

WALKING SCHOOL BUS



RESOURCE #9 – WSB Guidelines for Parents & Caregivers

Rain or Shine!

The walking school bus (WSB) will take place regardless of the weather – rain, snow or shine! However, if your children will not be walking due to inclement weather, please contact the school admin for that day by 8am or 2.30pm to let them know.

Walking Route

The route will be finalized by your school. This route must be adhered to at all times. It will be reviewed periodically throughout the year, so if you have any suggestions for improvements, please let the school administrator know.

If any part of the pathway cannot be used, due to a temporary blockage (e.g. road works, parked vehicles), the leaders/chaperones will divert accordingly. If there are persistent problems with a route, they will be reported to the city by the school.

Safety

Parents are responsible for their own children's safety to and from the designated WSB stops. WSB leaders/chaperones are required to stay with the group on the authorized route and take care when children join and leave the WSB.

Parents should speak to their own children about road safety before letting them join the walking school bus. Leaders/chaperones will give newcomers to the WSB a brief reminder about acceptable behaviour. Parents should emphasize that children must listen to the leader/chaperone and obey their instructions at all times – particularly about stopping and crossing.

Pedestrian and road safety instructions include:

- The leader/chaperone will be in the front leading the group. A second adult will be at the rear to ensure there are no stragglers. Additional adults may be present depending on the size of the group. No child should walk ahead of the leader/chaperone or behind the second adult. We recommend having the youngest and slowest children in front walking just behind the leader/chaperone.
- The children should walk along the pavement away from the curb in an orderly manner, and in pairs where possible, allowing other pedestrians to pass.
- Always look for cars – leaders/chaperones are supposed to obey the rules and watch for people walking. But you cannot count on them to always remember.

- Choose the safest routes to walk with the fewest and safest streets to cross. Avoid crossing busy or high-speed roads whenever possible. Do not deviate from the WSB route set out by the school.
- Walk along the street safely. This means:
 - Use sidewalks or paths. Do not walk on the street (only acceptable if there are no sidewalks).
 - If there are no sidewalks or paths, walk facing traffic and as far from the cars as possible.
 - Watch for cars turning, entering or exiting driveways or backing up in parking lots.
 - Cross streets at crosswalks, stop signs or at signalized intersections whenever possible.
 - Obey traffic signs and signals.
 - Walk, don't run or dart across the street.
 - Hold hands of small children while waiting to cross, and when walking on the sidewalk.
 - At a signalized intersection, a walking man means it's safe to cross the street. However, don't assume that drivers will see you because you are waiting to cross the street. The driver may run the red light or turn without looking for pedestrians.
 - Before you step off the curb, look LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT for traffic, and then behind you and in front of you for turning cars.
 - Make eye contact with the drivers to ensure they have seen you and stopped. When it is safe to cross keep looking left and right as you do so. Be alert for vehicles making a right turn on red.
 - Remember that just because it is your turn to cross does not mean that it is safe to cross. Do not trust that cars will obey the rules or that turning cars will see you.

Parents' Responsibilities

Parents must have completed a consent form before a child is allowed to use the WSB. This form includes emergency contact details and an indication of when the child will use the WSB. This information will be held at the school.

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of any change to their child's regular travel pattern. For permanent changes, please contact the parent coordinator so the register can be updated.

Parents should also ensure their children understand how the WSB operates and impress upon them the need to behave sensibly and obey any instructions given by the leader.

Parents are responsible for their children's safety to and from the designated WSB stops and must discuss with their child what to do if they miss the WSB for any reason.

If your child is having a friend over to play, their parents must write and sign a note giving their child permission to walk on the walking school bus. If safe adult-to-child ratios are exceeded, you may be asked to come and walk with the group.

Children's Responsibilities

Children must behave, follow instructions, and the student code of conduct ([Resource 8b](#)). If they miss the WSB in the morning, they must return home so their parents can arrange an alternative way to get to school. If for any reason they are left behind after school, they must go to the school office and inform a staff member.

