

Schemes which the school could organise

The Walking Bus

The 'Walking Bus' is the perfect alternative to the school run in the car, the idea has been developed by the experts from the Pedestrians Association and is a perfect fit with the government's aim to reduce road traffic congestion and provide safe walking routes.

A 'Walking Bus' lets a group, or 'bus', of children walk from home to school each morning quickly and safely under the guidance of trained adult supervisors. Each Walking Bus is an organised walking group led by an adult 'driver' and 'conductor'. It has a timetable, a fixed route and 'bus stops'. Each 'passenger' wears a high visibility waistcoat and has to bring a permission slip and complete a pupil promise.

The potential benefits of leaving the car at home, especially for short journeys (up to 2 miles), would be felt in terms of improved health, cleaner environment, reduced travel costs and increased 'road awareness' for children. A walking bus is one way to encourage short journeys to schools to be made on foot.

Walking Buses have to be set up and organised by the school, and parents and your council will provide support. This support includes advice on routes, basic training for the adults and the loan of high visibility waistcoats. Get in touch with your local School Travel Plan Co-ordinator and they will be able to advise on the best way to get a Walking Bus started.

Park & Stride

Many families live too far away from school to be able to walk and some parents have to drive on to work and so need to take the car. Even the most regular walkers sometimes might need to take the car, especially after school if you going on to do something in a different place. The Park & Stride scheme is a simple solution to these problems and means that children at least walk some of the way to and from school.

Parents are encouraged to park a good distance away from the school and walk the last five or ten minutes. They may be able to park in a pub or supermarket car park with the agreement of the owners, or just in a quiet street.

To encourage parents to Park & Stride you can promote this as a proper scheme. A letter to parents is a start but it needs more than that. One of the best ways to get a message to parents is via the children if you can get the children enthusiastic about it. An assembly about Park & Stride (maybe as part of a general walk to school assembly), a poster competition and class charts of the number of children who Park & Stride or walk to school should

get them motivated. Children from participating families can earn stickers or badges as rewards.

Getting the local press involved will get people even more interested and you never know, other schools in your area might decide to copy your good example.

WOW - Walk Once a Week...

The scheme was developed as a way of enabling schools and local authorities to promote walking to school on a regular basis throughout the entire school year.

'WOW' is a simple and flexible scheme which can greatly reduce the number of children who are driven to school regularly and increase the amount of physical activity children take in their every day lives. The scheme asks schools to pledge to be a 'WOW School'. A 'WOW School' is one that agrees to promote walking to and from school as the preferred travel choice on a regular basis.

The great thing about 'WOW' is its flexibility. A school can decide how they want to run their program from a range of different options.

WOW: Walk on Wednesday...

This scheme, will promote walking to school to parents and pupils on Wednesdays. The most effective schemes encourage parents and pupils to walk to and from school every Wednesday in every week of the school year. The school can provide incentives if they want to.

WOW: Whenever possible...

It is possible that some schools may find it difficult to promote walking to and from school every Wednesday. In response, the scheme can be adapted to suit an individual school's needs with the regularity of the promotion changing. A school may for instance, decide to promote walking to and from school one Wednesday every term, every month or every fortnight. Where this is the case, the reward system should vary too. For example, pupils could receive badges at the end of every term or school year.

Promoting 'WOW' 'Whenever Possible' means that schools will not achieve such of a significant increase in the number of pupils walking to school as regularly. It is recommended that 'WOW: Whenever Possible' should be used as a starting point to promoting walking to and from school every Wednesday of the school year.

If you are considering putting a walking bus or other organised walking event together for International Walk to School Week, please ensure that you contact your local School Travel Co-ordinator) who can advise on how to operate your event safely.