



WALKING SCHOOL BUS VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Thank you for expressing an interest in undertaking voluntary work with the Walking School Bus at McKinley Elementary School. The Walking School Bus has the potential to improve our school by providing safe and secure opportunities for children to walk between home and school; however we cannot do this without adult volunteer leaders.

This information should be read in conjunction with the general Walking School Bus Information Sheet.

Benefits of being a Walking School Bus Volunteer

- The opportunity to help reduce traffic congestion and improve safety around the school
- Involvement in the school and the community
- Increased personal fitness
- The opportunity to assist children to become physically active and to gain greater independence
- The opportunity to meet other parents
- A safer and cleaner neighborhoods
- A reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- Time saved by not always having to accompany your child to school
- Money potentially saved on before school care and fuel costs
- A fun start to the day!

Volunteer Requirements

- Volunteers must be aged 21 or over.
- Must be prepared to supervise up to six children.
- Volunteers are required to participate in a short introduction session conducted by an experienced volunteer or WSB representative. The introduction will be based on this Volunteer Information and cover the agreed WSB route, duties and responsibilities of a volunteer, safety issues and emergency procedures. This may be done in person, over the phone or computer based as available.
- Each volunteer must complete an application for a background check.

Liability Issues

Please read attached sheet regarding liability.

- Each WSB must follow the agreed and advertised route.
- Each volunteer must read the general Walking School Bus Information and Volunteer Information sheets, and read and sign the Volunteer Agreement before they can commence leading a Walking School Bus.
- Each WSB must have the appropriate number of volunteers for the number of children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend one adult for every six children. If children are age 10 or older, fewer adults may be needed. If children are ages 4 to 6, one adult per three children is recommended.
- All volunteers must have completed a background check.

If an incident does occur, it must be reported to Sarah Lerand, 414-841-3576 within 24 hours.

Procedures

- Wear your fluorescent vest throughout the walk.
- Greet children as they arrive. Once a child has joined the group, they must stay with the group.
- Know whom you are expecting on your walk. This might mean carrying a list, or staying in touch with parents via texting, phone call and/or email.
- Start walking.
- If a child does not turn up, It is not your responsibility to wait for them.
- Walk along the specified route, picking up children. Ensure the group stays together along the route.
- If something happened (such as a skinned knee) take the child to the school office.
- If other children want to join, they must fill in a **Student Consent Form**. The completed form should be kept on file, and the child's name written added to your roll. Ensure that all volunteers have the child's family contact details and that the child's parents have contact numbers for all volunteers.
- If it rains, the volunteers may **cancel the walk**. Use the telephone tree to do this via text message or other preferred contact.
- If you **cannot walk** on your designated day, organise for another volunteer to take your place.
- If the **route** is not suitable, it can be **changed**. Discuss the proposed new route with other volunteers and parents, then notify all participants of any changes.
- **Once the route has been established, the volunteers and participants run the WSB themselves.**

Road Safety

"Three Golden Rules:"

- * Walk (Don't Run)
- * Stay on the Sidewalk
- * Walk Sensibly (No Horsing Around)

When crossing a road:

- **Group cohesion** is essential at all times. Once children have joined the group, they must stay with the group.
- **Travel pace** must match the slowest person in the group.
- That the group should **not become separated** as a result of negotiating road crossings or intersections.
- **Wait** one step back from the curb while waiting to cross.
- Routes will use a **marked pedestrian or school crossing** wherever one is available.
- Where there is no marked crossing, routes will cross at locations **where drivers can see pedestrians**.
- **Stop, look (right - left – right), listen and think.**
- **Watch** until there is no traffic or traffic that has stopped.
- **Walk** quickly across the road, looking and listening for traffic both right and left.
- **Talk** with the children about road safety, and allow them to assist in making choices.

Strategies to Increase Safety

- Teach children to scan the road. Remind them to physically turn the head from side to side to compensate for their reduced peripheral vision.
- Explain to children why you are making a decision to cross or not to cross a road. This helps children to understand the decision-making process.
- Activities such as counting the time vehicles take to travel from sighting to crossover point.
- Compare this time with the time it takes a group of children to cross the road (with time to spare).
- Any activity that can assist children in learning to judge distance, speed and the length of time needed to cross the road is beneficial.
- Explain to children that when they hear a traffic sound they should begin scanning until they have identified the source and whether the vehicle could be a threat to their safety.
- Advise children that they must have a clear view of the road in all directions.
- Discuss the risk of stepping of into the roadway from behind a parked vehicle or bush.
- Assist children's concentration by asking questions that cause the child to focus on a potential or actual hazard.
- Reinforce the need for children to approach path ends and carriageway boundaries cautiously and STOP, LOOK (right-left-right), LISTEN and THINK.
- Encourage children to cross all roads at a brisk pace, never running.
- Be aware of the influence that other children have on behaviour of the individual.

What to do if... ?

If there is a major incident, go to the nearest house and phone 911 for assistance or use your mobile to call 112.

A child joins in the WSB without a Student Consent Form on file or walks only occasionally.

Enter the child in the 'incident' report, and assume responsibility for the child that day.

A volunteer is unable to meet her or his scheduled commitment.

The volunteer contacts another volunteer and organises for that person to replace them.

Only one volunteer arrives to walk with the children.

If only one volunteer turns up to walk with the children, that volunteer may walk with the children if they feel it is safe and are comfortable to assume responsibility.

The weather conditions deteriorate.

In the morning, the WSB may be suspended if all participants can be contacted. The participants should organise a phone tree in order to contact each other in this event.

Conditions on the walking route become unsafe.

If you encounter unexpected conditions on your WSB route that impact on safety (eg construction work or other activity blocking your route), endeavour to find a suitable detour. If the changed conditions are likely to continue, discuss with other volunteers whether the route should be changed temporarily.

A child misbehaves.

If a child misbehaves, the volunteer is encouraged to speak to the child's parents, teacher and school principal. If the child's behaviour does not improve, they can be formally asked to cease walking with the WSB.

A child or volunteer is unable to complete the trip because of sickness or injury not considered serious enough to require an ambulance.

The person is taken to a nearby "safe house" or is stayed with until transport can be arranged to home or to a medical centre.

A child with additional needs joins the WSB.

Please talk to other volunteers to discuss any necessary procedure changes. Procedures that could be considered are:

- Allowing more time for the WSB to get to school
- A modified ratio of 1:6 adults to children or less
- Holding hands if appropriate