



Bike to School Week Guide

Revised March 2024

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Bike to School Week Guide

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Bike to School Week Guide Version 1.5



INTRODUCTION

Thank you for championing Bike to School Week at your school! This guide provides you with information on how to make your week successful and is based on best practices at schools across Metro Vancouver where Bike to School Week has become part of the school culture. [Bike to School Week](#) is an annual celebration where we encourage students of all ages to bike, roll, or walk to school. Find out how you can promote the event at your school using our [media kit](#).

We thank [CultureLink Settlement and Community Services](#) for generously allowing HUB Cycling to use their *Guide for Schools* as the inspiration for this document.



HUB Cycling loves connecting with schools celebrating Bike to School Week – please email us at btsw@bikehub.ca anytime!

BIKE TO SCHOOL WEEK - WHAT'S NEW THIS SPRING

This year, Bike to School Week is back with a new Wednesday Winners Contest. School Champions who choose to report their mid-week results by Wednesday at noon will be added to the Bike to School Week Leaderboard and can win prizes for their school! Schools with over 80% participation this Bike to School Week will also receive a shout-out in HUB Cycling's Bike to School Week newsletter and a Participation Certificate upon request.

Additionally, schools that would like to connect to other School Champions within their school districts can choose to release their contact information via HUB Cycling's Bike to School Week Registration Form. Their emails will only be shared with School Champions within the same school district and they are encouraged to connect and co-host activities such as bike parades or bike bus during Bike to School Week.



SCHOOL CHAMPION'S CHECKLIST

Every participating Bike to School Week school is registered by a School Champion who steps forward to lead the initiative at their school, often with support from others in their school community. School Champions can be parents, teachers, administrators, community members, or even students - the only requirement is being passionate about the benefits of active transportation in schools!

School Champions should ensure they have spoken with their school's administration about registering their school for Bike to School Week before doing so.

- ❑ Register your school for free online if you haven't already - bikehub.ca/btsw
- ❑ Spread the word - make sure others in your school community know that your school is participating. Add event dates to your school calendars, and use the newsletter and social media templates included in this guide to support your promotion efforts.
- ❑ Find your team - Bike to School Week is often organized by an enthusiastic team of teachers, parents, administrators and students with support from other community partners like bike shops and grocery stores.
- ❑ Plan Bike to School Week activities - these can include bike safety instruction, school celebrations, and other creative ways to encourage cycling and active transportation at your school.
- ❑ Create a display at the front of your school and put up your school's Tracking Poster
- ❑ During Bike to School Week, connect with other active travel schools by using the hashtag #bike2school on social media
- ❑ Report on how your events went - complete the reporting survey on our website to be entered to win prizes!



BENEFITS OF ACTIVE TRAVEL & BIKE TO SCHOOL WEEK

Biking to school creates healthy and energized students who are ready to learn. Increased active travel to and from school has been associated with a number of positive environmental, social, and safety benefits for students of all ages. Bike to School Week allows students, families and schools to experience the following benefits first-hand. With positive encouragement and school support, active travel can become a lifelong habit for students!

Students arrive energized and ready to learn

- Physical activity during the trip to and from school is associated with increased concentration¹

Improved safety in school zones

- Driver behaviour during drop-off and pick-up times is associated with increased risk of collisions²

Students experience better physical and mental health

- Biking to school helps students meet the daily physical activity targets suggested by the World Health Organization, which have been proven to improve control over symptoms of anxiety and depression³
- It has been shown that 15 min periods of aerobic exercise are associated with significant mood improvements for younger children⁴
- Physical activity during the commute to school is associated with decreased BMI⁵ and increased cardiovascular health for students⁶
- Biking to school helps students develop skills around emotional self-regulation
- Biking improves student well-being and builds life-long habits of independent and active mobility through building physical literacy
- Active travel during the commute to school (as compared to being driven to school) is also associated with additional levels of physical activity during the school day⁷

¹ Goodyear, Sarah, et al. "The Link Between Kids Who Walk or Bike to School and Concentration." CityLab, 8 Feb. 2013, www.citylab.com/transportation/2013/02/kids-who-walk-or-bike-school-concentrate-better-study-shows/4585/.

² Rothman, Linda, et al. "Dangerous Student Car Drop-off Behaviors and Child Pedestrian–Motor Vehicle Collisions: An Observational Study." *Traffic Injury Prevention*, vol. 17, no. 5, 2016, pp. 454–459., doi:10.1080/15389

³ Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health. World Health Organization, 2010, Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health, www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/global-PA-recs-2010.pdf.



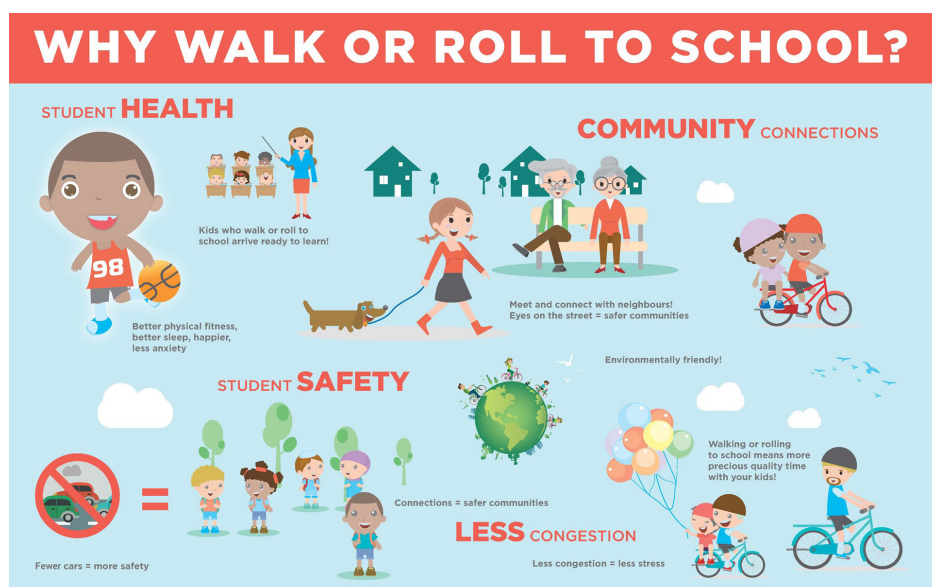
Stronger school communities

- Students, parents, teachers and administrators working together to plan Bike to School Week strengthens community connections
- Active travel increases students' social connections and network⁸

Contributes to a more sustainable school neighbourhood

- Reduction in vehicle traffic around schools improves air quality due to reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and other particulate air pollution⁹
- 79% of schools who participated in the 2021 event said they were motivated to take part because they wanted to keep school culture alive during a very different year with COVID-19

To learn more about the benefits of active travel and the supporting research, check out the [Active Travel Fact Sheet](#) (created by the Canadian Public Health Association) or [Making the Case for Active School Travel](#) (compiled by [Ontario Active School Travel](#))



Infographic created by the [North Vancouver School District](#)

⁴ Reducing Risks, Promoting Healthy Life. World Health Organization, 2002, Reducing Risks, Promoting Healthy Life, www.who.int/whr/2002/en/whr02_en.pdf?ua=1.

⁵ Mendoza, Jason A., and Yan Liu. "Active Commuting to Elementary School and Adiposity: An Observational Study." *Childhood Obesity*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2014, pp. 34–41., doi:10.1089/chi.2013.0133.

⁶ Larouche, Richard, et al. "Associations Between Active School Transport and Physical Activity, Body Composition, and Cardiovascular Fitness: A Systematic Review of 68 Studies." *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2014, pp. 206–227., doi:10.1123/jpah.2011-034.

⁷ ParticipACTION. (2016). 2016 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth.

⁸ Living Streets (2008) Backseat Children: how our car dependent culture compromises safety on our streets - <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/1406/backseat-children.pdf>

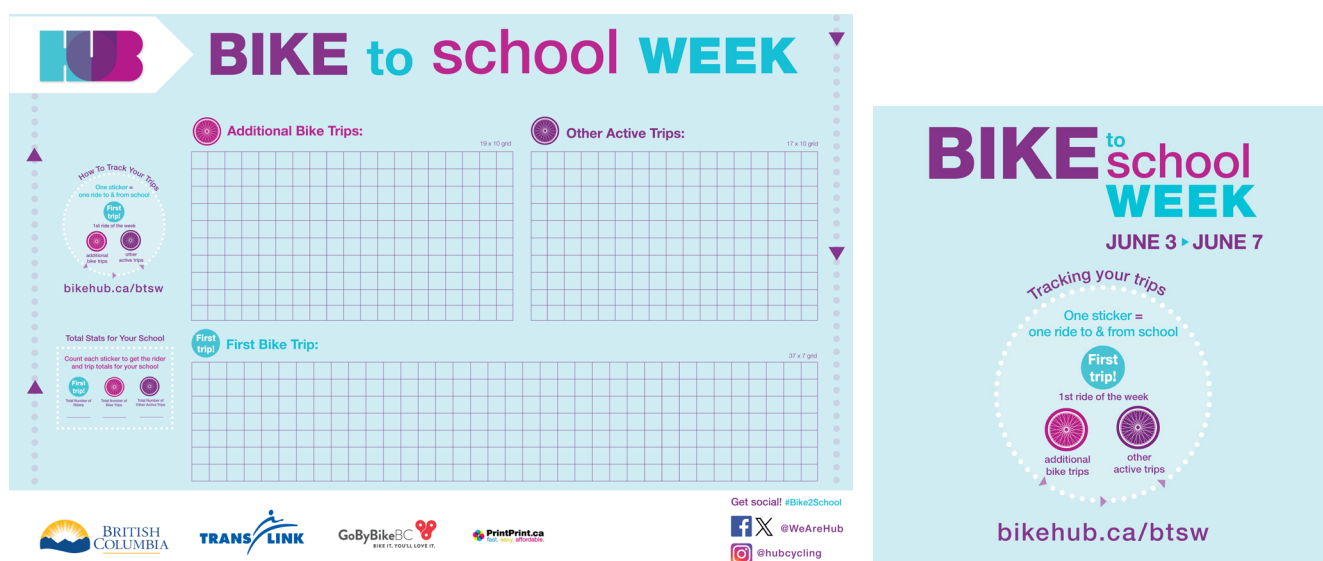
⁹ ParticipACTION. (2016). 2016 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth.



HOW BIKE TO SCHOOL WEEK WORKS

Although Bike to School Week activities and celebrations look different at every school, at most schools you will find a display that includes the Tracking Poster. See some examples of school poster displays on the following page.

School Champions use the Tracking Poster below (left), provided by HUB Cycling, to track students' biking and other active travel trips to and from school. Usually this happens in the morning as students arrive. At some schools, older students, leadership volunteers, or parents help with trip tracking. Students love putting their stickers on the poster to show they biked to school, and this is often a focal point of the event.



As shown in the image above (right), stickers represent a trip to and from school. Students' first bike trip of the week should be tracked using the blue 'First Trip' sticker; subsequent bike trips should be tracked using the pink 'Wheel' stickers. Any other active travel trips should be tracked with the purple 'Wheel' stickers. If you happen to run out of stickers, feel free to use your own!

At the end of the week, School Champions count the stickers and report school totals as part of our reporting survey. School Champions and schools who submit their reporting survey on time can win one of our prizes.



Sample School Tracking Poster Displays



Lord Roberts Annex, Vancouver



Riverview Park Elementary, Coquitlam



Tyee Elementary, Vancouver



Larson Elementary, North Vancouver



ACTIVITIES & CELEBRATIONS

Bike to School Week Champions generally tailor activities and celebrations to the strengths and interests of their school community. These are just a few possible activity types and suggestions to get you started, feel free to mix and match or get creative and come up with something unique! Please follow the latest advice put forth by B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer when planning Bike to School Week activities.

In-Class Safety Instruction

[ICBC Lesson Plans](#)

- Audience: K-10 students
- Content: 'Walk smart, bike safe' lesson plans cover the "dos and don'ts of pedestrian and bike safety on city and country roads".
- Format: PDF download and DVDs
- Access: Free, but DVDs need to be ordered online

[Bike Smarts for Children](#)

- Audience: Grade K-7 students
- Content: Instructor's guide to teaching safe cycling skills
- Format: PDF download
- Access: Free

[PHE Guide to Ride](#)

- Audience: Grade 4, 5 & 6 students
- Content: Comprehensive guide to teaching cycling skills and basic bike maintenance, and promoting active transportation in schools. Includes lesson plans for 30+ classroom and active on-bike sessions
- Format: PDF download
- Access: Free after registering an account with PHE Canada

[ABC Quick Check by Active Trans](#)

- Audience: Grade 4+ students
- Content: Short cartoon illustrating how to do an ABC Quick Check to make sure a bike is safe to ride
- Format: Vimeo video
- Access: Free

[Helmet Fit by Parachute Canada](#)

- Audience: Grade K+ students
- Content: Finding the right helmet and helmet fitting
- Format: PDF download and YouTube video
- Access: Free

[Bike Safety for Kids by the US Federal Highway Administration](#)

- Audience: K-4 students
- Content: Short cartoon illustrating basics of bike safety for children
- Format: Youtube video
- Access: Free



BC Curriculum & Sustainability Links

Bike to School Week also offers many possible points of engagement with the 'Big Ideas' in the new BC Curriculum. It is also an opportunity for students to continue building age-appropriate core competencies, particularly in the Personal & Social category. Previous School Champions have indicated that participation in Bike to School Week is linked to sustainability curriculum at their school.

Some of these Big Idea links include:

- [Grade 2 Social Studies](#) - Big Idea: "Local actions have global consequences, and global actions have local consequences"
- [Grade 4 Science](#) - Big Idea: "Energy can be transformed"
- [Grade 7 Science](#) - Big Idea: "Earth and its climate have changed over geological time"

Other BC curriculum links:

- [Grade 4 Physical & Health Education](#) - Big Idea: "Personal choices and social and environmental factors influence our health and well-being"
- [Grade 2 Physical & Health Education](#) - Big Idea: "Daily participation in physical activity at moderate to vigorous intensity levels benefits all aspects of our well-being"

Skill-Building Activities

Bike Rodeos

Bike rodeos are a great way to build excitement about cycling while also developing students' cycling skills. Bike rodeos typically involve setting up stations for students to practice different cycling skills using cones and other commonly found materials. Skills often covered include starting and stopping, shoulder checking, turning, and emergency braking.

Planning considerations:

- Will your rodeo take place before school, during class time, during lunch time, or after school?
- Who will your station leaders be? It's best if these people are confident and enthusiastic cyclists
- Where will you store bikes on rodeo day?

Additional resources:

- Utah [Bicycle Skills Rodeo Packet](#)
- Safekids [Bike Rodeo Station Guide](#)
- Peel Police [Community Rodeo Kit](#)



Bike Tuneups

Bike tuneups can be a stand-alone activity or happen at the beginning of a bike rodeo, group ride, or other on-bike event. Students will love learning about the 'ABC Quick Check' and how to make sure their bike is safe to ride. This is a great opportunity to involve your local bike shop or a member of the school community that is experienced with bike maintenance.

Materials required:

- Bike pumps with pressure gauges
- Rags
- Bike lubricant
- Bike multi-tools and metric wrenches

Planning considerations:

- Group size - how many materials (above) do you have and how many leaders do you have?
Teaching students the ABC Quick Check will work best in small groups where students can ask lots of questions and watch demonstrations closely
- Timing - how much time do you have available? Do you want to do a demonstration as well as a lesson?

Basic steps:

- Invite students to bring their bikes to school
- Teach students about the ABC Quick Check - demonstrating on a bike
- Test their memory and understanding of the ABC's
- Go through the ABC's and support students to complete them on their own bikes

Air - Identify the correct air pressure required by their tire and the type of valve they have on their bike.

Show them how to pump air into their tires

Brakes - Have students test their brakes and identify what type of brakes they have (rim, disc, coaster). If needed, tighten barrel adjusters

Chain - Have students pedal backwards to see if chain is making any strange noises. Check that chain is running smoothly and is free of rust. Wipe with rag and lubricate chain, using 1 drop per link. Take care not to let students use too much oil or spill oil on their rims.

Quick Releases - Identify quick release levers on bike (typically found on wheel and seat) and ensure they are tight and tucked away.



Celebrations & More!

Bike Decorating & Parade

Bike decorating doesn't need to be part of your event, but it sure is fun! Students can decorate their bikes with streamers, stickers, pipe cleaners, construction paper, lights, and anything else they can imagine. A parade can include students walking, cycling, scootering or skateboarding, and using mobility aids and is a great way to engage primary grades.

Planning considerations:

- Parade route - this often takes place on school grounds in the morning, during lunchtime or after school but you can also pick a local landmark like a park where students will meet in the morning and travel to school together. This version will require a little more planning, including determining the exact route and communicating with local officials if road closures are required
- Safety messaging - the beginning of the parade is a great time to share safety practices with students like doing a helmet check, teaching hand-signals, and reinforcing pedestrian safety messaging
- Ages and abilities - plan to have two route length options or two routes; one for cycling, and one for walking, scootering, and skateboarding



Golden Sprocket Trophy - Highlands Elementary

“Awarded daily to the class with the highest percentage of active transportation participation. We also have a Golden Sneaker Trophy that we use for other, non bike-focused events. Made by a parent using a repurposed trophy and an old cassette donated by a bike shop. Can be used year after year, is fun, sugar-free, garbage-free, and creates amazing friendly competition within the school. Even the teachers love it!”

Biker's Breakfast

You can serve a celebratory breakfast such as pancakes or granola bars and fruit in the morning for students who are using active transportation to get to and from school.



Friendly School-Wide Competitions

School staff, parents, and teachers are encouraged to register a team for Go by Bike Week and track their own cycling trips! Consider creating a special trophy (like a golden wheel or crank set) for your school that the winning team or classroom keeps until next year.

Tracking Kilometers or Greenhouse Gases

Track how far students have walked or biked throughout the week. This can include calculating students' green footprint and the amount of GhGs emissions saved through using active transportation instead of vehicle transportation for school travel. Our online tracking tool at bikehub/gbbw allows you to calculate your greenhouse gas emission savings.

Neighbourhood Rides

Older students will love going out with their peers on a short ride around their neighbourhood, or using active travel during a class field trip.

I-SPY sheets

Playing I-SPY on the way to school using activity sheets (like [these developed by Ontario Active School Travel for Winter Walk Day](#)) will be a hit with primary students and will encourage them to pay attention to their surroundings.



Bike decorating station at
Southlands Elementary,
Vancouver

The *Walk & Bike to School* website has [additional guidance](#) for planning your active travel celebrations, and the Ontario Active School Travel website has even more [creative activity ideas](#) that your students will love!



REMOTE ACTIVITIES

Learn2Ride Online

- Audience: Grade 4-7
- Content: 'Learn2Ride Online is a free web based online course that helps youth ages 9-12 yrs learn about basic cycling safety. This online course is based on HUB Cycling's Learn2Ride program, an in-school course that has been completed by over 25,000 Metro Vancouver students. Learn2Ride Online helps families learn skills to cycle safely and confidently around your neighbourhood.
- Format: Online via Moodle
- Access: Teachers can register their class for free [here](#). Parents/guardians can register their child for free [here](#).



Cycling worksheets from the online course can be downloaded and printed to complete at home or in-school here:

- [Parts of the Bicycle](#) (PDF)
- [Wearing a Helmet](#) (PDF)
- [Cycling Safety Gear](#) (PDF)
- [Locking a Bicycle](#) (PDF)

Bike Ride Bingo

- Audience: Grade K-12
- Content: Go on a ride around your neighborhood and try to cross off as many boxes as you can, and learn about good bike riding behaviour and communication along the way!
- Format: A bike-route in your neighborhood
- Access: Download the Bike Ride Bingo card [here](#).



STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION & REDUCING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

We want to ensure that *all* students have the opportunity to experience the positive benefits of active travel, thus the strategies below will help School Champions plan activities which include students with physical and cognitive disabilities, with behavioural concerns, students that can't ride or scooter, and students that don't own bikes.

Advanced Planning:

- Involve Educational Assistants and parents of students with special needs in your Bike to School Week planning team. Invite parents of students with special needs to let you know what support their child might need to participate in Bike to School Week, especially during on-bike activities¹⁰
- Make it explicit that all students are welcome to participate by using inclusive language and images of students with disabilities as part of any promotional materials.¹¹ For example, 'walking includes all students using a wheelchair or a mobility aid during their journey to school'
- Rather than focus on individual achievements, plan activities that emphasize group participation and celebrate all contributions to group's success as valuable¹²
- Host a "school walkabout" to determine how accessible your school grounds are for walking and cycling. While the recommendations resulting from this process may take time to implement, for example, infrastructure improvements around your school, getting your school's concerns in front of municipal and transportation decision makers can help improve future accessibility of your school.



¹⁰ Involving Students with Disabilities in SRTS. Prepared by the National Center for Safe Routes to School, 2010, Involving Students with Disabilities in SRTS, www.pedbikeinfo.org/pdf/Community_SRTSlocal_InvolvingStudentswithDisabilities.pdf.

¹¹ Lubin, Andrea, and Trish Sanchez. Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Safe Routes to School: Progress and Opportunity in New Jersey. New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource Center, 2016, Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Safe Routes to School: Progress and Opportunity in New Jersey, www.saferoutesnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FINAL-Inclusion-Report.pdf.

¹² Engaging Students with Disabilities in Safe Routes to School. Safe Routes to School National Partnership, 2018, Engaging Students with Disabilities in Safe Routes to School, www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/resource_files/engaging_students_with_disabilities_in_srts_final.pdf.



Sharing Resources:

- If there are students who would like to participate in Bike to School Week but don't own a bike due to financial or other barriers, consider hosting a bike drive, where families who have bikes that they no longer need can donate them to the school. Students in need can be given these bikes, or they can borrow them temporarily. Host a 'bike swap' where parents bring small bikes and trade them in for better fitting bikes making sure that everyone has a bike that is their size to ride! Include the option to bring helmets in good condition to trade as well.
- Have bike locks available for use at the school office for students that don't have their own. Students can borrow a lock and parents will feel better knowing their child's bike is secure while at school.
- Consider fundraising for safety gear that can be accessed by students in need; items such as helmets, lights, and reflectors

Inclusive Activity Considerations:

- If there is a route being walked or ridden, pre-walk or ride it to make sure it is clear of debris and any other obstacles on the day of the event. Be sure to confirm locations of curb-cuts and ramps for students using a wheelchair or other mobility aid¹³
- If time allows, take children that need additional emotional, behavioural, or learning support to pre-ride or walk the route beforehand so they are familiar with what it entails in advance¹⁴
- Consider students with less stamina and/or strength. For example, if planning a group ride to school, try picking both a longer and shorter route to accommodate all students¹⁵
- Invite students that have their own adapted bikes to bring them to school during on-bike activity days
- Balance bikes are a great way to break down learning to ride into more manageable skills, tackling balance first. Consider purchasing a couple of balance bikes for students who are still learning how to ride or invite students to bring their own balance bikes to school¹⁶
- Plan a 'beginners' activity during any on-bike events such as bike rodeos so that students who don't know how to ride or are less confident on their bikes can continue to develop their skills

¹³ The Discover Inclusive Safe Routes to School Guidebook. Division of Human Development and Disability at the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011, The Discover Inclusive Safe Routes to School Guidebook, www.nchpad.org/fppics/WalkToSchool_FINAL_ToShare.pdf.

¹⁴ Lubin, Andrea, and Trish Sanchez. Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Safe Routes to School: Progress and Opportunity in New Jersey. New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource Center, 2016, Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Safe Routes to School: Progress and Opportunity in New Jersey, www.saferoutesnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FINAL-Inclusion-Report.pdf.

¹⁵ Involving Students with Disabilities in SRTS. Prepared by the National Center for Safe Routes to School, 2010, Involving Students with Disabilities in SRTS, www.pedbikeinfo.org/pdf/Community_SRTSlocal_InvolvingStudentswithDisabilities.pdf.

¹⁶ Ibid.



For further reading on inclusion in the Safe Routes to Schools Movement, check out the following guides:

- [Engaging Students with Disabilities in Safe Routes to School](#) (Safe Routes to School National Partnership)
- [The Discover Inclusive Safe Routes to School Guidebook](#)
- [Involving Students with Disabilities in SRTS](#) (Safe Route to School National Partnership)
- [Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Safe Routes to Schools](#) (New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource Centre)

SAFETY TIPS & RESOURCES

These can be shared with parents through your school website, emails, or newsletters sent home.

Route Planning

If your school has completed a School Travel Planning process and has a School Travel or Best Routes Map, print it and send it home with students. Parents will benefit from having the safest cycling and walking routes outlined for them.

- [City and District of North Vancouver School Travel Maps](#)
- [City of Vancouver School Travel Maps](#)
- [City of Burnaby School Travel Maps](#)
- [City of Surrey School Travel Maps](#)
- [City of Richmond Travel Maps](#)

BCAA's School Safety Patrol Program

The BCAA School Safety Patrol program has all the necessary safety patrol equipment, student resources and training materials to start a student patroller program at your elementary school. Register, renew, or request additional materials free of charge through the [School Safety Patrol webpage](#).

BikeSense

The [BikeSense manual](#) is a great resource for parents wanting to familiarize themselves with traffic safety for cycling.



Bike Parking

Bike parking is a common concern for School Champions. Previous schools have used outdoor fenced-in courtyards to lock up bikes during the school day, as well as unused classrooms or portables. Schools with a growing cycling culture can consider requesting additional bike racks from their school district.



Larson Elementary, North Vancouver



David Lloyd George Elementary, Vancouver

Common Parent Questions

“When I bike with my children, where should my kids ride?”

When riding as a family, we recommend riding single file. A child that can be trusted to stop and understands road markings can ride in the front, with the adult and younger children following behind. This allows you to see them, and encourages them to build the decision making and safety skills needed to ride independently in the future. It also prevents them from simply following the leader in front of them and not paying attention.

“Should my child ride on the sidewalk?”

It is illegal to cycle on the sidewalk in most municipalities (some exceptions are Maple Ridge & parts of New Westminster), but we understand that while children are young they may still end up riding on the sidewalk. The important thing to reinforce when riding on the sidewalk is respect for pedestrians (they have the right of way!), and understanding that drivers are not expecting cyclists to be on the sidewalk, meaning extra attention should be paid at crossings, lanes, alleyways and driveways. In the end, sidewalks are for walking on, so as children get older (and ride faster!) we want to encourage them to build the skills needed to ride on the road.



“What is an appropriate age to let my child ride by themselves?”

Rather than a hard and fast age rule, we suggest that before children are allowed to ride on their own, parents ensure they:

- Understand relevant traffic safety, such as understanding who has the right of way at basic intersections and how to watch for cars
- Are able to reliably bike in a straight line
- Are able to shoulder check without swerving
- Are able to control their speed and stop when traveling downhill
- Are able to ride on uneven surfaces

Helmets & Safety Accessories:

The BC Motor Vehicle Act* states that any cyclist should be equipped with the following:

- Helmet
- Rear red reflector
- Front white light & rear red light**

**The BC Motor Vehicle Act doesn't require cyclists to have a bike bell, but some municipalities do. Regardless, a bell is always a good way to communicate with other road users*

***These are only required from sunset until sunrise. However, daytime running lights decrease the risk of collisions significantly and so we recommend using them whenever possible.*



Student safety signage
at Mt. Lehman
Elementary, Langley



PROMOTING BIKE TO SCHOOL WEEK

Spreading the word about Bike to School Week is key to getting everyone excited and ready to be active. Here are some ways you can spread the word:

- Our promotional poster - we provide printed copies in your Bike to School Week package, but you're welcome to print as many as you'd like by downloading a copy from our [website](#)
- School calendars
- School newsletters (see sample in appendix)
- Parent letters (see sample in appendix)
- Social media (see sample in appendix). Social graphics will also be available for download from our [website](#).
- Posters designed and created by students
- Morning announcements



Bike to School Week 2022 at St. Mary's Elementary, Vancouver



METRO VANCOUVER BIKE TO SCHOOL WEEK

SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

School Champion- Bowen Island Community School, Bowen Island

Who is the most excited about Bike to School Week at your school?

Students! They love starting their day with exercise and often getting an accomplishment under their belt before the bell even goes.

*How does your school work together to host Bike to School Week?
Are any other community members involved?*

We worked with the RCMP on a "Slow Down" campaign near the school. One morning during Bike to School Week, an RCMP Corporal joined students on the roadside to encourage drivers to slow down and be aware of bikes and pedestrians.

How do you spread the word about Bike to School Week to get people excited?

Weekly newsletter to families at the school that reaches about 400 people. Anyone who did not get the message would have seen many, many people show up on a bike with a smile on their face on Monday, so that helps too.

School Champion - Woodward Elementary, Surrey

*How does your school work together to host Bike to School Week?
Are any other community members involved?*

In order to encourage bike riding to school, we have donated used bikes to children. Over six years we have distributed over 250 used bikes thanks to two separate community organizations: Bikes for Kids and Ride On Again Bikes. We have also obtained new bike racks or used ones which we repainted.

Can you share any awesome stories regarding successes at your school?

One day we had 92 bike-riding children arrive! Recently we gave away about 50 used bikes in two days to students in Kindergarten to grade 4

And the biggest question first-time schools ask: where do you store students' bikes?

We have installed 4 bike racks in front of our school office but we also have an undercover fenced in/lockable area where kids can lock their bikes to the inside of the fence.



School Champion - Ross Road Elementary, North Vancouver

What events does your school usually host during Bike to School Week?

Each year is a bit different. Last year we had a bike parade before school to kick off BTSW. The teachers tracked students who biked to school each day as well as students who walked and rolled (small wheels). The intermediate & primary classes with the most trips won a pizza party for their class. We also hired a local bike company to deliver bike training to students. K through grade 5 students learned bike skills and practiced bike ramps on the school field. Grade 6 and 7 students were divided up into groups and taken for a bike ride in the community.

Can you share any awesome stories regarding successes at your school?

My favourite thing about Bike to School Week is coming to the school and seeing all the bikes parked outside. The school yard is overflowing!

And the biggest question first-time schools ask: where do you store student bikes?

Everywhere!! The few bike racks we have are overflowing. Bikes are leaned up against the school and all along the chain link fence. It is very encouraging to see.

APPENDIX

Sample Newsletter Content

SCHOOL NAME is celebrating Bike to School Week this year from DATE to DATE! We're encouraging students and families to use active transportation for their trips to school all week - walking, biking, scootering, skateboarding, and using mobility aids all help reduce congestion in our school neighbourhood and help students arrive to school energized and ready to learn.

We're also hosting SCHOOL EVENT on DATE, TIME, and we hope that students can BRING BIKES, ETC.

IF LOOKING FOR PARENT VOLUNTEERS, INCLUDE INFO HERE.

LET PARENTS KNOW ANY OTHER DETAILS LIKE WHERE BIKES ARE BEING STORED DURING THE DAY, ANY INCENTIVES BEING PROVIDED, AND CONTESTS OCCURRING.



Sample Social Media Content



- We've registered for HUB Cycling's Bike to School Week! We're joining schools across Metro Vancouver in celebrating cycling and making our neighbourhood safer by reducing traffic. Try using active travel to #bike2school June 3-7.
- Bike to School Week is off to a great start at SCHOOL. Students are getting excited about EVENT. How is your Bike to School Week going? #bike2school
- That's a wrap, Bike to School Week 2024 is complete! We had # OF RIDERS and # OF TRIPS. Already dreaming about next year. #bike2school



- We've registered for Bike to School Week! Can't wait to walk, bike, and roll to school June 3-7. #bike2school
- What do your school's bike racks look like this week? Here's ours: PHOTO OF BIKE PARKING #bike2school
- Our celebration of biking to school! INSERT PHOTO What did you do to celebrate Bike to School Week this year? #bike2school

Sample Letter or Email to Parents

We're excited to let you know that our school is participating in Bike to School Week this year from DATE to DATE. This event encourages students and families to choose active modes of travel to get to and from school throughout the week.

The benefits of active travel include reduced traffic in school areas, students arriving to school energized and ready to learn, and student participation in a sustainable, curriculum-linked activity. Active travel includes biking, walking, scootering, skateboarding, and using other mobility devices to get to school.

We're organizing SCHOOL EVENT this week on DATE, TIME.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW STUDENTS CAN PARTICIPATE, AND INVITATION TO PARENTS TO GET INVOLVED IN ORGANIZING.



ORGANISE A WALKING OR BIKE BUS

Biking or walking school buses are a great way to encourage active travel, particularly for older students and for students that live outside the school catchment area where it would take too long to walk or bike to school. These 'school buses' are groups of students travelling together to and from school. They are led by parents or teachers that volunteer to supervise students on their journey to school. The 'school bus' can either pick students up from their homes, or from other designated pick up locations. Check out [General Gordon Elementary's Bike Bus](#) organized by Maya Goldstein in 2023!

Organising a bike bus can be formal, involving the school community in a program with several bike buses, or informal, with just you and your neighbours riding to school together - just make sure that everyone is having fun!

Why Organise a Bike Bus?

- A bike bus permits parents extra time in the morning while the kids ride to school with other parents or older students, and social time with friends and neighbours while riding with the bike bus
- Allows children the opportunity to work with a "team"
- Gives opportunity to kids to practise their bicycle safety skills under adult supervision
- Reduces traffic congestion during school arrival and departure
- Provides an opportunity to get to know neighbours and build community
- Improves personal safety by adding more eyes and ears on the street
- Most importantly...it's fun



Bike to School
Week 2022 at
General Gordon
Elementary,
Vancouver



Planning considerations:

- What will be the ratio of students to parent leaders?
- What will the route to school look like? Where will the designated pick-up locations be?
- Are 'school bus' leaders confident cyclists?
- Are 'school bus' leaders comfortable supervising students?
- Are students prepared to cycle to school? Do you need to assess their skills or host a skill-building event like a bike rodeo before beginning your 'school bus'?
- If students are being registered for a biking or walking 'school bus', send home a form for parents to complete where they can indicate any special needs they feel might be relevant to their child's participation.

Tips for Creating a Safe, Fun Bike Bus

- Work with the school, city and parents to design "recommended routes" for the bike bus
- Finalise a bike bus map that can be distributed widely
- Promote the Idea: You can't have a bus without passengers and leaders!
- Present the bike bus map and idea to your Parent Teacher Association, principal and teachers
- Let local businesses and community leaders know about the bike bus, they might be interested in supporting or sponsoring the program
- Coordinate with local bike shops, teams and clubs to arrange a meet up so they can ride along or use a local shop for a pick-up point
- Talk to neighbourhood associations and any other volunteer groups for additional volunteers or support
- Ask to present the bike bus concept to the students in the classroom
- Invite local celebrities to join your bike bus

All routes should attempt to:

- Designate a meeting point to start the bus, and indicate the timing of stop points to pick up more riders along the way
- Utilise quiet, less travelled streets
- Pass through intersections with safe street crossings
- Take no longer than 30 minutes to bicycle to school



Pick a Start Date and Go for It!

Getting the bike bus running, even if there are only a few participants, is the most important part. Creating and maintaining a culture of safety is essential to gain buy-in from parents and the school, as well as to help create a successful and safe trip to school. A few tips to keep things running smooth:

- Set Guidelines and Enforce Rules
- Set a maximum number of participants per adult to keep riding safely
- Set a minimum age limit (most children can't accurately judge speed, distance or sound of oncoming traffic without supervision until the age of 10)
- Ensure that all students have received at least basic training in bicycle safety
- Train adults in how to safely operate a bicycle and participate in a bike bus
- Provide an adult to lead the front of the bike bus and direct participants
- Provide an adult to sweep at the rear of the bike bus in order to make sure all students stay "aboard"
- Require students to ride single file and keep bicycles at least one bike length apart for emergency stopping
- Communicate with each other and traffic by using hand signals
- Stay to the right, no swerving
- Obey all stop signs and signals
- Be prepared for break-downs and flat tires; Carry a tool kit and have a contingency plan
- Every rider needs a properly fitted helmet and a lock to secure their bicycle at school
- (For more information on how to ride safely, visit the League of American Bicyclists: Ride Better page)
- Regularly review the bike bus rules with participants. Prepare and vocalise a plan of action for students that are unable to adhere to the rules.



Bike to School Week 2022 at St. Helen's Elementary, Vancouver



Additional Tips

Safety

- First Aid Kit – also be aware of any medical needs students may have (such as asthma)
- Be visible – wear bright clothing, a jacket or vest and all riders should have lights if riding at night
- Carry a phone for emergencies
- Carry the bike bus parents' phone numbers

Weather Conditions

- Have a policy for rainy, cold or snowy days. Make sure that all participants know the policy and either dress appropriately for a cold, wet ride or find an alternative way to get to school
- During warmer months, ensure that participants bring water to stay hydrated and dress in clothing that breathes, especially if the trip to school is long

Cancellation Policy

- Be prepared for possible leader cancellations. Bike bus leaders may get sick or just be unable to help certain days. Using a phone tree to notify participants or find alternate leaders is one way to deal with unexpected cancellations. Whatever the policy is, make sure that everyone knows it well.

Extra Credit

- There are endless ways to make your bike bus interesting and exciting to participants, below are just a few creative ideas:
- Start a bike bus Facebook group where leaders can share stories, pictures and ideas
- Give bus participants blank flags, bike buckets and posters for them to decorate and hang on their bicycles for the ride
- Have 'get to know you' and 'celebration' parties
- Start contests between different bike buses
- Hold regular bicycle skills courses (bicycle rodeos) for students to hone their skills and compete against one and other





bikehub.ca

