

How to: organise a walking bus to school



A 'walking bus' is simply a group of parents/carers and children walking to school, picking up more children and parents/carers along the route. During the COVID-19 lockdown we experienced cleaner air and saw massive shifts to low pollution behaviours. Let's keep up the momentum and keep our air clean.

When done on a regular basis, parents/carers can take it in turns to accompany the walking bus, reducing overcrowding at the school gates and giving you the occasional break from doing the school run! Clean Air Day is a fantastic time to begin planning a walking bus when its safe to return to school!



Top tips



- Stick to the side streets - there are [websites](#) to find the quiet, less polluted routes near you.
- The bigger the bus, the more fun you will have, but make sure you have enough adults to supervise the 'passengers'.
- You can have multiple walking buses from different locations.
- Agree a time that the walking bus will leave and an approximate time for when you will be picking people up on route.
- Talk to the school about your walking bus, and let them know which children will be arriving in your walking bus.

Step by step



- 1 Decide your route. Where possible stick to the side streets, avoiding the main roads can reduce your exposure to air pollution by up to 20%.
- 2 Choose the time your walking bus will leave in order to get to school on time and work out a rough time schedule for when it will be walking past various places where you can pick up more children.

“ It was a really lovely fun walk, and great to get the Councillors and the Mayor involved ”

Islington Council



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Let everyone know what's happening:

- Use the template letter to tell parents/carers and invite them to join the bus. Advertise the route and the schedule, and let them know how to get involved.
- Get the children involved by making posters to promote the walking bus in school.
- Can you mention it in school assembly or the school newsletter?
- Use the publicity tips to encourage local media to come along



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Let the school know which children will be arriving on the walking bus and let class teachers know if they will be dropped off by someone other than their regular parent/carer.



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Remind all your participants/passengers in the days leading up to Clean Air Day. Encourage them to bring signs or banners, these will make for great photos to promote your walking bus. Remember to abide by social distancing measures.

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If your walking bus is a success, work with other parents/carers to make it a regular car-free way to get to school, helping to reduce your children's exposure to air pollution.

After the day



Let us know how it went. Fill in the Clean Air Day event feedback form with a short description of what you did, how many people came along and any photos you have taken.



Health and Safety recommendations

Carry out your own risk assessment of your walking bus and make sure you have taken all necessary actions to keep participants safe. Choose a safe route, use the [Green Cross Code](#) and consider wearing hi-vis jackets.

To get involved in Clean Air Day and learn more about how air pollution could be affecting you and your family's health, visit cleanairday.org.uk or search #CleanAirDay. Due to Covid-19, please ensure that any activities you undertake meet with your government's guidelines.