

What parents tell us

'Socially, it's great. My children have formed some good friendships because of the walking school bus. The adults get to know each other better too.'

'It gets all of us walking more and the children don't complain about walking like they used to.'

'Parents no longer have to get their children to and from school every day. When the weather is too bad to walk, we usually carpool with other families on the walking school bus.'

'The more families involved the better. If you have five-plus families in your group, there's more flexibility with the roster.'

For more information, see:

www.landtransport.govt.nz/travel/school/walking-school-buses/

From here, you can download *The walking school bus coordinators' guide* and order a walking school bus kit.
Or phone our call centre on 0800 699 000.



The walking school bus

Walk to school
It's good for you and the environment

What is a walking school bus?

A walking school bus provides a fun, safe, active and sustainable way for children to travel to and from school with adult supervision – that even the youngest students can enjoy.

Each bus walks along a set route, with at least one adult 'driver', picking children up at designated stops and walking them to school. Some buses pick up children from outside their houses, while other buses have designated bus stops. In the afternoons, when the children are coming home from school, the process is reversed.

The bus can be flexible to suit the needs of the families using it. It can transport just a few children or as many as 50. It can run as often as demand requires and children can use it as often as they like.

A walking school bus is like a real bus – it travels at a set time and children join or leave the bus at designated stops.



Always walk on the footpath

Walk in pairs

Why a walking school bus is a good idea

Recent national surveys show that the proportion of primary school children walking to school has dropped from 42 percent to 27 percent, while the proportion being driven to school has jumped from 31 percent to 52 percent. It is vital that we turn these figures around. Getting kids out of cars and on their feet on a walking school bus will:

- improve their fitness and health – today nearly one-third of all New Zealand children get very little or no exercise every week. Walking to school is an easy way to introduce exercise into a child's daily routine
- decrease traffic congestion at the school gate – every child walking to school potentially represents one less car on the road
- save money on petrol, reduce energy use and lessen vehicle emissions
- provide a safe journey for children to and from school – children are supervised by adults who ensure they arrive at school or at the bus stop safely
- provide more social interaction for kids.

Children love being part of walking school bus – they enjoy the walk and meeting new friends along the way. Teachers often report that children arrive at school invigorated and ready to learn.



Listen to what your driver says

Follow your driver



How do I set up a walking school bus?

As with all new initiatives, somebody has to take the lead in getting things started. In your school community, it could be a parent, teacher, principal, school board trustee or the local road safety coordinator. Whoever makes the first move, their key role is to enlist support. A supportive school community will ensure the success of the walking school bus.

Fuelling your walking school bus with an enthusiastic coordinator and caregiver volunteers will ensure the success of the walking school bus.

A great way to get started is to put a message in the school newsletter and organise a meeting of interested families. If the school has many people for whom English is not a first language, it may be more effective to talk directly to people at the school gate, use word of mouth or translate notices into different languages.