

Hop on Board

Together we make a difference



Walking Bus benefits: Parent Guide



Registered charity 1105834

Share the task of taking your children to school



Busy parents can share the job of transporting children to school by using the walking bus.

The scheme works with parents taking it in turns to escort a column of children along a set route to school. Joining in could almost free you from the school run and result in a trusted adult walking children to school on your behalf most of the week.

Walking buses are the cool way to walk to school. Children and adults walk in a column wearing 'walk to school is cool' hi vis tabards along an approved route and stopping at set points to collect additional passengers. Just like a real bus it even has a 'driver', 'conductor' and an option to 'park & stride', which means driving to the start of the walking bus route and walking to school from the meeting point.

A key factor for parents is the time-saving. Parents are spared the task of transporting their child to school most mornings in the week. The trade off is that once a week they take a turn escorting the column. Remember, a walking bus is a co-operative scheme where everyone shares the load, taking it in turns to walk on the bus and lead the children. All routes are KCC approved and all adults involved in the bus are CRB checked.

There are some great benefits in being involved which you can read in this special pack.

To apply to join the walking bus at your school or to register your interest and encourage the school to set up a scheme visit www.kmwalktoschool.co.uk

If you want to play a leading role in setting up a walking bus at your school request the briefing pack **First Steps** from our website.



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Be a record breaker!

There are many great reasons to join the walking bus - these include exercise and camaraderie for the children and adults involved.

Two key factors making children and families enjoy are the annual record attempt to cut the most car journeys from local roads and our road safety skill tests.

Roads safety skills – children on the walking bus can take bronze, silver and gold road safety skill tests and when they pass receive a certificate and special textile badge that can be proudly worn on their hi vis tabard.

Older children passing the On The Street Assessment receive a special Blue CREW tabard and support the adults in operating the scheme.

Be a record breaker – walking bus families will help our children's charity to remove more than 200,000 school run car journeys from Kent and Medway roads this year. With your help we could smash the record!

How do we know this? Every week a key walking bus volunteer on each bus adds their 'register' details of walk to school numbers into our database. This information is added to that provided by schools using our popular Walk on Wednesday and Active Bug schemes to provide our grand total. Join us and be a record breaker!

Find out more at www.kmwalktoschool.co.uk



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Making the walk to school a treat

The KM Charity Team encourages schools and families using the walking bus to regularly praise and reward participating children.

We help support your scheme by providing stickers and treats.



Just rewards - Three times each year every child on a walking bus in Kent and Medway receive a treat to reward them for using the walking bus. This could be special badges, stackable pencil erasers or even free entry tickets to Leeds Castle.

Some walking bus parents hold fundraising events or have a table at the school's Christmas Fair or Summer Fete to raise funds to purchase additional treats for their school's walking bus children. The KM Charity Team can provide items that can be sold on your table to help this.

We recommend schools award merit marks to children using the walking bus and to present their end of term walking bus certificates in assembly to help raise the profile of the scheme.

Stickers – Children on the walking bus receive a sticker card each term and are awarded with a special certificate once the card is complete. Key parents on the bus are provided with rolls of instant reward stickers to award to children for good behaviour.

Find out more at www.kmwalktoschool.co.uk



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What a great way to make friends

Walking buses are a great place to make new friends and to help we have teamed up with Build-a-Bear Workshop to add to the fun.



Escort teddy to school – Build-a-Bear Workshop will provide official Kent and Medway Walking Buses with a free teddy mascot that children on the scheme can take turns to escort on the scheme.

The children on the scheme will be invited down to your local Build-a-Bear Workshop to create the special friend and our charity will provide a hand-made hi vis tabard for teddy so it is appropriately dressed to join you on the walking bus.

Many buses use their teddy mascot as a tool to encourage the children to write walk to school diaries to develop their literacy skills. We like to see photos of the locations your walk to school teddy visits whether on the route to school or special trips or excursions – you can upload these at www.kmwalktoschool.co.uk

Find out more at www.kmwalktoschool.co.uk



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Recognising star qualities

The KM Walk to School charity provides a range of events to reward the best walking buses and to highlight top tips to operate schemes.



Free events – Buster's Big Bash is a double record attempt staged each May to create the biggest walk to school 'crocodile' and Kent's largest teddy bear's picnic. Children attending receive a goodie bag provided their free tickets were booked online in advance. You have an open invitation to attend this walk to school mini festival!

Nature trails – KM Charity Team stage a range of pond-dipping and mini beast events for walking bus children. Numbers able to attend are restricted so keep an eye on our website or for special mailings to alert you when these are open for bookings.

Annual awards – the Kent Green Travel Awards seeks out and promotes examples of the very best walking bus schemes in our county. Your scheme could win an award so make sure you nominate your scheme.

Find out more at www.kmwalktoschool.co.uk



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