



*'Seeing You Go Safely'*

# How to Get More Kids Walking to School



## Ideas for Primary School Parents and Teachers



**Tel: 01536 526461**  
**[www.brightkidz.co.uk](http://www.brightkidz.co.uk)**

# When We Were Kids...



**...nearly all of us walked to school every day. We would chat to our friends on the way and arrive fit, refreshed and ready to start the school day. Congestion from school run traffic was not a big issue and the school gates were not seen as danger zones.**

Nowadays many children are driven to school every day. Lifestyles have changed; walking to school does not always fit in with our busy schedules. Not all children go to the nearest school. Increased traffic makes us cautious of letting even our older children walk alone.

We all want the best for our children; we want them to have friends, to be healthy, happy, confident, independent and to live in a safe, clean environment. Regularly walking

to school helps but it's easier said than done when it means breaking habits.

Whether you are a parent or teacher, this guide offers some ideas to help you and others get the Walk to School habit.

*Alison*

**Alison Holland**  
Founder, BrightKidz



## Park & Stride



Parents who have to drive to school can park well away from the school gates. Some schools arrange with a local pub or supermarket for parents to use the car park. Alternatively parents could park in a quiet side street and walk ten minutes - much better than getting to school an hour early in the afternoon to grab your spot outside the school gates!



## Walking Bus



This is when children walk to school in an organised group wearing high visibility clothing. It's much more fun than being driven and walkers are really visible to traffic...so others want to join the gang! It also means children are less likely to be late for school. There are different types - choose the one that suits you best and contact your local authority to see what support they can give. Try linking your Walking Bus to a Park & Stride scheme.



## Informal Walking Bus

All children walk with their own parents in a large group. You just need to agree a meeting point, leaving time (stick to it!) and a few basic rules for the children. As parents are responsible for their own children, no paperwork is required.

It's quick and easy to organise, fun and creates a strong, visible walking culture that will encourage other people to leave the car at home and join you the walkers next instead. Make sure everyone knows that any parent can join and that it's not just a group of friends.

## Formal Walking Bus

Participating children are collected from designated 'bus stops' and are accompanied to school in a group by registered volunteers (usually parents). Insurance may be provided by your local authority.

A formal Walking Bus makes life easier for busy parents if their children can join without them, especially if they need to get to work early - or just want a morning off the school run. In some areas, formal Walking Buses have helped to reduce truancy levels and improve punctuality.

It takes a bit of effort to start a formal Walking Bus and to fulfil the insurance requirements (volunteer registration, training and CRB checks, route risk assessment by local authority, registering children and drawing up rotas). If you start an informal Walking Bus first it makes it easier to get volunteers for a formal Walking Bus. Once it's set up properly it's quite easy to maintain if you keep the rotas regular and promote it annually. See Resources for further information.

## Junior Conductor



Older children, age 8+ join the Walking Bus as helpers. They may get special training and a badge or certificate. If they join without their own parents they still need to be registered and do not replace the adult volunteers.

## Walking Taxi

A smaller version of the Walking Bus which may be the most practical solution for the walk home.



# Walk To School Events

National walk-to-school events are a good way of getting people started with walking to school, or re-motivating those who have lapsed. Your local authority may provide you with stickers and information on the National and International Walk to School weeks organised by Living Streets.

Road safety charity Brake organises an annual Record Breaking Walking Bus event in which UK schools can participate in their own neighbourhood. A good excuse to get something in the local press about your school's efforts to promote walking to school!

Occasional special events can help increase participation. Why not invite Santa in December?

## Footsteps

Those who walk to school are rewarded with small stickers either regularly or occasionally. These can be collected and added to a 'Walking Passport' or used to make a trail across school bags.



## Golden Shoe

Each class records how many children walk each day with a tick chart on a wallchart. The Golden Shoe trophy is awarded each month or term to the class with the most walkers or greatest increase in walkers.



## Walk 500 Miles

How long will it take for your class to walk 500 miles? Work out the distance each child walks to and from school, ask them to record each time they walk and add up class totals. A great maths project! Show the whole school's total on a map and see which countries you reach – great for geography lessons.



## WOW Days

WOW stands for Walk On Wednesday or Walk Once a Week and is a great way to encourage parents and children to make the effort to walk to and from school at least once a week and break the drive to school habit. WOW stickers, badges and certificates may be available from your local authority School Travel Advisor; or contact Living Streets (see Resources) who helped pioneer the scheme.

# Be Bright

'High vis' is not just for the Walking Bus and does not have to be a yellow jacket! Fluorescent, reflective clothing or accessories can make all children more visible to traffic and safer on the way to and from school all year round. The sun's ultraviolet waves make fluorescent colours 'glow' in daylight and particularly at dusk when light is fading (when children are heading home from school). The reflective strips work after dark when they reflect light back to its source (eg car headlights), which is important for children returning from after-school clubs in winter.

Parents may be more willing to let older children walk to and from school if they wear or carry a high visibility item. Ask the children to vote for or choose favourite styles and colours. Include high vis as part of the school uniform or sell high vis products through the school. Visit [www.brightkidz.co.uk](http://www.brightkidz.co.uk) for high vis clothing and accessories and register your school for discounts.



## Homeward Bound

The journey home is just as important so make sure you also have schemes to encourage walking home. Schemes such as Park and Stride or WalkingTaxis may be most suitable.

## Support from Businesses

Local businesses may be interested in supporting your scheme. Many large companies and co-operatives have budgets set aside for community projects.

## Promote It!

Let people know about your schemes, not just through school assemblies and letters home but also by using the local press. If your scheme gets in the local paper you are helping your own school and inspiring other schools.

## Saying 'Thanks'

The children could design a 'thank you' card or framed montage of pictures to present to any supporters of your schemes.



## For Teachers

The ideas we have given can be used in your School Travel Plan - a way of setting out the things you want to do to increase walking and cycling to school. Some schools may be able to receive capital funding if they develop a School Travel Plan which includes a survey and is approved by the local authority.

There are plenty of ways that you can make use of walk to school schemes and integrate them into the curriculum and school assemblies. A strong walk to school culture can help to gain Healthy Schools standards, sustainable schools awards and Eco school status. OFSTED inspectors look favourably on schools that can show they are making an effort to promote walking.

If messages about walking and safe parking are channelled by the school through the children to their parents they are more likely to get heard. By giving any keen parents or colleagues your full support you are all more likely to succeed.

## Further Information

**[www.brightkidz.co.uk](http://www.brightkidz.co.uk) for more information on the schemes covered here, high visibility clothing and walk to school promotional products.  
Tel 01536 526461**

**Also contact your local authority School Travel Advisor or Road Safety team for advice.**

[www.walktoschool.org.uk](http://www.walktoschool.org.uk) for information on national and international Walk.To School weeks and WOW resources.  
Tel: 020 7820 1010

[www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk) for lots more walk to school ideas from Sustrans. Sign up for their newsletter Routes 2 Action.  
Tel: 0117 915 0100

[www.larsoa.org.uk](http://www.larsoa.org.uk) has an on-line weekly newsletter which features walk to school schemes and road safety news.

[www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk) for information on the record-breaking Walking Bus event.  
Tel 01484 559909

[www.eco-schools.org.uk](http://www.eco-schools.org.uk) how to make your school 'greener'.

[www.lhsp.org](http://www.lhsp.org) to find your local contact for the Healthy Schools programme.





## 'Seeing You Go Safely'

- **Keep your child SAFE** with our high visibility clothing and accessories
- **Get your children ACTIVE** and **HEALTHY** with our incentives and ideas for walking and cycling



- **Visit our website or phone for a catalogue**
- **Discounts for schools**
- **Custom printing available**



This leaflet was written and published by BrightKidz, a social enterprise promoting walking to school. All high visibility clothing, accessories and incentives featured are available to purchase from BrightKidz.

PDF version of leaflet at [www.brightkidz.co.uk](http://www.brightkidz.co.uk)

The information in this leaflet is intended to be a guide on promoting walking to school and does not constitute road safety advice.

We would like to thank all those who have supported us, including the children of Park Junior School, Kettering and Geddington Primary School, Northamptonshire.

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