

Walk Wheel Kids! Safe and Active School Travel

What is Active Travel?

Active Travel includes using our bodies to get from one place to another. Therefore, “active school travel” is using any kind of active transportation to move between home and school.

Active Travel is walking, wheeling or biking, scooting, roller blading, skateboarding, etc. *It is not driving.* While it does not necessarily include bussing, you still have a chance to be active by walking to and from your bus stop, and you are reducing traffic around your school by choosing to ride the bus when available.

Choosing Active Travel

If you are currently driving to school, a good way to include active transportation into your day is by choosing to walk to school, or at least “Walk a Block” – which means having parents and guardians drop students off in a safe spot that is a short 5-minute walk from the school. This also helps reduce the amount of congestion in front of the school with so many parents dropping off students.

What are the benefits of Active Travel?

- **Healthier Students:** Active school travel helps students increase their physical activity which is linked to improved cardiovascular health as well as overall well-being. Mental health benefits include reduced stress, depression, and anxiety, and increased happiness.
- **Safer School Zones:** Reducing traffic volumes at bell times creates a safer environment for students and their families as well as the quality of life for the community.
- **Healthier Environment:** Less cars on the road means improved air quality and less pollution which can contribute to many health risks.
- **Better Academic Performance:** Walking and wheeling supports healthy brain development, which can lead to improved learning and academic outcomes. Studies show that physically active kids have increased brain activity and improved test scores as well as grades.
- **Overall Well-Being:** By walking and wheeling to school, students can learn more about their neighbourhood and community, see more of nature and spend more time socializing with friends.

Travelling to School Safely

Before heading out on your journey to school there are a few things students can do to ensure they are prepared:

Dress for the weather! Be sure to check the forecast to know what type of weather to expect for the day and be sure to dress appropriately.

- On **dry, sunny days** be sure to wear light, loose clothing. Wearing a hat or sunglasses makes it easier to see in the bright sun.

- On **cooler, wet or rainy days** dress in layers as it may be colder in the morning than on your way home from school. If you know it is going to rain, be sure to bring an umbrella or raincoat and rain boots.
- On **cold, snowy days** make sure to dress warm. Wear a hat, mitts, warm boots (ones with good tread so that you don't slip and fall) snow pants and jackets. Remembering to have a spare set of socks, just in case you get wet is a good idea!

Check your belongings! Be sure that shoe laces are tied, and all items are stored in your backpacks or bags.

- This means that all toys and sports equipment, headphones and cell phones should be stored away when crossing the roadway. This helps you focus on keeping yourself safe.
- If you are riding your bikes or scooters, make sure to have your helmet on and properly secured.

Road Safety

Sidewalks and pathways are the safest place for us to walk as they keep you out of the roadway and away from traffic. Walking on the side further away from traffic is always best! When you need to pass another person, move over to the right and pass single file.

If there is no sidewalk – then walking on the side of the road facing traffic is best. This way you can see the cars that are coming and are able to move out of the way when necessary.

Be sure to check every driveway for anyone that may be pulling out and wait until they're gone before crossing.

Crossing the Road Safely

STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN... and THINK!

STOP: 2 or 3 big steps back from the roadway – this is because some large vehicles, like trucks sometimes have a hard time turning the corner and their wheels may come up onto the sidewalk.

LOOK: Make sure that you are looking each way that traffic is coming from. (If you are crossing at a straight intersection, look left and right and left again. If you are crossing at a corner intersection, look left, right, in front and behind you. This ensures that you can see traffic coming from every direction)

LISTEN: Listen for oncoming traffic or any other hazards

THINK! Now that you have LOOKED AND LISTENED, is it safe to cross? Do you have enough time to get across the road before another car comes?

It is also a good idea to make eye contact with the drivers before crossing and point to where you are crossing to. *Remember... use your eyes and ears BEFORE you use your feet!*

It is safer to cross with an adult, older siblings or Crossing Guards

It is also safer to walk in numbers, this also makes you more visible to drivers – just remember to stay alert when it's time to cross the road.