

WALK & ROLL TO SCHOOL DAY

Event Guide

Background

Walk & Roll to School Day brings communities together through getting active on the way to and from school. Communities across King County and the country host Walk to School Day in October and Bike to School Day in May, but schools can host their own events more frequently. Walk & Roll to School Day events can be simple or elaborate, with the ultimate goal to be active, connect with other families, and reduce congestion and vehicle emissions around schools.

This guide will help you prepare, promote, and foster participation in a Walk & Roll to School Day event.

Why Walk & Roll?

Walk & Roll to School Day celebrates being active together on the way to and from school, providing these benefits to students and their families:

- ★ Supports learning to safely walk and roll to school while under adult supervision.
- ★ Helps increase concentration in school and improve academic performance.
- ★ Increases social interactions with other families and neighbors, which can create bonds that extend beyond the school day.
- ★ Decreases traffic congestion around schools, improving safety and air quality for everyone.



This guide offers strategies for both Walk and Bike to School Days by referring to them as Walk & Roll days. 'Roll' can be used instead of 'Bike' to:

- ★ **Better include students and family members who may use rolling mobility devices**, such as wheelchairs or specialized scooters, to get around.
- ★ **Extend participation** to students who would prefer to bike, scooter, or skateboard, as allowed by school or district policy.
- ★ **Promote other shared modes**, such as carpooling with other families or taking the bus, to include students who may need to 'roll' to school using a vehicle while using transportation options that support the environmental and social goals of the event.

Who plans Walk & Roll?

Anyone can be the Walk & Roll to School Day event champion! But make sure to ask your school's principal for permission and follow any district requirements for volunteers.

Individuals directly involved in the school community are often the event champions, including: PTA members, parent volunteers, PE teachers, school nurses, and/or school administration.

Other event champions could include city or school district staff, or a local non-profit.

This guide is written for anyone who is leading or involved in planning Walk & Roll to School Day activities.

How to plan Walk & Roll?

Follow these five easy steps for a successful Walk & Roll to School Day:

- 1 IDENTIFY A DATE** and coordinate with the school.
- 2 RECRUIT** community partners and volunteers.
- 3 PLAN** the event day logistics.
- 4 PROMOTE** the event.
- 5 FOLLOW UP** and thank all volunteers and partners after the event.



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Plan Your Walk & Roll to School Day

Walk & Roll to School Days can be simple by just encouraging families to be active on the way to school that day, or they can be elaborate with coordinated walking groups, designated routes, or on-campus events.

Use the checklists under each of these five steps to plan the Walk & Roll to School Day that works best for your school and volunteers!

1 Coordinate with your school (1 - 4 months before)

- Create an outline of what you'd like your Walk & Roll to School Day to look like. e.g., Do you want to organize families to meet at designated spots and walk together, or for them to self-organize meeting to walk together, or to walk independently? Do you want to set up a table or an activity on campus?
- Meet with your school's principal for event approval and establish which modes are permitted by school/district policy. e.g., Some school districts only allow 4th graders and above to bike to school.
- Set a date for the event.
Tip: Reference International Walk to School Day's set date, your school's calendar, the PTA calendar, and a multifaith calendar to avoid any significant religious holidays.

2 Recruit community partners and volunteers (1 - 2 months before)

- Recruit school staff, parents, and students by requesting volunteers who can assist with steps 3 through 5 below. *Tip: Explore communication channels such as: PTA meetings or listservs, school and teacher newsletters, and student sustainability teams.*
- Identify local partners to help with event logistics. *Contacts can include local transportation or public health agencies, the school district, city council, and/or fire and police teams. Tip: City departments and police may be able to offer small safety incentives such as lights or reflective stickers; fire trucks or police cars can be on site for students to check out; inviting council members to join families on the walk creates opportunities to let elected officials know how important safe routes are to your community.*
- Reach out to local businesses to request donations for incentives or treats for families who participate. e.g., Coffee, stickers, fruit, pastries, and/or promotions, like a free or discounted frozen yogurt.

continued!



3 Plan the logistics (3 weeks - 1 month before)

- Plan and map out designated active routes to school. *Tip: Reach out to your school district and/or city's transportation department to see if they have suggested walking routes to school.*
- Establish any meet-up points or Park & Walk locations; add these locations and meeting times to the route maps. *Tip: Reference King County Metro's Park & Walk SchoolPool Guide for further information.*
- Collect or create event materials and coordinate with the school to post or store materials. *Include day-of logistics, such as the route map and meeting times, on any take-home materials.*
- Consider how to evaluate the event. *Options include counting the number of participating students, offering a family survey, and/or asking families for their stories and feedback following the event. Tip: Counting and giving out small, inexpensive incentives such as stickers is a great way to count how many students participated in the event. Consider having volunteers count and give out stickers at designated meeting places or at select entries to school.*

Visit kingcounty.gov/metro/schoolpool for ready-to-use resources, including posters, banners, and safety tip sheets, available in multiple languages.

4 Promote the event (starting 2 weeks before)

- Register the event at Walkbiketoschool.org to support walking and rolling at the national level (for May and October events only).
- Two weeks before the event: Post electronic and print announcements in the school's and PTA's newsletter, on bulletin boards, and/or to social media accounts. *Tip: consider promoting an October Walk & Roll to School Day at back-to-school nights by tabling with event fliers and volunteer sign up forms.*
- One week before the event: Send home the event logistics. *Tip: Send fliers in backpack mail that provide date, routes, meeting places and times, benefits of participating, and contact information. Reach out to local media to promote the story.*
- Several days before the event: Post a reminder on social media and consider sending home walking safety tips for families to review together.
- Day before the event: Work with the school administrator to share a reminder announcement on the school's intercom system, encouraging students to walk or roll to school the next day.

5 Follow up

- Evaluate the event: How many people participated? What media coverage did the event receive? Did someone take great photos that will be useful?
- Thank all volunteers and partners after the event and share some of your evaluation findings with them.

Sustain it!

Keep Walking & Rolling with these suggestions:

- ★ **Host Walk & Roll to School Days with the rest of the world in May and October or as frequently as you'd like.**

Here are some ideas for events throughout the school year:

- ▶ September: Walk & Roll Back to School
- ▶ October: International Walk & Roll to School Day
- ▶ November: Winter Walk & Roll
- ▶ January: New Year Walk & Roll
- ▶ February: Lovin' Walk & Roll
- ▶ April: Walk & Roll for the Earth Day
- ▶ May: International Bike to School Day
- ▶ June: Rock the Walk & Roll for Summer



- ★ **Launch a Park & Walk program.**

A Park & Walk campaign encourages families to park at a designated spot nearby the school and walk together, rather than driving all the way to school. This allows families to walk the rest of the way to school while reducing traffic congestion and emissions around schools. Parents can coordinate with other families to meet at the designated place and share the walk to school, or participate independently.

- ★ **Form a Walking School Bus.**

A Walking School Bus follows the same route every time and picks up students from their homes or at designated stops at pre-arranged times. The group walks to school with a designated volunteer. Routes may operate daily, weekly or monthly. Daily routes are preferred and have been shown to successfully address student absenteeism.¹

Find out how to organize a Walking School Bus and Park & Walk using King County Metro's other SchoolPool guides, available at:

kingcounty.gov/metro/schoolpool

¹Safe Routes to School National Partnership. Addressing Attendance through Safe Routes to School.

Resources

★ Event Planning:

Walk & Bike to School National Program (UNC Highway Safety Research Center)
walkbiketoschool.org/plan/how-to-plan/

★ Safety Tips & Promotional Materials:

Outreach Materials and Templates in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian
(King County Metro)
kingcounty.gov/depts/transportation/metro/travel-options/rideshare/programs/schoolpool/safe-routes.aspx

★ Route Planning:

Walkability & Bikeability Checklist in English and Spanish
(UNC Highway Safety Research Center)
walkbiketoschool.org/plan/event-ideas/walkability-and-bikeability-checklists/

★ Liability Tips:

Liability 201 (Safe Routes to School National Partnership)
saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/resource_files/liability_201_sara_slides.pdf

Safe Routes to School: Minimizing Your Liability Risk (ChangeLab Solutions)
changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/SRTS_Fact_Sheet_FINAL_%28CLS-20120530%29_20100727.pdf

10 Tips for Safe Routes To School Programs and Liability (State of Vermont)
saferoutes.vermont.gov/sites/saferoutes/files/liabilitytipsheet.pdf



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