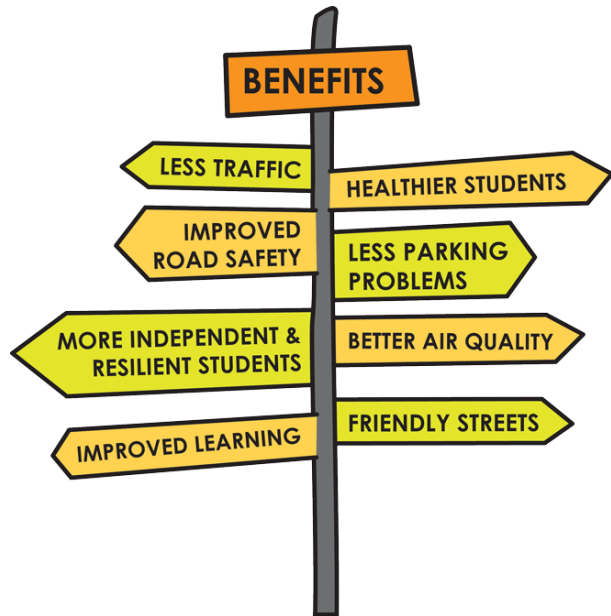


Walking School Bus

The Walking School Bus is a fun way for local children to walk to school together regularly - thanks to adult volunteers, usually parents, who take turns to walk with the group.

It's great for social time, exercise, community connections, road safety awareness and perfect for busy parents that struggle to find the time to walk every day.

Successful Walking School Bus initiatives are usually led by parents, rather than school staff.



Who can be a volunteer?

The bus is accompanied by at least two adult volunteers. A volunteer might be a parent, grandparent, aunty, uncle or a community member interested in helping children get to school.

Who can join the bus?

All children can join; collection points are identified by volunteers and may be your front gate or an agreed location.



Get started

Identify parent interest

- Start by discussing the idea with parents living within a kilometre or so, from the school
- Send the parent survey home with a note or email
- Invite interested people to meet up



and chat about what they would like to see happen and map out their addresses

- Watch our 'how to' video [featuring the Kyilla Primary Walking School Bus](#)

Have a go

- Identify a route and volunteers – four or more is a good start.
- Start small and keep it manageable. Try out the Walking School Bus one day a week.

Key points to note

- Have at least two adult volunteers and no more than 10 children per adult for maximum road crossing safety.
- Volunteers should be capable of exercising sufficient control of each child in the group.

Speak to your Champion:

Tailor the Walking School Bus to meet your school's needs. Check out the parent pledge and adapt as needed. Suggested points for volunteers to discuss, agree and act on:

Walking School Bus Operation

Action in the event of:

- Bus, volunteer and child attendance cancellations
- Weather conditions (suspend bus if a road weather alert is issued)
- Child sickness during trip

Consider

- Using SMS groups and have a stand by volunteer rostered.
- Dogs, bikes, roller blades and scooters are often preferred not to be on the bus. Some groups include strollers.

Administration

- Will you use a parent pledge? Require parent consent forms? Will the school manage a register?
- Creating a volunteer roster
- Creating maps/routes and times

Keep it fun, safe & easy

Teaching Street Wise behaviour

Involves:

- Demonstrating STOP, LOOK behind-right-left-right, LISTEN, THINK before crossing the road
- Counting the time vehicles take to travel from sighting to crossover point, and comparing it to the time taken to cross the road.
- Hearing a traffic sound, scanning and identifying the source, deciding if it is safe to cross the road.
- Scanning the road in all directions to ensure a clear view.
- Staying one metre back from the kerb at all times.

Rewards for sharing with the network

By sharing your progress with the Your Move network you earn Points which can be spent on rewards, such as a raffle prize pack for assembly promotion, high visibility vests, volunteer coffee vouchers, event day breakfast contributions or certificates for new participants. It is as easy as posting some photos, ideas or a paragraph about the Term's bus trips.



Fun activities

Once you're on a roll you may want to try something special occasionally. Like a Sensory Journey to School, a road safety activity, or a NaturePlay activity as listed on our activities page, or dress up on special occasions such as Halloween, Christmas or Valentine's Day.

Grow

The key is to recruit and retain volunteers, check out our Volunteer Power guide, always recognise volunteer contributions and invite more families to join as you go.

- Keep talking about the benefits of the bus, identify key parents to speak with.
- Remind school administration of the benefits the bus offers and the value of recognising volunteer participation in newsletters and events each term.
- Maintain a Walking School Bus noticeboard in the school office with contact details and photos.
- As interest grows you can create new routes and increase the number of days the bus operates.

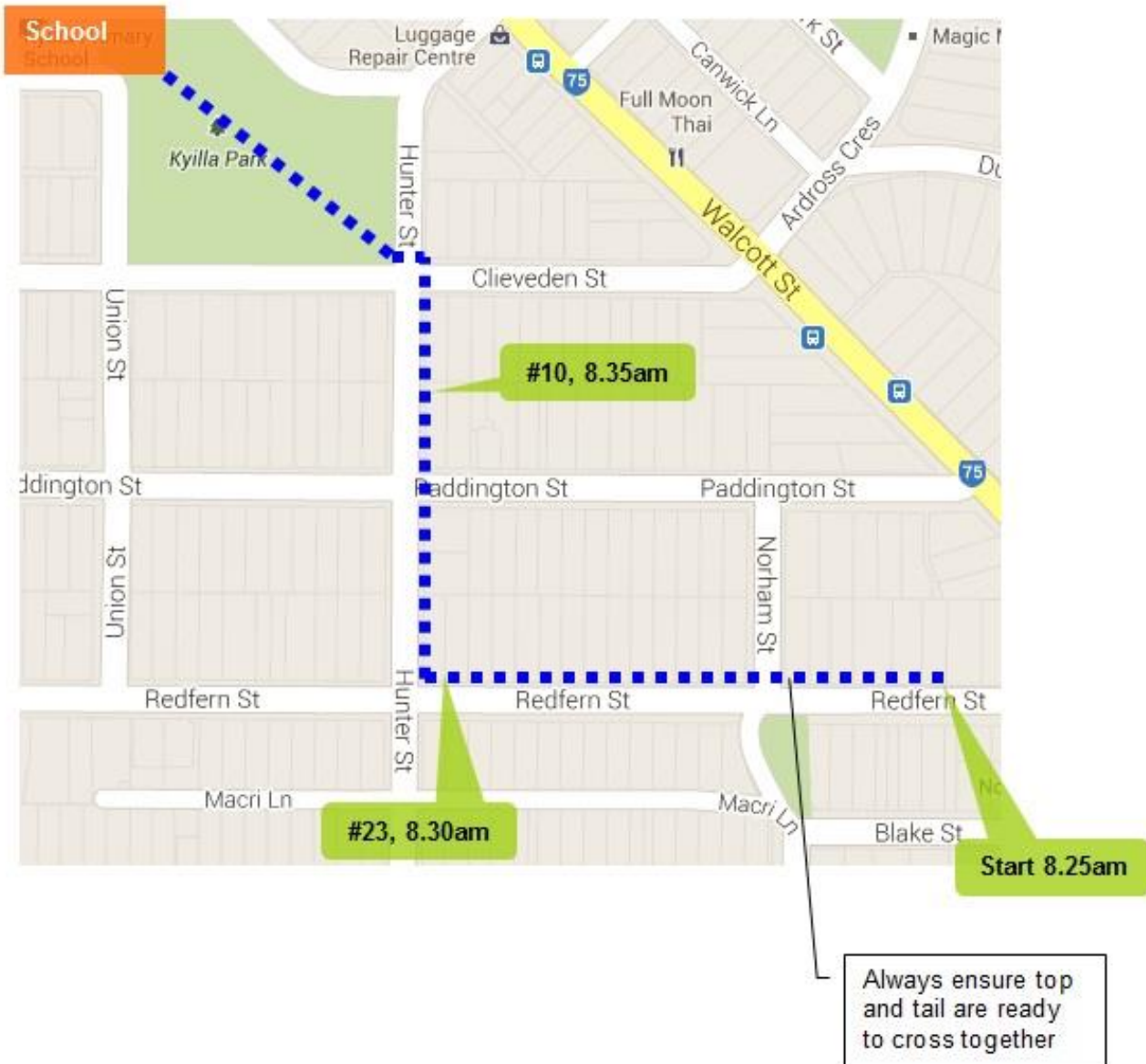
- A special event day can be a great way to highlight your Walking School Bus routes. For example, Walk Safely to School Day in May, World Environment Day in June or Walk to School Day in October.
- Name your bus to increase family's sense of ownership and connection. You could run a student competition for bus name and/or mascot ideas.

Attracting more volunteers

- School newsletter & noticeboard
- School social media pages
- Assembly celebration of volunteers and new participants
- Posters
- Send route maps home to parents
- Contact the local newspaper
- Place an expression of interest register at reception
- Include Walking School Bus information in the school's new families pack
- Place route maps on the school website & noticeboard
- Host casual get togethers for volunteers and those curious to know more
- Knock on the doors of other families on your route
- Speak to kindy and pre-primary parents at their start of year orientation day

Volunteer road safety tips

- The recommended maximum group ratio is no more than 10 children per adult.
- Volunteers should comply with the Road Traffic Code pedestrian regulations and we recommend they wear high visibility vests - available through Your Move rewards.
- You are not expected to act as a traffic warden. It's best not to attempt to stop traffic in order to commence crossing a road.
- It is advisable not to commence a crossing if the group size, road width or traffic speed will provide less than a 5 second margin of safety between the last person off the road and the vehicle arriving at the crossover point.
- Where possible cross roads within the 40 km/h school zones.
- Teach children to scan their environs and discuss decision-making with them.
- Ensure new participants understand to listen carefully for stopping and crossing instruction and that they can't go ahead of the first, or behind the last adult leaders.



Legal stuff

The Department of Transport does not provide personal liability insurance for any teacher, parent or other volunteer participating in the Walking School Bus program. Such persons are advised to consult their own insurer to determine if their existing insurance policies provide coverage for participating in this program and, if not, consider whether to obtain a policy of insurance covering their participation in the Walking School Bus program.

Non parent / guardian volunteers

State legislation states that non parent volunteers such as grandparents, other relatives or friends should obtain a Working with Children Check (WWC) and maintain a volunteer record. Parents of enrolled children are specifically exempt from this requirement.