



## Volunteer Guidelines \*

Three types of adult helpers are needed to support your Walking Bus:

- Co-ordinators
- Drivers
- Conductors

### Co-ordinators

The School Co-ordinator is responsible for the overall running of the school's Walking Bus. Developments might include new routes, increasing the number of children, and incentives. The following is a suggested list of tasks a Walking Bus School Co-ordinator would normally be expected to undertake as part of his/her role.

### Specific duties

- a. Keeping up to date registers with names, contact numbers, and other relevant details, copies of which will be held at the school.
- b. Assisting the school in keeping up to date records of Walking Bus volunteers, including dates/reference numbers of CRB checks.
- c. Being the first point of contact for all enquiries, including any emergencies and decisions that need to be made in extreme circumstances, i.e. bad weather.
- d. To communicate with Travelchoice (01733 317411) when necessary and to arrange termly reviews of the walking bus.
- e. To report any accidents and/or changes to risk assessments to both the school and Travelchoice.
- f. To regularly promote the Walking Bus to children, parents and Governors of the school.
- g. To arrange, when necessary, meetings for the Walking Bus volunteers to discuss areas of concern.
- h. Ensure that there are at least two adult helpers to each Bus and minimum ratio of 1:8 for infants and 1:4 for juniors. The ratio will be adjusted accordingly.
- i. To be responsible for all administration arising from the above.
- j. To keep the head teacher informed of Walking Bus developments.
- k. Should a Walking Bus become too large (20+ children), the group will split into smaller buses.
- l. In cases where a number of helpers are available, the co-ordinator is responsible for devising a rota.
- m. It will also be the responsibility of the co-ordinator to train any new helpers after the initial training from the local authority.

### Drivers

Drivers are volunteers who lead the Walking Bus. The driver should remain at the front of the bus at all times, setting good road-user behaviour standards, directing the children and checking for hazards.



#### Points to watch out for are:

- Follow the set route at all times
- Be particularly aware of driveways
- Cross at the places shown on your route, these will have been checked for safety.
- Cross the children in small groups rather than in pairs. Regroup pairs at the other side

#### Conductors

The conductor must walk at the back of the bus. As the driver is primarily concerned with the route and checking for hazards, the conductor must be aware of the children's behaviour, and ensure that directions and instructions are carried out.

#### Points to watch out for are:

- Keep children away from the kerb
- Make sure children walk at a steady pace
- Relay unheard messages from the driver
- Make sure children give other pedestrians plenty of room to pass

#### All Volunteers

The enthusiasm of volunteers is essential to the efficient running of a Walking Bus.

Volunteers should:

- Involve the children in learning road safety skills
- Ensure that volunteers and participants wear tabards at all times
- Stay on the set route. Any changes to the route must be brought to the attention of first, the co-ordinator, who will pass this on to the local authority.
- Bad behaviour should be reported to the co-ordinator or head teacher.
- The Walking Bus runs on a strict timetable and will not wait for latecomers. It is suggested that only a short time should be spent waiting, if this happens frequently children may be late for school.
- If the Walking Bus operate in the afternoon and a child has no-one waiting for him/her you should continue to the end of the route as waiting for one parent may cause anxiety for the other parents.

#### Operating the Walking Bus

- a. High visibility clothing must be worn by all volunteers and children on the walking bus.
- b. The bus must keep to the set route.
- c. There must be a minimum of two adults on each bus. The ratio of adults to juniors is 1:8 and infants is 1:4; extra adults will assist at points along the bus.
- d. The driver should lead the group and the conductor following at the rear so that children can be seen and kept in order at all times.



- e. If unforeseen problems arise on the route these must be reported to the organiser so that appropriate action can be taken. If there are any persistent problems the route will need to be re-assessed by the School Travel Plan Co-ordinator as soon as possible.
  - f. When crossing roads you may find it quicker/safer to get the group to cross in a bunch e.g. 3 rows of 4 abreast rather than in a long line. After crossing, the group can reform.
  - g. If any driver stops for you to allow the group to cross make sure other traffic is aware of what is happening and has also stopped before stepping into the road. There is always the danger of other drivers overtaking the stationary vehicle.
  - h. Take care not to have prams/trolleys positioned over the kerb when waiting to cross.
  - i. Be particularly careful near driveways and other possible blind spots.
  - j. Children should not walk on the road edges and should walk in pairs.
  - k. Children under seven should hold hands.
  - l. In bad weather drivers will take longer to stop and both drivers and bus members may not be so visible. If it is very foggy follow the Highway Code's advice i.e. drivers to carry a white torch and the conductor at the rear to hold a red torch (the torch pointing to the rear).
  - m. If using a pram/pushchair, make sure the child is strapped in. If you have other young children with you hold them on reins or get them to hold onto the top part of the handle.
  - n. Be particularly careful near driveways and other possible blind spots as drivers may see you but not small children.
  - o. Children should walk in pairs. Always allow room for other pedestrians to pass. On shared use paths/cycle-ways exercise caution.
  - p. Older children may help with the trolley but should be supervised and helped where there may be difficulty i.e. going up/down kerbs.
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- This information is intended as a guide only, schools can adapt where necessary to suit their individual needs.

