

Walking School Bus Information

Definition

A *Walking School Bus* is a group of students who walk to and from school along a set route, accompanied by supervising adults. One adult is at the front of the 'bus' while the other adult supervises at the rear. The *Walking School Bus* picks up or drops off 'passengers' at designated stops on the way to and/or from school.

Background

It is recommended:

- Intended audience for this document - P&C, volunteers and principals
- The decision to implement a *Walking School Bus* is made in consultation with the school community. Careful consideration in planning is advisable before implementation.
- Implementation and management are done by the P&C, with school leadership consultation.
- Your local council's Road Safety Officer and Police Youth Liaison Officer may be able to provide support in planning / implementing a *Walking School Bus* at your school.

Responsibility

Parents and carers are responsibility for how their child travels to and from school

It is recommended:

- Implementation and management of *Walking School Bus* programs are done by the P&C/parent or volunteer group.
- The group organising the program are responsible for regularly reviewing and evaluating the *Walking School Bus* program to check for ongoing safety and risk management.
- Consultation with the school principal to review the activity to align with local school procedures.
- Schools take over responsibility and duty of care for the student once they enter the school premises.

Making a decision

- After examining all considerations and additional specific factors it is recommended the organiser check for ongoing safety and risk management as evidence to support the decision to proceed with the *Walking School Bus* initiative.
- Communicate all decisions with the school Principal.
- Contact your [Road Safety Education Officer](#), [local council](#) and/or the [Parents and Community Association](#) for further assistance.
- Review [safe travel advice](#) for walking and Transport for NSW's [Safety Town](#) for advice for families.

Considerations to be made by the organisers

Organisers are to consider the unique aspects of each *Walking School Bus* and tailor their strategies according to their local contexts. These considerations are a guide and not designed to be used as a definitive checklist.

Planning

Volunteers and supervisors:

- have a *Working with Children Checks for Volunteers*
- are given access to training and resources to support them in the role
- are provided with:
 - a) knowledge of safe road user behaviours and management practices
 - b) expectations of the role
 - c) routes/timetables and safety procedures.

Management of permission and attendance

Parental permission notes of are:

- received for all students who travel on the Walking School Bus
- stored and shared with the school, so students can be released to the volunteers of the program after school.

Procedures developed for:

- management of attendance lists and absent/late students and new students.
- when absences/late/unavailability of bus 'drivers' and supervisors
- management of behaviour issues of bus 'passengers' in the traffic environment
- volunteer to student ratio clearly defined
- age of students are considered so an adult can hold a child's hand if under 8 years of age
- wet weather, changes in routine, emergency and clearly communicated

For Privacy issues, P&C are to maintain all documentation

Route

- Risk assessment of the route to be developed by organising group
- Route, distance, time, direction and crossing locations communicated to school and school community
- Routes are regularly reviewed to evaluate safety
- Hazards communicated to volunteers and students.

Some possible strategies to assist volunteers

- Carry communication devices and first aid kit, carry mobile phones, or walkie talkies if mobile reception is poor
- Be given a direct contact for parents/the school to call
- What to do in the event of an emergency
- School bus 'drivers' wear high visibility vests
- Clear communication channels developed around routes/timetables and procedures. These are readily accessible to the whole school community
- Key pedestrian safety messages are provided to and reinforced by parents/carers, students, staff and the cycling school bus drivers and supervisors.

Add any other considerations you will need to discuss with your parent community