



Leading a Walking School Bus project at your school

What teachers need to know

About this resource

This is guidance for you to support a student-led project to set up a walking school bus (WSB) at your school. This may have come about because there are congestion or road safety issues. Or you may want to support a student leadership project that sets up a WSB for student wellbeing or in response to the climate crisis.

Supporting resources

- [Walking School Bus Checklist](#) – helps plan who does what and when during the project.
- [Map My Journey](#), [Walking Pou](#) and [Park and Stride](#) (coming soon) – class resources and school guides.
- [Active Travel Action](#) resource – choose from three lessons that explore how kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga, citizenship and mauri can support this WSB resource.
- [Te Taiao \(Environment\)](#) – A Movin’March resource that complements the setting up of a WSB.

Scaling the project

To manage the size of this project or to explore other alternatives, you could:

- Invite parents and ākonga (students) to create a temporary WSB. This can gauge support for a more permanent arrangement. Pick out key elements in this resource to get started. Trial over a limited time (for eg during Movin’March or Car Free Day). Then share contact details with interested whānau who want to continue.
- Start small and support parents to lead the set-up. This could be in one neighbourhood with a small group of interested families. It’s like carpooling, but with feet. If using this approach, key things to include could be:
 - Invite families who live nearby, pick a route and trial a walk.
 - Decide what days the group will walk.
 - Agree on a [safety management](#) and wet weather plan.
 - Set up suitable communication channel (such as a What’s App group).

NZ Curriculum Links Achievement Objectives

See the NZ Curriculum [Achievement Objectives](#) resource for Movin’March. These could be useful for your planning.

What is a Walking School Bus (WSB)?

A walking school bus (WSB) is a group of tamariki (children) and adults (often parents) who walk along a specific route on a set day, picking up children (passengers) along the way. Parents are usually the volunteer 'drivers' of a WSB. This is a great opportunity for tuakana-teina (older sibling-younger sibling) relationships, experiences and the development of social skills.

Sometimes a walking school bus can be combined with a *Walking Pou* or *Park and Stride* (coming soon). A WSB doesn't have to operate everyday, it could be just one day a week. Generally they're most suitable for morning journeys (to avoid after-school activities). See [Further activities, resources and links](#) below for safety tips, templates and other resources.

Outside of class

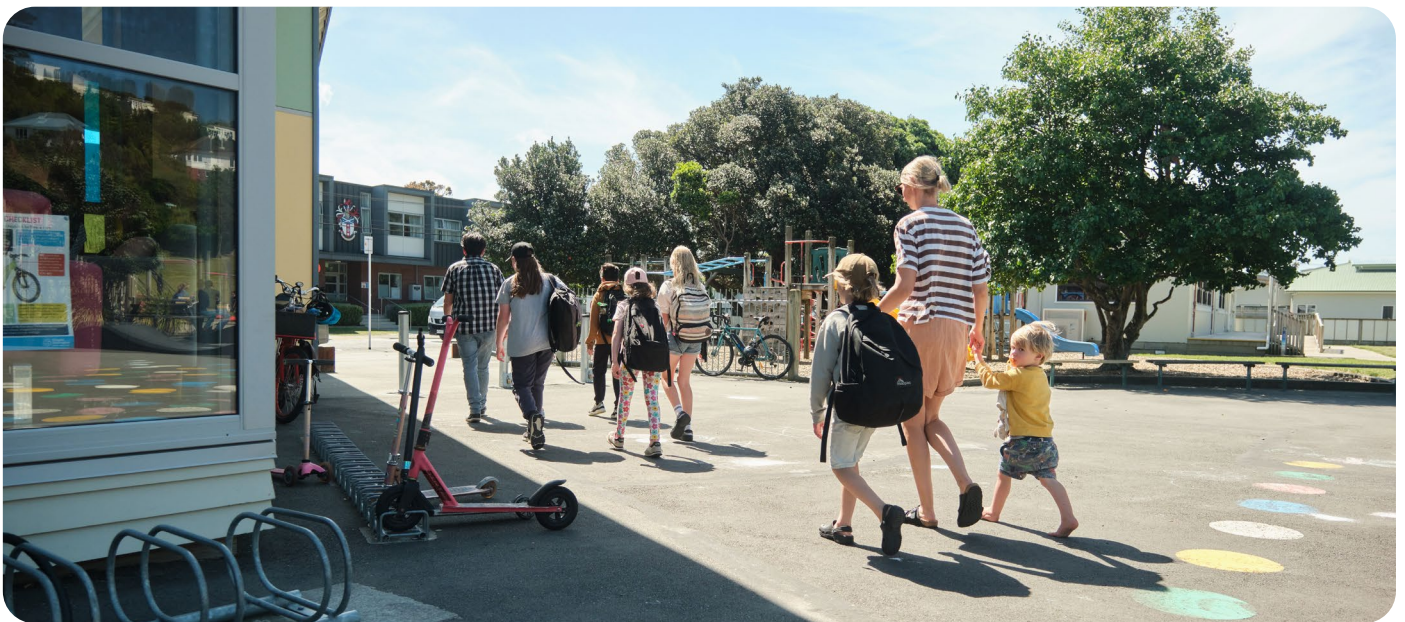
Getting interest and holding a meeting

- Hold a meeting to see who might be involved.
- Find a shared way forward.
- Consider kura (school) values, kaupapa, learning themes or board approval.
- Is there one person who can coordinate?

Talk to local councils, Enviroschools ([page 8](#)) or involve a teacher champion to share tasks/workload.

Include the Principal, BoTs, and parent champions.

Invite mana whenua/iwi leaders, student leadership group, local council or Enviroschool representatives (see [page 8](#)).



1. In class

Set the scene and create context for discussing and understanding transport.
Pick and choose any of these elements (or use them sequentially).

Getting started

- Can I make a difference?
How people can affect our natural environment in positive ways.
- Everything is connected.
Explore effects of travel on the natural environment.

Resources (coming soon):

- [Can I make a Difference?](#)
- [Everything is Connected](#)

Engaging our senses

- Group or class walk.
- Engage senses.
- Collect objects and photos.
- Create collage based on senses, experiences and objects found.

Resources (coming soon):

- [Sensory collage](#)

Getting perspective

- Create montage that shows how transport has changed – past, present, future.
- Different ways children around the world active travel to school.
- Interview kuia/other generations about school journeys.
- Explore active travel benefits today

Resources (coming soon):

- [Travelling to school – montage](#)

Display collage or montage in a place where the whole school community can see it, eg, library or office.



2. In class

Build the foundations for setting up a WSB in your neighbourhood:

- Get ākonga views on the benefits of a WSB, for eg, reduce congestion, improve safety, promote physical and mental wellbeing, building sense of community. See teaching and learning resources on [Active Travel Benefits](#) (coming soon), along with suggested discussion ideas and template.
- How or why will they take part?
- What route should it take? Ask for a council or Enviroschool representative for support in facilitating decision-making in class.

Heads up!

- RAMS forms needed ahead of walkability checklist activity, share with Principal
- Permission forms ahead of walk
- Permission doubles up as invite for parent help

Invite:

- Invite local council and/or Enviroschools Facilitator as 'expert visitors' into classroom.
- Ask council about possibility of signage or [Walking Pou](#) if appropriate

Pick and choose OR progress through:

Mapping tool

Where are there clusters of ākonga living? Where would the best route start/go? (Note exact locations of where ākonga live should not be identified to protect privacy)

Resources:

- [Map my Journey - teacher & learning resources](#)

Walkability Checklist

How walkable is your neighbourhood?

Explore potential walking school bus route, meeting points or signage along the way.

Encourages student agency, investigates safe and active travel to school.

Two resources to help: Teacher guide and checklist for students to assess the 'walkability' of their neighbourhood.

Resources:

- [Walkability Checklist – teaching & learning resource](#)



Create a map of your WSB:

- Get BoT approval
- Ākonga could write a proposal or present to board
- Feedback to parents via drop-in session, newsletter or survey

Resource:

- [WSB steps – who does what when?](#)

3. In class

Data gathering and getting ready.

Te Haerenga o ngā Tamariki

- Sign up and start collecting data before walking school bus starts. Use this online tool to collect data that is student led, secure and anonymous.
- Record how students are travelling to school. Graph results before during and after start of WSB to compare data.
- Encourage other teachers to use tool so there's a whole-school/evidence-based benchmark before walking school bus is implemented.

Resource:

- [Te Haerenga o ngā Tamariki](#)

Teaching and learning resource

- The Teacher resource is a 'how to guide' for using Te Haerenga o ngā Tamariki.
- The Learning resource supports inquiry and extension learning in the classroom.

Resource:

- [Learning resource](#)

Motivation – Intrinsic vs extrinsic

What are the motivations for active travel?

See (coming soon):

- [Intrinsic vs extrinsic](#)
- [My motivation for using active travel](#)
- [Miramar School walking school bus \(Enviroschools\)](#)



Outside of class – Confirming route and safety:

- Confirm exact route and if signage relevant, decide on format and placement.
- Organise parent volunteers, send home a survey/sign-up newsletter and reminders.
- Create a roster and police vetting, provide consent forms, create ākongā list of ‘passengers’, taking care around privacy.
- Write letters to school community and residents if signage being installed. Let them know walking school bus starting up, route description.
- Source hi viz jackets for adults, include school logo?
- Share guidelines and tips for WSB safety and success with parents.
- Ensure there are enough parents to run WSB on the mornings agreed.
- Promote via: newsletter, Facebook, parent groups, letterbox drop, posters from ākongā.

Talk to Council’s road safety personnel or local Police Community Officer to confirm the route you have planned is safe (see [page 8](#)). Keep Enviroschools reps in the loop.

Templates available for letters, newsletters, letter to parents or residents, rosters and guidelines for running the WSB.

Students can design posters to go up in classrooms to promote WSB.

Share with councils and Enviroschools to promote via their comms channels.

Outside of class – Pre-launch:

- Check timeline for sign installation with local council.
- Check with council if ākongā can stencil “sneaky driveways” or footpaths.
- Keep school community informed via newsletters, website.
- Hold meeting with key stakeholders to organise launch of walking school bus; set a date, karakia (blessing).
- Can wider community get involved? For eg, local café offers discount to walking parent helpers.
- Walk the route with parent helpers, talk through guidelines, tips and any issues.
- Share roster and ākongā involved.
- Ensure logistics and safety information understood by parents (eg wet-weather plan, safe walking, first aid kit, contact plan).
- Afternoon tea to ākongā to offer thanks (if aligning with school’s kaupapa) or acknowledgement at assemblies.
- Ensure consent forms from ākongā are returned before launch day.
- Let school community know signs are installed for the WSB.
- Continue to promote launch day!

Involve: principal, lead teachers, council and Enviroschool reps, mana whenua, BoT and parent champions.

Take photos and share with Enviroschools, Councils, promote on school Facebook page or school apps.

Guides are available online (see [page 8](#)) for videos and guides from Waka Kotahi and Auckland Transport.

Student leadership group talk at assemblies. Make sure staff, students and school community know about launch.



4. In class and whole school

Celebrating and maintaining

- Karakia
- Celebrate and acknowledge
- Continue to collect classroom travel data to show results.

Share your story and photos, external media, measure your success.

Further activities, resources, and links

- Integrate into an English lesson using persuasive writing to explore the benefits of active travel.
- Integrate into a Physical Education, Fitness or Science lesson.
- Talk to your [Enviroschools' facilitator](#) for guidance on connecting with mana whenua. You could think about expectations around their role, level of commitment and how their involvement would support iwi aspirations.
- [Waka Kotahi NZTA's WSB resources](#) include guidelines, roster templates and consent forms.
- Waka Kotahi NZTA's [WSB Coordinator's Guide \(pdf\)](#) has useful safety tips and guidelines.
- Contact your [local council or Greater Wellington](#) for more information on safe and active travel.
- Get in touch with your local police station to find out who your [Police School Community Officer](#) is.
- Parent volunteers will need to be [police vetted](#). Hi viz vests may need to be sourced. Talk to your local council for suggestions on funding of these.
- Download this [newsletter flyer \(pdf\)](#) to promote a parent meeting to gauge interest for a WSB.
- Share with ākonga the Education Gazette [story](#) of Berhampore School setting up a WSB.

Videos explaining WSB – courtesy of Auckland Transport:

 [How a WSB works](#)

35 secs [CC](#) Ads: 

 [Why volunteers love WSB](#)

50 secs [CC](#) Ads: 

 [Benefits of a WSB](#)

1 min 22 secs [CC](#) Ads: 

 [Sneaky driveways](#)

28 secs [ST](#) Ads: 

 [Crossing at pedestrian refuge](#)

44 secs [ST](#) Ads: 

