

# STARTING A WALKING SCHOOL BUS: THE BASICS



## WHY START A WALKING SCHOOL BUS?

Many schools have found that Walking School Buses can be a fun, low cost mode of school transportation. During these uncertain times, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for schools and districts to transport the same number of students on school buses while following social distancing guidelines. This may be the perfect time to start a Walking School Bus to help fill the transportation gap caused by COVID-19 .

Students who walk or bike to school not only get the daily physical activity they need to be healthy, but studies also show that children who walk or bike also tend to perform better in school.

## WHAT IS A WALKING SCHOOL BUS?

A Walking School Bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. It sounds simple because it is! However, there are some modifications that need to be put in place due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements.

Typically Walking School Buses range in size from just a few kids to a dozen, with an appropriate number of adults to provide supervision. Due to COVID-19, walking school buses should consist of **no more than 6 children and one adult**. They can be structured like a regular bus by creating one or more meeting points, a timetable, and a regular schedule of volunteers.

## START SIMPLE!

Walking School Bus programs should start simple and can always change or grow as needs arise. Start with a single neighborhood that has parents and children who are interested and live nearby. It is like a carpool, without the car! Added benefits include exercise, fresh air, and being with friends.

Are you home due to COVID-19? Consider walking your child and including a few other children from your neighborhood.

For an informal bus:

- Locate and invite nearby children to walk with you
- Pick a route and **take a test walk before school starts**
- Decide in advance how often you will walk together and **what the return trip for each student will be**
- Have fun!

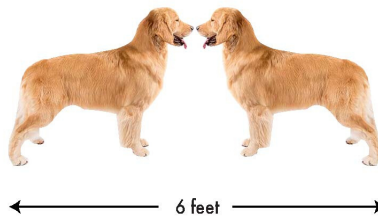
## BIKE TRAINS FOR OLDER STUDENTS

A variation on the Walking School Bus is called a Bike Train. Bike Trains may be more appropriate for families that live further from school or for older students. In a Bike Train, adult chaperones ride bicycles with children to supervise their ride on the way to or from school. The flexibility of the Walking School Bus or Bike Train make them appealing to children of all ages and communities of all sizes with varying needs.





## COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS



Due to the dangers of the highly contagious coronavirus, schools and districts must ensure that all students and walking adults adhere to social distancing requirements.

To keep students and volunteers safe, please follow these guidelines:

- All walkers **must wear a mask**
- No more than 6 children and 1 adult per Walking School Bus
- Encourage **all walkers to wear bright/reflective clothing** and during winter months, flashlights are also encouraged
- Space students out **6 feet apart** when meeting and while walking
- In order to stay safe in traffic, **walkers may be closer than 6 feet for short periods of time when crossing at crosswalks or intersections**, which is why everyone **must wear a mask**. As soon as it is possible, walkers will resume the 6 foot space

Sample Walking School Bus Schedule

Date	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Sept. 14-19	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones
Sept. 22-27	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones
Sept. 14-18	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones
Sept. 21-25	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones
Sept. 28-Oct 1	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones
Oct 3-7	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones
Oct 10-14	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Mr. Anderson P.M. Mr. Jones	A.M. Ms. Smith P.M. Mr. Jones

## WHEN PICKING A ROUTE, ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- **Do you have room to walk?**
  - Are there sidewalks or paths?
  - Do trash cans create obstacles?
- **Is it safe to cross the street?**
  - Can you see cars and can they see you?
  - Are there crosswalks?
- **Are drivers aware of pedestrians?**
  - Are you crossing in a crosswalk?
  - Are there school zone signs or flashing beacons to warn drivers?
- **Does the environment feel safe?**
  - Can you let your neighbors know more kids are walking?

For more help identifying walkable routes, visit [http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/cms/downloads/walkability\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/cms/downloads/walkability_checklist.pdf)

## REACHING MORE CHILDREN

Determine who lives within walking distance and is interested in participating.

Determine if you will operate once a week or everyday and decide on a meeting place.

Identify a group of reliable adult walkers and create a schedule.

Determine if you will walk in the morning and in afternoon so it is known how children will get home at the end of the day