

# TransLink's TravelSmart Toolkit



**Walk to School Wednesday** is an opportunity for students, parents, and teachers to choose an active way to get to school at least one day a week. Active transportation includes walking, biking, scootering, skateboarding, transit or any other kind of “people powered” way of getting around.

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**In this resource you will find:**

- The tools to start a **Walk to School Wednesday** tradition at your school
- A health focused infographic to draw attention to the health benefits of walking to school
- Announcement scripts, newsletter and website write-ups and customizable press release and sponsorship letters , to help promote your initiative
- Tally sheets so classes can track their participation.

**Why Have a Walk to School Campaign?** Travelling smart to school by foot, bike, skateboard, scooter or transit has a positive effect on a child's health and academic achievement. Recent research suggests that children who walk or cycle to school arrive more alert and concentrate better than their peers who are driven. Today, 91% of Canadian children are not getting enough daily physical activity.<sup>i</sup> Your PAC can help change this by organizing active travel initiatives at your school. This resource is designed to be used by any group interested in getting more kids safely and actively travelling to school. Our hope is that the TravelSmart initiatives featured in this resource become the foundation for a strong culture of active school travel that fosters the development of happy, healthy, and independent kids year round.

***Did you Know?***

*Only 7% of 5-11 year olds and 4% of 12-17 year olds in Canada are meeting the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Children and Youth<sup>ii</sup>.*

**Walk to School Wednesday** makes getting to school fun, social, and special. Your school can personalize the event by including decorations, special guests, food, music, and some friendly competition.

# A Five Step Checklist

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## 1. Take the Lead, find some friends

- Recruit parent and staff volunteers. *(8 weeks before event)*
- Find Community Partners or Sponsors. *(7 weeks before event)*
- Invite public authorities like the school board, community police officers, mayor and city council, and health authority officers. *(6 weeks before event)*

## 2. Round up the Routes

- Encourage parents to map out the safe routes to school from their homes. *(5 weeks before event)*
- Consider establishing a Walking School Bus route so that many children can walk together *(5 weeks before event)*
- Consider establishing a meeting point with other families that is a five-minute walk to the school. *(Drive to 5!)*

## 3. Spread the word

- Post Posters at your school. *(4 weeks before)*
- Promote through School Website, School Newsletter, or School Email List *(3 weeks before)*
- Use social media to create some buzz and excitement. *(2 weeks before event)*
- Have students make PA Announcements-see templates. *(2 weeks before event)*
- Send out a Letter to Parents-see template. *(1 week before)*
- Send Press Release to a community newspaper-see template. *(1 week before event)*

## 4. Inventive Incentives

- Make it fun by including prizes, costumes, music, etc. *(3 weeks before event and ongoing)*
- Involve parents, teachers, and students in planning and promotion. *(8 weeks before event and ongoing)*
- Meet kids at the school with a reward like hot chocolate or stickers. *(day of event)*
- Award a weekly “Golden Shoe” trophy for highest class participation. Calculate the highest class participation using a teacher hand’s up survey or other counting method. *(once a week)*

## 5. Party Time, Rain or Shine

- If you want, set up decorations, snack stations, or music. *(morning of event)*
- Enjoy your event rain or shine! *(day of event)*
- Have teachers complete the Hands-Up Survey *(every day of the event)*.
- Share the experience on social media *(ongoing)*

## A few tips:

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### Get the word out!

Getting the word out to parents should be your number one objective.

Recruit enthusiastic parents, students and teachers to help you plan and promote this full school initiative. They can also help to tally the participation results you get each week. **Find Community Partners to Sponsor Your Event.**

Reward students who walk or roll to school with a special treat like hot chocolate or fresh fruit. A local grocery store may donate fruit or other healthy snacks, or a local business may donate decorations or prizes. Use our **Sponsorship/Donation Request Letter.**

### Invite Local Leaders

Children need good role models to demonstrate healthy habits like walking to school. Invite local leaders such as sports heroes, School Board Trustees, police officers, firefighters, traffic engineers from the city, doctors, the mayor and councilors, health authority representatives, or non-profit organizations to help out on **Walk to School Wednesday**. This will set a good example for the students and make it cool to walk to school.

### Using Social Media

Consider the following:

- Ask principal of your school to send out an email reminder to parents each week.
- Create a special page on the school website that is devoted to sharing photos and tallies from the walking initiatives achieved each week.
- Create a page for your event on Facebook with all of the details and post updates on it regularly.
- Be sure to use the school's photo release form for any photos of children. Consider posting infographics, pictures, videos or other interesting articles and information related to **Walk to School Wednesdays** to social media as a way to educate people about the importance of walking and rolling to school.

### ***Did you Know?***

*If just nine families participate regularly in a Walking School Bus over the course of a school year, they can collectively prevent almost 1,000 kg of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere<sup>iii</sup>!*

### Measuring Success: Hands Up Surveys

It's important to count how many students are walking and rolling to school during your **Walk to School Wednesday** events as it allows us to determine the winning class each week and gauge whether or not there is a difference in behavior on those days. We recommend using a simple "**Hands Up Survey**" for teachers or student volunteers to ask each class. Some schools send out tally sheets in the attendance folders and amass their results in the office and transfer the results onto a central bulletin board that is updated weekly. You may choose to have students enter their names to win weekly prizes by issuing special stickers or tickets to walkers and rollers as they arrive at the school.

### **Walking n' Rolling and Beyond!**

Empower future PACs to hold active transportation events long after your child moves on to another school. Be sure to recruit and train new parents to pass along knowledge, experience and resources or find a champion teacher that can carry the torch for you.

Teachers can register for free TransLink's TravelSmart for Schools workshops for students in grades 6, 7, 8, and 9. Email [info@travelsmart.ca](mailto:info@travelsmart.ca) to book a workshop. We also encourage parents to explore the many active school travel resources available online at [www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca) and [www.hastebc.org](http://www.hastebc.org).

# Template: Sample Letter to Parents

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## *Walk to School Wednesdays Start on <DATE>!*

<Date>

**Dear Parents,**

Did you know that two-thirds of Canadian children live within a 30 minute walk of their school, but less than one third walk regularly?<sup>v</sup>

Today we are so busy that most of the parents at <SCHOOL> choose to drive their children to school. This has created a lot of traffic and air pollution at our school – not to mention contributed to Canada’s low level of childhood physical activity! Our kids want to try walking and biking to school and the <SCHOOL> PAC wants to make sure they can do it safely.

That is why at <SCHOOL> we’re starting a ***Walk to School Wednesday*** program starting on <DATE>! **Every Wednesday during the month of <DATE> we are asking students to walk, bike, scooter, skateboard, or rollerblade to school instead of being driven.** Even changing one day a week can really make a difference to your children and our school’s “carstipation” problem! Through this program we hope our students will get a little more exercise which will make them better students throughout the day.

Families walking and rolling to school results in:

- More parental “eyes on the street” and a safer neighbourhood for all.
- Regular physical activity for you and your children.
- Less traffic congestion, vehicle idling, and air pollution around our school.
- Road safety skills and greater independence for children.
- Students who are more alert, have better memory, and get better grades.

Walking or rolling to school might seem like a tough change to make for some families but there are lots of people here to help you. For families who live too far for children to walk we’ve created “Walk-a-Block Zones” where you can park your vehicle a block from the school and walk the rest of the way with your child. You might also consider dropping your child off with a family that lives closer to the school so that they can walk with a friend.

**Don’t forget! Every Wednesday your child is encouraged to walk or roll to school.** Take advantage of this opportunity to instill some good habits and break some old ones. Best of all, this is going to be fun! The PAC is still looking for parent volunteers. If you’re interested in getting involved please contact <NAME> at <PHONE NUMBER>.

Thanks and happy walking and rolling!

-<NAME>, PAC President

# Template: Website and Newsletter Content

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## School Website Content

### **Announcing *Walk to School Wednesday!***

<SCHOOL> invites students, teachers and parents to participate in ***Walk to School Wednesday*** on <DATES> so that everyone can enjoy the health and environmental benefits of walking and rolling to school.

If your commute is too far to walk, you can park a few blocks away and walk the last block or two with your child. Walking and rolling to school can contribute to your child's health by increasing daily exercise, improving concentration, and fostering independence.

Our school has a traffic congestion problem and making our school safer is up to every parent. Please do your part to make our school safer by walking or rolling with your child.

## School Newsletter, School email, or PAC Newsletter Content

### **Announcing *Walk to School Wednesday!***

Did you know that today less than 1/3 of Canadian children walk to school?<sup>vi</sup> That's too bad because walking (and rolling) to school has many benefits for kids including better health, better concentration in class, better sleep quality, and improved ability to manage stress.

That's why our school is starting a ***Walk to School Wednesday*** program starting on <DATE>. Every Wednesday we're asking you and your child to choose an active way to get to school like walking, biking, scootering, or skateboarding. If you live too far for your child to walk the whole way, consider walking to transit, finding a Walking Buddy, starting a Walking School Bus, or parking a few blocks away from school and walking into school with your child.

So get out your rain boots and plan your walking route. Parent volunteers are encouraged to contact <PAC PRESIDENT> to learn how you can help!

Thanks and Happy Travels!



# Template: PA Announcement Scripts

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*These scripts are written for students to deliver in pairs to build excitement around your **Walk to School Wednesday** event. Feel free to customize!*

## **Monday Announcement Intro Script:**

**A:** Good morning <SCHOOL NAME>! It is time to tie up your sneakers, grab your bike, and bring your skateboard, scooter or rollerblades to school!

**B:** Because Wednesdays are no longer just Wednesdays, they're **Walk to School Wednesdays!**

**A:** How can you travel smart to school on Wednesday? You could...

**B:** Walk with a friend!

**A:** Bike with your brother! Scooter with your sister!

**B:** Walk a block or two to school by having your driver drop you off a little ways from the school then you could walk with a friend!

**A:** We want everyone to start walking and rolling to school because it is good for your body and your brain!

**B:** And what's good for your body, is good for the planet.

**A:** Get ready to Walk and Roll!

**Both:** **Walk to School Wednesdays** ROCK!

## **Tuesday Announcement Script** (Reminder to announce in afternoon-at going home time)

**A:** Guess what day it is tomorrow?

**B:** Wednesday.

**A:** Are you ready to Walk and Roll?

**B:** Oh yeah! Walk to School Wednesday! How are you going to get to school tomorrow?

**A:** Ride your bike, skateboard, walk, scooter or roller blade to school tomorrow.

**B:** Walk with a friend or walk with your parent. Just get your body moving!!

**Both:** Do your part and TravelSmart to school tomorrow!

### **Wednesday Announcement Script**

**A:** We'd like to take this moment to thank everybody who walk and rolled to school today!!

**B:** Walking and rolling to school helps to make our school parking lot safer because more people-powered travel means less motor powered vehicles like cars in our parking lots.

**A:** By using our bodies to travel from home to school and back again we manage to sneak in extra exercise to build stronger bodies and brains.

**B:** And let's not forget how fun walking and rolling to school is. We get to see our friends and explore our environment.

**Both:** Congrats <SCHOOL> on taking the first steps to start ***Walk to School Wednesdays***. We look forward to getting more students on board to join us on ***Walk to School Wednesdays*** in the coming weeks!

### **Thursday Announcement Script – if a class prize is involved (e.g. free time)**

**A:** Hey remember when everybody walked and rolled to school yesterday?

**B:** That was so fun! We got some great exercise and were ready to learn when we got to school!

**A:** Guess what! There was one class that walked and rolled the most!

**B:** Wow! Who won?

**A:** This week <Division #> had the highest proportion of walkers and rollers during Walk to School Wednesday! That mean's <Teacher's Name>'s class gets to \_\_\_\_\_!

**B:** Wow congratulations to <Division #>!

**Both:** And congratulations to everyone who walked and rolled!

**Both:** ***Walk to School Wednesdays*** ROCK!

## Template: Social Media Strategy

Some schools use social media to help spread the word about school activities. You can use these simple tips to help you share information about **Walk to School Wednesdays**. Use our Sample Tweets to quickly post event details on your school's Twitter account.

1. Appoint 1-3 social media volunteers from the PAC. These volunteers will take and upload photos, post messages, monitor questions, and be responsible for getting the word out online.
2. Promote Walk to School Wednesday on social media by letting everyone know about the dates, times, prizes and other key details. Link back to the school website for more information.
3. If your school uses Facebook you can create a Facebook Event with all the key details about Walk to School Wednesday. Facebook will automatically remind people about the event.
4. Use your school's photo release form to ensure you have parent permission to take photos of children. If you don't have a signed photo release form, do not publish photos of children.
5. Invite politicians, civic leaders, local sports heroes, and the community newspaper to attend your event. Organize a group photo with your special guests show the community how much fun it is to walk and roll to school! Post the photo on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
6. Follow these groups for more tips and information about active school travel: @CanadaWalks, @Letsmove, @HASTeBC, @DashBC, @ParticipACTION, @HealthyFamilyBC etc.

### Sample Tweets

- The amazing kids at <SCHOOL> Elementary are walking to school on Wednesdays because #ActivelsBetter #Walk2School #ParticipACTION
- <SCHOOL> Elementary is joining the league of #ActiveSchools by starting a #Walk2School Wednesday program. @DASHBC #ActivelsBetter
- Lace up those sneakers! <SCHOOL> Elementary students will be 100% people-powered this Wednesday! #WalkToSchoolDay. #ActivelsBetter
- <SCHOOL> Elementary shows us how they stay active and get 'secret exercise' by walking to school. @ParticipACTION @healthyfamiliesbc #ActivelsBetter

Hashtags to Use	Handles to Follow
#ActivelsBetter	@TravelSmart (Metro Vancouver's TDM program)
#Walk2School	@CanadaWalks (Active&Safe Routes to School)
#letsmove	@Letsmove (Michelle Obama's initiative for active children)
#ActiveSchools	@HASTeBC (BC's Active School Travel Consultancy)
#MoveMore	@DashBC (non-profit promoting healthy BC schools)
#ParticipACTION	@ParticipACTION (Canadian government initiative for physical activity)
#healthyfamiliesbc	@HealthyFamilyBC (BC Government wellness agency)

# Template: Sample Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ***Walk to School Wednesday* rolls into <SCHOOL>!**

58% of Canadian parents walked to school when they were kids, but today only 28% of children in this country walk to school<sup>vii</sup>. But all that is changing at <SCHOOL> with the announcement of ***Walk to School Wednesdays*** – one day a week where all students at the school are encouraged to choose “TravelSmart” transportation modes like walking, biking, or taking transit to get to school.

Starting on <DATE> don’t be surprised to see a lot more youthful faces on the sidewalk in the <SCHOOL> neighborhood. <SCHOOL> students have just spent the last year learning about why active transportation is so important for their health, their safety, their happiness, and for the environment. The Grade 6 class even put on a production where they performed songs and skits about the benefits of travelling smart.

“Research shows that the exercise kids get from walking or rolling to school helps them to pay attention and remember better. No wonder they call it TravelSMART!”

- <NAME>, President of the <SCHOOL> Parent Advisory Committee

“I’m so proud of the students at <SCHOOL> for making the effort to change their school travel behavior. By walking and rolling to school they are learning how to be independent in the world.”

- <NAME>, <SCHOOL> Principal

“By walking and biking to school, these young students are setting a great example for their community – do your part to TravelSmart!”

- <NAME>, Mayor of <Community>

Media Contact

<NAME>

PAC PRESIDENT

<PHONE NUMBER> <EMAIL>

# Template: Sample Sponsorship/Donation Request Letter

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<DATE >  
<BUSINESS OWNER>  
<BUSINESS NAME>  
<ADDRESS>  
<CITY>

Dear <NAME>,

Did you know that two out of three Canadian kids aren't getting enough exercise?<sup>viii</sup> One of the leading contributing factors to inactive lifestyles is the increased use of vehicular travel to get to school. The risk of obesity goes up 6% for every hour spent in a car each day.<sup>ix</sup> And even in our local communities, childhood obesity is becoming a major health problem - causing diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and even death. We can do better. And you can help make it happen.

<SCHOOL> is committed to helping our kids develop healthy and sustainable habits like using active transportation to get to school. We're writing to ask for your help! We've started **Walk to School Wednesday** campaign at <SCHOOL> to encourage kids to get daily exercise and stay healthy. With your help, this can impact the futures of many children!

The purpose of **Walk to School Wednesday** program is to provide kids a clear, safe path so they can walk to school regularly. This program encourages students, teachers, and parents to increase walking and wheeling (cycling, skating or scootering) trips to and from school. <The **Walk to School Wednesday** program description>

## How you can help

In order to make our program a success, we need community leaders like you to pitch in. We need <SPECIFIC NEEDS: fruit, snacks, hot chocolate, photocopying, umbrellas etc.>. This donation is vital in helping us <SPECIFIC GOAL: offer kids incentives to be active, educate kids and parents, spread the word about the importance of the program, etc.>.

## What's in it for you?

In return for your generous donation, we'll make sure your concern for our children is publicly acknowledged. The goodwill generated by your act of kindness will benefit your business for years to come.

Please consider the impact your donation could have on the health and safety of our community's kids. Someone from our organization will call you soon to follow up.

Sincerely,  
<YOUR NAME>, <YOUR TITLE, ORGANIZATION

**Walk to School on**

**\_\_\_\_\_!**

**The Class with the highest  
participation gets a**

**\_\_\_\_\_!**

**Start Date \_\_\_\_\_**

**Finish Date \_\_\_\_\_**

**TravelSmart to school by walking, biking, scootering, or skateboarding  
every \_\_\_\_\_ for the month of \_\_\_\_\_!**

## Active School Travel Fast Facts

Use these fast facts to quickly explain the importance of active school travel to the students and parents at your school. It's a good idea to post this in a highly visible place like a bulletin board or school website.

Benefits of Active School Travel	
<b>Academic Benefits</b>	Active school travel before school can increase a child's ability to concentrate. These effects can last for about <b>4 hours</b> . <sup>x</sup> Physical activity has been shown to improve school grades, classroom behaviour, cognitive skills, concentration, memory, self-esteem, and verbal skills. <sup>xi</sup>
<b>Independence and Development Benefits</b>	Children who walk to school gain self-confidence and a sense of responsibility. Exploring one's environment on foot is an important part of childhood development. Walking to school develops spatial awareness, independence, self-sufficiency, and resilience. <sup>xii</sup>
<b>Physical Health Benefits</b>	If children walk for all trips less than one kilometre instead of being driven they will take an average of <b>2,238 additional steps per day</b> . This translates to approximately 15-20 minutes (1/4 to 1/3) of the physical activity that kids need for overall health. <sup>xiii</sup>
<b>Mental Wellbeing</b>	Research shows that active travel can relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety, resulting in improvements in individual quality of life and improve thinking, understanding and remembering. <sup>xiv</sup>

Benefits of Activity Outweigh the Risk of Active School Travel
It is estimated that if Canadian children engaged in <b>60 minutes</b> of physical activity per day, <b>33%</b> of all deaths related to coronary heart disease, <b>25%</b> of death related to stroke, <b>20%</b> of deaths related to type 2 diabetes, and <b>20%</b> of deaths related to hypertension could be avoided. <sup>xv</sup>
Every hour your child spends in a car each day makes them <b>6% MORE likely to be obese</b> . <sup>xvi</sup>
Every hour your child spends walking each day <b>reduces their likelihood of developing obesity by 4.8%</b> . <sup>xvii</sup>
Childhood obesity is associated with a higher chance of premature death and disability in adulthood. Overweight and obese children are more likely to stay obese into adulthood. <sup>xviii</sup>
In Canada, a recent survey found that although <b>58%</b> of parents walked to school when they were kids, only <b>28%</b> of their children walk to school today. <sup>xix</sup>
Data from Statistics Canada shows that on average, kids are only moderately or vigorously active for <b>14 minutes</b> between 3pm and 6pm. <sup>xx</sup>
Nearly <b>75%</b> of students surveyed would prefer to walk or cycle to school regularly. <sup>xxi</sup>
Today <b>1/3</b> of Canadian children are obese or overweight in part due to low rates of physical activity. <sup>xxii</sup>

# TravelSmart for Schools - Fact Sheet

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*Use these facts in speeches, school newsletters, or even on your school's website!*

## **TravelSmart Kids are Healthier**

- 91% of Canadian kids are not getting enough daily physical activity. The recommended amount is 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day.
- Low physical activity costs our health care system \$5.3 billion each year.
- Children who walk or roll to school regularly have a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and osteoporosis as adults.
- The risk of obesity goes up 6% for every hour spent in a car each day.
- The risk of obesity goes down by almost 5% for every kilometer walked per day.
- Only 7% of 5-11 year olds and 4% of 12-17 year olds in Canada are meeting the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Children and Youth.

## **TravelSmart Kids do Better in School**

- Children who walk or bicycle to school show better concentration ability than their peers who are driven to school.
- Research shows that kids who walk or bike to school arrive more alert and ready to learn and as a result achieve better academic results.
- Studies have shown that physical activity is associated with academic achievement, better school attendance, and fewer disciplinary problems.

## **It's Time to Let our Kids Walk and Roll to School**

- 58% of Canadian parents walked to school when they were kids, but today only 28% of children walk to school.
- Active transportation saves your family money. Walking and cycling costs an average of 3 cents per kilometer. By contrast, driving costs an average of 46 cents per kilometer.
- The risk of a child being killed in a road traffic accident is 40 times greater than the risk of being abducted.



## Walk-a-Block Zones & Walking Buddies

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*When we talk to parents about letting their children walk or bike to school they often raise concerns about distance and safety. There are many easy ways of responding to these concerns. Walk-A-Block Zones, Walking Buddies, and Walking School Buses are three ways to make active school travel accessible for every family.*

**Walk-A-Block Zones** are designated areas a few blocks away from the school where children can be dropped off so that they can walk the rest of the way. These places can also be called “Drive to 5” or “Meet with Friends”.

Principals or PACs can set up a Walk–A-Block parent drop off zone a block (or more) away from the school. Secure these zones by working with local municipal traffic staff to locate safe and legal parking spaces a few blocks from the school for driving parents to safely drop off their children.

Encourage families that don’t live within walking distance from their school to consider parking at the designated Walk-A Block zone and walk the last block or two with their child. The Walk–A-Block drop off zone can also allow children to join an active Walking School Bus or the chance to meet their Walking Buddy.

Children and parents will enjoy taking a short walk, help to reduce traffic congestion and clear the way for other walking or cycling students. Some schools even barricade the street in front of the school to prevent cars from driving and parking there.

**Walking Buddies** are pairs of students who walk together to school. Walking with a buddy can help parents feel more secure about letting their children walk without parent supervision. It’s a great idea to pair younger children with older children. Finding a walking buddy for your child can be as simple as introducing yourself to the other families in your community. You can also use a school bulletin board or online social media space to find a walking buddy for your child.

A **Walking School Bus** is a larger group of students who walk to school together and “pick-up” children at designated locations or as they pass by their homes. A walking school bus takes a little bit of planning but there are lots of great resources online to help. It’s a good idea to have a parent or older sibling volunteer to lead the Walking School Bus each day.

# How to Start a Walking School Bus

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A Walking School Bus is a great solution for busy families who want their children to benefit from a daily walk to and from school. By teaming up with other families you can share the responsibility of transporting children to school each day.

It's like a carpool on foot!

The Walking School Bus involves one or two adults accompanying several children to and from school each day. The Walking School Bus "picks up" each child from designated locations or at the front door of the home on the way to the school and "drops off" the children to their front door on the way home.

Your Walking School Bus can be big and formal or small and informal. Bikes and scooters are welcome. The key is to get active!

## Why Start a Walking School Bus?

- ✓ Parents **save time** in the morning
- ✓ Meet your neighbours and **make friends**
- ✓ Kids who walk to school get **better grades**
- ✓ Kids who walk to school get more physical activity and are **healthier**
- ✓ Make the **streets safer** by getting cars off the road
- ✓ Protect the **environment** and improve air quality
- ✓ Kids who walk to school **sleep better** and have better **self esteem**

## How to Start a Walking School Bus:

- ✓ **Plan your Route:** Plan the best walking route from your home to your child's school.
- ✓ **Find other Families along your Route:** Talk to the other families at your child's school and find out who else lives along that route. Ask your school principal to put an ad in the school newsletter. Collect everyone's names, addresses, and email addresses. Invite the families to a planning meeting.
- ✓ **Develop a Schedule:** Plan out who will accompany the children each day. Plan the time that each child should be ready to leave the house.
- ✓ **Stay in Touch:** Be in contact with the other families in case of sickness or holidays. You can use a simple email list, phone tree, Facebook group, or smart phone app to coordinate.
- ✓ **Have Fun:** Enjoy this special time in your child's life. Discover your neighbourhood and make friends along the way!

For more information visit: [http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/walking\\_school\\_bus/index.cfm](http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/walking_school_bus/index.cfm)

# TravelSmart Teens

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*Families with children in both high school and elementary school often drive to school to save time. Use this resource to encourage parents at your school to teach their teens to take transit.*

## Top Reasons for Teens to be Walking, Biking, and Taking Transit to School

- **Independence and Life Skills:** Young people need to learn how to navigate the city on their own. Taking transit to school helps to develop mobility skills that are an essential part of the transition to adulthood.
- **Preparation for Post-Secondary:** Practicing transit skills as a high school student can help teens get ready for college, university, or technical school. The majority of post-secondary students use transit, so why not get your kid ready for the next step?
- **Energy and Mental Health:** Walking part way to school might be the only exercise your busy teenager gets in their day. Help your teen feel more energized and manage the stress of high school by encouraging them to walk. It will even improve sleep quality!<sup>xxiii</sup>
- **Cost Savings:** Your family can save money and time by getting teens on transit instead of being driven to their daily activities.
- **Better Grades:** Exercise is proven to improve memory, concentration, and overall performance in school.<sup>xxiv</sup> Help your teen do their best by getting them more active!

## Tips for TravelSmart Teens

- **Get Visible:** Tell teens to wear light coloured clothing or reflective gear when out after dark. It is the law that bikes have front and back lights.
- **Headphone Safety:** Teach teens to only use one earbud when they are walking or waiting for the bus. This will help them to hear what's going on around them and be aware of hazards.
- **Correct Fare:** TransLink offers a discounted Concession Fare for high school students. Make sure your teen always has correct fare or a compass card and a school ID on them when they are using transit.
- **Route Planning:** Teens love technology so get them involved in planning their trip using online tools like TripPlanner, Transit Alerts, or Next Bus. This is a key life skill and will prevent them from being late or getting lost.
- **Safety Skills:** Review TransLink's safety features and transit etiquette with your teen. Make sure they have the Transit Police number (87-77-77) programmed in their phones.



## TravelSmart Walk to School Wednesday Challenge Hands-up Survey

Distribute this form to **every teacher** and have them count the number of students taking an active mode to school on the day of your event. At the end of the four weeks, tally all the forms in the Tally Sheet.

Division Number \_\_\_\_\_

Week 1: Date _____		
A	How many students are in your class today?	
B	How many students came to school by car today?	
C	How many students walked or rolled today? <i>(includes walking part way, biking, scootering, skateboarding etc.)</i>	
E	What percentage of students used active transportation today?	$A \div C =$

Week 2: Date _____		
A	How many students are in your class today?	
B	How many students came to school by car today?	
C	How many students walked or rolled today? <i>(includes walking part way, biking, scootering, skateboarding etc.)</i>	
E	What percentage of students used active transportation today?	$A \div C =$

Week 3: Date _____		
A	How many students are in your class today?	
B	How many students came to school by car today?	
C	How many students walked or rolled today? <i>(includes walking part way, biking, scootering, skateboarding etc.)</i>	
E	What percentage of students used active transportation today?	$A \div C =$

Week 4: Date _____		
A	How many students are in your class today?	
B	How many students came to school by car today?	
C	How many students walked or rolled today? <i>(includes walking part way, biking, scootering, skateboarding etc.)</i>	
E	What percentage of students used active transportation today?	$A \div C =$

**TravelSmart Walk to School Wednesday Challenge**

**Tally Sheet**

<b>Division Number</b>	<b>TravelSmart Average (% of students walking + rolling)</b>				
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Monthly Average = (Week 1+2+3+4) ÷ 4

## TravelSmart Walk to School Wednesday Challenge

### Evaluation Form

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Let us know how your first month of **Walk to School Wednesdays** went! Please fill out this form and return it to TravelSmart.

1. How many students attend your school?
2. How many students walked, rolled, or carpoled to school on **Walk to School Wednesdays**?

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total

3. How many parent volunteers helped at **Walk to School Wednesdays**?

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total

4. What was the best part of **Walk to School Wednesdays**?
5. What was the hardest part of **Walk to School Wednesdays**?
6. Will you continue to organize **Walk to School Wednesdays**?
7. What would you do differently in the future?
8. How could TravelSmart have helped you in a different way? How can we improve?
9. How will your school continue to encourage safe and active school travel in the future?

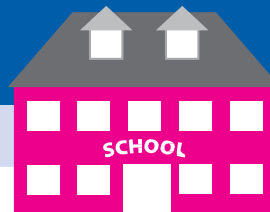
Send completed forms to [info@travelsmart.ca](mailto:info@travelsmart.ca).

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- vi Green Communities Canada's Active and Safe Routes to School Program
- vii Active Healthy Kids Canada: Are we Driving our Kids to Unhealthy Habits? 2013 Physical Activity Report Card
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# The Benefits of Walking to School



## Health

Reduce chances of:

- Cancer
- 
- Heart Disease



## Academic

Walking to school can improve grades, memory and thinking skills

## Quality Time

Walking allows families to connect without distractions

