

MEDWAY'S WALKING BUS



A FUN, HEALTHY, SAFE, AND SUSTAINABLE WAY TO TRAVEL TO SCHOOL

A Walking Bus is a fun, healthy, safe, and sustainable way of travelling to school. Powered by good, old-fashioned legwork, children and volunteers walk in a group along a set route, picking up or dropping off 'passengers' at specific 'bus stops' on their journey to and from school. Everybody wears a Walking Bus hi-vis tabard so that the Walking Bus can be easily identified by drivers and giving the children a sense of belonging.



WHAT IS A WALKING BUS?

Reducing traffic at the start and end of the school day would be a considerable benefit for everyone, especially the children and their families/carers. Having less traffic in the areas will reduce harmful pollution, create a safer space for pedestrians, cyclists and scooter and wheelchair users, and it will reduce noise, creating a calmer and more people-friendly environment.

Encourage more parents and carers to leave their cars at home and to get their children to walk or cycle/scoot to school is not only better for their health, but it can also make a huge difference in taking the potential stress out of the school run.

Introducing a Walking Bus at your school would definitely be a brilliant step in the right direction.

By establishing a Walking Bus at your school, you will help deliver benefits which include:



**60
MINS
EXERCISE**



**SAVE
TIME
& MONEY**



**LESS
TRAFFIC
ON ROADS**



**LEARN
ROAD
SAFETY**

- Help contribute to the 60 minutes of recommended daily exercise for a child.
- Provide children with the opportunity to learn essential road safety skills and at the same time get additional social time with other children.
- Reduce local congestion and pollution.
- Encouraging parents/carers to be part of the process and support healthier and more sustainable ways of travel, with the added benefit of saving fuel costs.

FIND OUT MORE

- Visit brightwayz.co.uk/how-to-organise-a-walking-bus/ which provides video resources, including animation of what a Walking Bus is and how to organise.
- Visit Living Streets www.livingstreets.org.uk/walk-to-school to research other walking initiatives.
- Contact Medway Council's Transport Initiatives Team for more advice on setting up a Walking Bus: transportinitiatives@medway.gov.uk
- Visit our designated web-page www.medway.gov.uk/roadsafety to find out more on our road safety education and other active travel initiatives.



MEDWAY'S WALKING BUS

GUIDELINES

POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN SETTING UP A WALKING BUS.

Establish interest and availability of volunteers

From the outset, it is important to establish whether there is a good level of interest before initiating a Walking Bus. It is essential to determine whether there would be enough parents/carers and school staff willing to help. Without the support of volunteers, the Walking Bus would be non-operational. Carry out a simple survey of interest using our Walking Bus survey of interest form to determine; how many children would be interested in joining a Walking Bus; how many parents/carers would be committed to help run it on a regular basis.

Ratios of a Walking Bus

At least two adult supervisors are needed to operate a Walking Bus, one leading from the front (driver) and one following at the rear (conductor).

The recommended ratio of adult supervision to children is 1:8 for Juniors and 1:4 for infants. If the age range is mixed, 1:6 ratio should be used. If younger children and babies transported in a pushchair travel with the Walking Bus, remember that these need to be included in the ratios.

Appoint a Walking Bus coordinator

It's a good idea to appoint a coordinator at the start of organising a Walking Bus. Their role will be to look after the administration of the bus and liaise between the school, parents/carers, and volunteers. To help the coordinator manage the initial tasks that need to be carried out you can use our Walking Bus coordinator checklist.

Identify route(s) and carry out a risk assessment

Careful consideration should be taken when choosing a suitable route(s) for a Walking Bus. The route should be convenient to parents/carers and children that want to take part and kept to a reasonable length. It will be better to set-up fewer routes with more volunteers taking it in turns on a rota, rather than multiple routes relying on the same volunteers.

You can operate your Walking Bus by selecting a departure point where all passengers and volunteers join at the same time, before travelling to school. Alternatively, you can include 'bus stops' en route that work to a timetable. If you are introducing stops, these should be kept to a minimum as a

'waiting time' will need to be included in the journey time.

Once your route has been identified this will need to be risk assessed. Volunteers and/or the Walking Bus coordinator should 'walk the route' first to ensure they are happy before approaching Medway Council to carry out the risk assessment.

Create a timetable for your Walking Bus

Consider starting off slow, offering the Walking Bus for one or two mornings a week on days where you have most volunteers. It will be easier to expand to more days once everybody becomes familiar with the process. Walking Buses can be arranged for the journey home too, but the uptake is likely to be less due to varying afterschool commitments. This could be explored once the bus gets up and running.



When creating a timetable, establish the number of pupils that want to join the Walking Bus, then how many volunteers are required to support this on the route(s) (see ratios for a Walking Bus).

For each Walking Bus journey/day, assign a lead volunteer who will be responsible for the running of the bus. Their tasks should include keeping the register of passengers and being the main point of contact if a child cannot attend. They should ensure there are enough volunteers to run the bus journey. When the rota is created, child emergency contacts and a list of 'back-up' volunteers should be made available on the 'leads' register.

Volunteer information

All volunteers helping with the Walking Bus must be DBS checked before taking part, the school should provide support on ensuring this takes place.

It is important that volunteers take responsibility to understand the highway code and ensure these rules and recommendations are used on all Walking Bus journeys. Use our Walking Bus volunteer guide as a hand-out to support a volunteers meeting, which gives advice on road safety procedures and how the bus should run. You can also request signing of the Walking Bus volunteer terms of agreement form. This is to confirm that volunteers understand the procedures in exchange of your Walking Bus insurance cover.

Obtain tabards

All volunteers and children taking part in the Walking Bus scheme will need to wear a reflective tabard.

AGREE PROCEDURES AND OBTAIN CONSENT

Parents/carers and Pupils

It is important that the walking bus responsibilities for parents/carers and pupils are understood before taking part. These can be edited to your own needs using the available consent form.

Parents/carers will need to sign a consent form before their child can join the Walking Bus.

Volunteers

Volunteers must understand their responsibilities, ensuring they familiarise themselves with the terms of agreement in order to be eligible for the Walking Bus insurance cover policy. These should include;

- A valid DBS check.
- Always maintain the adult to child ratio.
- Confirmation that they have read and understood the Walking Bus volunteers guide provided, the Walking Bus volunteers terms of agreement form can be used to support this.

Launch

Be proud that your school has initiated a Walking Bus by creating a launch. This could be done through an assembly/newsletter or social media posts. By creating positive publicity on your Walking Bus, you are more likely to gain further volunteers to expand your bus service.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- Walking Bus survey of interest form
- Walking Bus coordinator checklist
- Walking Bus volunteer guide
- Walking Bus volunteer terms of agreement form
- Walking bus consent form





MEDWAY'S WALKING BUS



WHAT MEDWAY COUNCIL WILL DO

TO HELP SET-UP A WALKING BUS MEDWAY COUNCIL WILL SUPPORT YOU BY:

- Carrying out a risk assessment of the route(s) selected by the school to determine whether they are suitable.
- Providing access to resources that schools can use to help initiate a Walking Bus.
- Providing Walking Bus guidelines to volunteers and support the Walking Bus coordinator with any training.
- Providing high visibility tabards (subject to resource and funding) for those taking part in a Walking Bus, allowing clear visibility of the bus in motion along the selected route(s).
- Medway LEA schools who have purchased Medway Council's Insurance package will benefit by registered volunteers being covered under the employers and public liability insurance policy. Non-LEA schools and clubs will need to provide their own liability insurance for any Walking Bus volunteers.
- Supporting every Walking Bus initiative in Medway to help improve the route to school and promote sustainable transport.

For more information about setting up a Walking Bus, including arranging a route risk assessment and sourcing tabards, please contact the Transport initiatives team for advice: transportinitiatives@medway.gov.uk



MEDWAY'S WALKING BUS



Medway
COUNCIL
Serving You

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are considering setting up a Walking Bus scheme. This initiative is designed to support children's health and fitness and at the same time help ease traffic and parking congestion in the vicinity of our school.

A Walking Bus is a fun, healthy, safe, and sustainable way of travelling to school. Children will walk to school as a group, using an agreed route with at least two supervisors, one leading from the front (driver) and one following at the rear (conductor). There will be a set departure point where children will meet, with possible set 'bus stops' where others can join on their way to school.

Routes will be established along the roads most used, for those who want to join the bus and for those parents/carers willing to volunteer their time to be drivers and conductors.

This is a fun, sociable and enjoyable way for children to travel to school, however, routes can only operate with the active support of parents/carers to help run the bus.

If you are interested in your child taking part in our Walking Bus scheme and/or you would like to volunteer to help run the bus, please complete, and return the following form:

Yours Sincerely,
Head Teacher

WALKING BUS SURVEY OF INTEREST FORM

Name of child	
Class name/Year	
Name of parent/carer	
Address	
	postcode
Phone number	

SURVEY QUESTIONS

How does your child normally travel to school? Walk / Cycle / Scoot / Car / Bus / Other			
If they walk to school, what roads do they usually walk along?			
Would your child use a Walking Bus if this was organised?	No	Maybe	Yes
Would you be interested in becoming a Walking Bus volunteer?	No	Maybe	Yes
If you (or another carer) are interested in becoming a Walking Bus volunteer, would you be available to attend a meeting on:	Date/Time	Yes	No

MEDWAY'S WALKING BUS



WALKING BUS COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

A WALKING BUS COORDINATOR SHOULD BE APPOINTED AFTER YOU HAVE ESTABLISHED ENOUGH INTEREST IN RUNNING THIS INITIATIVE.

Task	Tick
Identify enough volunteers to run one or more bus routes	
Identify a suitable route(s) based on those wanting to take part (volunteers and children)	
Contact Medway Council to risk assess the route(s) proposed	
Ensure all volunteers have been DBS checked	
Hold a volunteer meeting to run through the volunteers guide (inc. road safety procedures)	
Obtain signed Walking Bus terms of agreement forms	
Ensure insurance cover is in place for the volunteers	
Acquire Walking Bus tabards for children and volunteers	
Receive confirmation that routes have been risk assessed and approved	
Devise timetable for each route and share	
Recruit passengers	
Obtain parental consent forms	
Set up register including emergency contacts	
Assign lead (driver) volunteer for the Walking Bus(s)	
Arrange a Walking Bus launch date (hold assembly and/or advertise on social media) and inform Medway Council's Sustainable Transport Team.	

After the bus has been successfully implemented, you now have the potential to:

- Recruit more volunteers and passengers.
- Increase the number of days the bus runs in the morning (if this is not already running every day).
- Establish whether there is interest in running a Walking Bus in the afternoon from school.



MEDWAY'S WALKING BUS



Medway
COUNCIL
Serving You

WALKING BUS CONSENT

Dear Parents/Carers

To allow your child to take advantage of the Medway Walking Bus scheme that our school will be running, we require you to complete the below consent form and return it to your class teacher/school office.

I agree for my child (full name)

Class

to take part in the Walking Bus scheme
at school.

Home address:

Post code:

Primary contact

Name

Relationship

Telephone number

In case of an emergency please provide contact details of two people who can be contacted in your absence.

Name

Relationship

Telephone number

Name

Relationship

Telephone number

Please provide details of any medication that your child may be taking and any medical/physical conditions that the Walking Bus co-ordinator should be made aware of?

Declaration

- I understand that my child's journey to/from school remains my responsibility even though they will be using the Walking Bus.
- I will make sure that my child is at the designated bus stop at the specified time, wearing the florescent tabard provided.
- In an emergency, I agree for consent to be given for the administration of anaesthetic and any other urgent medical treatment.
- I understand that I should contact the Walking Bus leader at least 15 minutes prior to departure if my child will not be taking part (i.e. unwell).

I have discussed with my child that they must follow the Walking Bus guidelines, including:

- Always listen carefully, crossing roads ONLY when instructed by the Walking Bus volunteers.
- Behave sensibly, as disruption to the Walking Bus will lead to expulsion.
- Always wear their fluorescent tabard along the Walking Bus route.
- Be courteous and polite to fellow Walking Bus children, volunteers, and the public.

I confirm that my child would like to take part in the Walking Bus on the following days (circle where required).

Monday AM	Tuesday AM	Wednesday AM	Thursday AM	Friday AM
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Monday PM	Tuesday PM	Wednesday PM	Thursday PM	Friday PM
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Route Name:.

Name

Signed

Date





WALKING BUS VOLUNTEER GUIDE

TABARDS

- Everybody taking part in the Walking Bus must wear a hi-vis tabard, including volunteers.

RATIO'S

- There should always be a minimum of two volunteers, one leading from the front (driver) and one following at the rear (conductor).
- If younger children and babies transported in pushchairs travel with the Walking Bus, these need to be included in the ratios.
- Recommended volunteer to child ratios should always be adhered to:

KEY STAGE 2 (junior)

1 adult to 8 children
(minimum of 2 adults at all times)

KEY STAGE 1 (Infant)

1 adult to 4 children
(minimum of 2 adults at all times)

MIXED KEY STAGE 1&2 GROUPS

1 adult to 6 children
(minimum of 2 adults at all times)

REGISTER

- Leaders (drivers) should have a register of all children and their emergency contact details*.
- Leaders should count children on and off the bus so that everyone is accounted for.

TIMETABLE

- If a child has not turned up at the agreed time, you are not expected to wait as it is your responsibility to get the Walking Bus to school on-time.
- You should not wait longer than the agreed time (usually 5 minutes) at each bus stop.
- The bus will run regardless of the weather unless this impacts the school opening.

WALKING THE ROUTE

- The driver (leader) should walk at the front of the bus and the conductor should follow at the rear.
- Children should walk in pairs unless pathways are too narrow or other pedestrians are wanting to pass.

- All routes have/or will be risk assessed by Medway Council's sustainable transport team. Volunteers should always keep to these routes unless circumstances change (for example road works). Any necessary permanent changes to a route should be risk assessed again by Medway Council.

BEHAVIOUR

- If any child misbehaves and/or causes disruption to the Walking Bus, this should be reported to the lead coordinator who will discuss the matter with the school before approaching the parents/carers.
- Frequent bad behaviour should lead to expulsion from the Walking Bus.

*Refer to your school's privacy policy

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- Volunteers should always carry a mobile phone. If there is a serious emergency en route to the school the emergency services (dial 999) should be called straight away, then the school to inform them of the incident. The register will contain any emergency contacts* needed and should be used where required.
- In the event of a minor incident such as a grazed knee, these can be dealt with on the arrival to school where medical supplies will be available.
- Please ensure that the school contact details are stored on your phone in case you need to call ahead to inform them of an incident.

ROAD SAFETY GUIDELINES

OPERATING AT CROSSING POINTS

- Crossings should be kept to a minimum. These will have been identified when carrying out the risk assessment, so keep to these where possible.
- It is the responsibility of the driver (leader) to assess the traffic and instruct children when to cross. The leader should act like a school crossing patrol but remember that you do not have the right to stop traffic. If a driver allows you to cross, check that all other road users are aware. There is always a danger of another vehicle overtaking if they are unaware of the situation.

- It is the responsibility of the conductor (rear) and any additional volunteers to ensure that the children cross over sensibly when instructed. Children should remain on the pavement, away from the edge until instructed to cross, not blocking the path.

PELICAN/PUFFIN/TOUCAN CROSSINGS

- Make sure the entire group is at the crossing before pressing the 'wait' button. The driver should walk into the middle of the crossing and instruct the children to cross when the green man is constant and not flashing. The driver should instruct the children to stop when the green man starts to flash, instructing any children yet to cross to wait. This will also help with the flow of the traffic.

ZEBRA CROSSINGS

- It is essential that the driver (lead) ensures traffic has stopped from both directions before moving into the middle of the road to conduct the children across.

CROSSING BETWEEN CARS

- Choose a place where there is enough room between two cars and make sure you can walk straight across to the other side of the road (no parked cars in the way). Ensure that the parked cars are not about to move by checking for drivers and listening out for engine noises and lights.

- Walk between the cars and stop when you are level with the outside edge of the vehicle. This will make you visible to drivers and allow you to clearly see in both directions, once you've checked the way is clear you can cross safely.

TRAFFIC ISLANDS/REFUGES

- This type of crossing should be used in two stages, with each half of the road treated as a separate crossing. You should only cross the number of children who can stand on the island at one time. You may need to do this several times to get everyone safely across.

TRAFFIC TURNING CORNERS

- Although pedestrians take priority at junctions, drivers often continue their journey without stopping. You should ensure that vehicles have stopped before moving into the road.



*Refer to your school's privacy policy

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

WHAT HAPPENS IF A VOLUNTEER IS UNABLE TO WALK THE BUS ON A PARTICULAR DAY?

- You should try and give as much notice as possible, for instance if you are beginning to feel unwell, it is better to arrange cover sooner, than drop out at the last minute. The leader should have a list of registered volunteers and contacts* and it is their responsibility to arrange a replacement or ask the Walking Bus coordinator for support. If alternative arrangements cannot be made in time to satisfy the Walking Bus ratios, the Walking Bus will need to be cancelled.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS BAD WEATHER?

- The bus should continue to walk if the school is open. If the school has an unscheduled closure i.e heavy snow, the bus will not run. It is the parent's/carers responsibility to determine whether the school bus will be operating as normal. Walking Bus leaders should have all participants contact details if they are required to advise of any cancellations.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A CHILD MISSES THE BUS?

- It is the volunteer's responsibility to get the bus to school on time, therefore volunteers won't be able to wait for any latecomers. It is the parents/carers responsibility to arrive at the designated time and they should let you know in advance if their child will not be joining.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A CHILD FORGETS TO WEAR THEIR TABARD?

- Tabards should be worn at all times and it is the parent/carers/child's responsibility to ensure this happens. It is suggested that the leader carries a spare tabard just in case someone forgets to put theirs on.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A CHILD LOSES PERSONAL BELONGINGS?

- All personal belongings are the child's responsibility, they will carry these at their own risk.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A CHILD MISBEHAVES, CAUSING DISRUPTION TO THE WALKING BUS?

- Volunteers should report this to the school/Walking Bus coordinator who will raise any concerns with the parent/carer. Continued misbehaviour will lead to expulsion.

Please refer to the schools Privacy Policy*





MEDWAY'S WALKING BUS



WALKING BUS VOLUNTEER TERMS OF AGREEMENT FORM

Please tick that you understand the guidelines below for running our school Walking Bus;

TERMS	TICK
Everyone on the Walking Bus must wear a hi-vis tabard	
There should be a minimum of two volunteers running the bus at any one time	
The bus must not exceed the recommended volunteer to child ratio's	
Leaders must have a contact list for all passengers and the Walking Bus coordinator/school office	
Leaders are responsible for counting children on and off the bus	
The bus must operate as per the timetable agreed, it is the leader's responsibility to keep to this	
In an emergency, contact 999 then the school office	
The bus will run regardless of the weather, unless the school has confirmed closure	
Volunteers must always act in a responsible and courteous manner to the public and to those taking part in the Walking Bus	
Leaders will need to share their contact details with parents so that they can be notified of any cancellations	
All volunteers MUST hold a valid DBS check	
You have walked the bus route at least once before the launch	
You have read through and understood the Walking Bus volunteer guidelines (inc. road and safety) and/or attended a Walking Bus school meeting to discuss best practice	

In exchange of [REDACTED] liability and public liability insurance cover please sign the declaration below and return to your school Walking Bus co-ordinator.

- I declare that I have understood the volunteer Walking Bus guidelines and will follow the terms of agreement outlined above and any other specified by the school.
- I confirm that I hold a valid DBS check.
- I will ensure health and safety measures are followed at all times, including the adult to child Walking Bus ratios specified in the operating guidelines.

Name		Date
Signature		
Contact details:	Mobile number	Home phone (if applicable)
Address		Postcode