

## **Walking school bus program gets students moving**

*New program encourages physical activity while reducing congestion*

March 1, 2022

VANCOUVER, BC – TransLink, the City of Vancouver, the City of North Vancouver, and the Dedicated Action for School Health (DASH) have partnered to encourage students to walk to and from school in groups known as walking school buses. The goal of this new program is to lower air pollution and reduce congestion near schools by promoting active transportation.

This new initiative, called [\*Kid Commute: A Walking School Bus Program\*](#), brings groups of students from the same school together to walk under the supervision of designated leaders. These groups walk along predetermined routes each school day with planned stops to pick up or drop off kids, like a conventional school bus would.

Currently, participating schools reside in the City of Vancouver and the City of North Vancouver. The participating elementary schools include:

<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>Municipality</b>
Larson	North Vancouver
Queen Mary	North Vancouver
Ridgeway	North Vancouver
Westview	North Vancouver
Queensbury (Starting April 2022)	North Vancouver
Cunningham	Vancouver
Lord Selkirk Annex	Vancouver
Trafalgar	Vancouver

Some benefits of the Walking School Bus Program include:

- Encouraging physical activity and active transportation.
- Reducing congestion near schools.
- Reducing air pollution/emissions.
- Helping students build new friendships and sense of community.
- Saving families time who would otherwise drop off or pick up their children.

The program is administered by DASH, who organizes and executes the walking school buses with staff, families, volunteers, and schools. The program partners will monitor the success of this pilot program before potentially expanding to other municipalities and schools in the future.

This program was developed and partially funded by TransLink with additional funding and support from the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the City of Vancouver, the City of North Vancouver, and the North Vancouver School District.

## MEDIA RELEASE



Families or school administrators who want to get involved with the program should reach out to DASH by emailing [info@dashbc.ca](mailto:info@dashbc.ca).

### More information:

[Walking School Bus webpage](#)

[Clean BC's Move. Commute. Connect. Webpage](#)

[Free Transit For Kids 12 and Under Webpage](#)

### Media downloads:

[Media can download photos and video of a Walking School Bus here](#)

### Quotes:

#### **Kevin Quinn, CEO, TransLink –**

"When children are encouraged at an early age to take part in active transportation they're more likely to continue choosing greener ways of moving around as they grow up. I'm proud that this initiative will foster healthier lifestyles, reduce congestion, lower air pollution, and create long-lasting friendships in our communities."

#### **Linda Buchanan, Mayor, City of North Vancouver –**

"As a parent myself I know how much children value and benefit from being outside. When children walk, roll or bike to school they can connect with their friends, community and develop their navigational skills while supporting their health and wellbeing through daily exercise. The City has long been a champion of safe and active routes to school which is why we are pleased to be a partner in the new Walking School Bus program. If you ask children they would tell you that they want to walk, roll, or ride to school. This program makes that happen and introduces them to lifelong healthy habits."

#### **Kennedy Stewart, Mayor, City of Vancouver –**

"A program like a Walking School Bus is an ideal way to introduce active travel to our youngest residents and show how important it is for their health, the environment and their school community. By joining a walking school bus children can help reduce vehicle congestion and carbon pollution around their school, which will help us reach our climate emergency goals, and make streets around schools safer. I look forward to seeing walking school buses expand across the city."

#### **George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy –**

"Safe, active travel for children is one more way to reduce our carbon footprint. This new program supports our CleanBC plan to create a cleaner, better future while ensuring students have a safe, fun and healthy journey to school"

#### **Faye Willick, Executive Director, DASH**

DASH is excited to be involved with this program because we strive to encourage all BC schools to be a healthy school community. This is an excellent example where students, staff, parents, and community members work collaboratively to build healthy, resilient and socially connected students who will learn how to be healthy for life. As I walked with the different groups, I already see students who will be lifelong walkers.

## MEDIA RELEASE



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**Mark Pearmain, Superintendent, North Vancouver School District**

"We are pleased to participate in the Walking School Bus initiative. This pilot aligns well with the school district's efforts to encourage students and families to get to and from school in active and safe ways. It also aligns with the school district's goal of supporting initiatives that champion sustainability. Students in the program will see the benefits of their participation by way of improved overall energy, mood, health and well-being; building connections with members of the community and becoming more familiar with their neighbourhood. We look forward to seeing this program expand and grow."

**Janet Fraser, Board Chair, Vancouver School Board**

"I am excited to see new possibilities for active modes of transportation available to Vancouver students and families. The Walking School Bus Pilot Program allows students to develop a better understanding of their local neighbourhoods and build confidence through walking with their classmates and leaders. As a Board, we continue to support active and sustainable transportation choices for school communities and thank all volunteers taking part in this program."

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