Planning your school’s Walk to School Day event

WALK BIKE NASHVILLE
Since 1998, Walk Bike Nashville has sought to make active transportation an option for Nashvillians, no matter where they live or where they’re trying to go. We want our sidewalks and bikeways to support active living, commuting options, and recreational opportunities. Together, we’re building a more walkable, bikeable, livable Nashville.
About this handbook

Thank you for your interest in participating in Nashville’s Walk to School Day!

Walk Bike Nashville, MNPS, Coordinated School Health, other metro departments and local businesses collaborate with educators and parents to put on this event. As a member of a Walk to School Day planning committee in your school, you are one of hundreds of dedicated, caring adults in our community working to give our children safe opportunities to be physically active.

Included in this handbook are tools that will help you plan a Walk to School Day event at your school. If you have further questions about planning your event don’t hesitate to contact Walk Bike Nashville Program Coordinator Robert Johnson at Robert@walkbikenashville.org

Remember- this is your school’s event- it can be elaborate or very simple. There is no right or wrong way to do it! We look forward to working with you on another successful Walk to School Day in Nashville, TN!

About Walk to School Day

The first “Walk to School Day” event was organized in the United States by the “Partnership for a Walkable America” in 1997. Growing concerns regarding clean air, children’s health, and safety helped to initiate the program.

Nashville began participating in Walk to School Day in 1999 with five area elementary schools. Now, more than 60 schools and 15,000 walkers participate annually alongside leaders from our school district, local government, and greater community.

Walk to School Day continues to draw attention to the need for safe pedestrian facilities across Nashville.

We hope that your continued participation and community involvement will lead to safe and walkable streets for all people, especially our children.
Walk to School Day Planning Checklist

More than one month out:
- Sign up to participate through Walk Bike Nashville [here](#).
- Work with the Principal to set event goals, assembly plans, parent permission forms if needed, and communication plan
- Recruit a committee, including parents and other adults to assist
- Register your event on the [National Walk & Bike day database](#)
- Optional: Send invitation to your city council and school board members

Four weeks out:
- Meet with your committee & assign tasks:
- Prepare flyers/contact media/plan assembly
- Program classroom activities related to the event
- Designate walk starting points, calculate walking time
- Optional: Contact Pencil Partners, businesses and places of worship regarding donations for walkers or volunteers

Three weeks out:
- Contact crossing guard supervisors, bus drivers, and police department
- Send first flyer/parent consent form home with students
- Create/order posters and banners
- Optional: Contact area high school for student assistance, band and/or cheerleader participation

Two weeks out:
- Put posters up in the school and community
- Send notification letters to houses along selected route
- Send home reminder flyers

Week of event:
- Make Daily announcements
- Meet with committee for final run-through
- On event day, make sure:
  - assembly is set up (podium, microphone)
  - volunteers are in place

After the event:
- Send out Thank You notes to supporters, guests, etc...
- Share your pictures and stories with Walk Bike Nashville
- Respond to the post event survey from Walk Bike Nashville
Frequently Asked Questions

What kind of event is right for our school?

Walk to School day is frequently celebrated at neighborhood schools with many students who live nearby. However, any school can and should participate in Walk to School Day!

- Schools with many bus-riding students can arrange for morning drop-offs to occur at a nearby park, community center, place of worship, or similar community organization so that students can walk the final stretch to school. However, make sure to let parents know about the change!
- If your school is located in an area that lacks facilities for safe walking, a “Walk at School” or “Walk at Lunch” event on school grounds or indoors can still promote physical activity. If there is a major issue in your area you can report it to Public Works. Have as many parents and the administration also reach out.

Where do we begin?

Start by contacting your school principal and other members of the administration. If this is your first year planning a Walk to School Day event, chances are likely that other members of the faculty, staff, and administration have experience with this event. Set smart goals and obtain approval from your principal.

A good next step is to recruit a committee. This is an excellent opportunity for parents to get involved. Announcements can be made at PTA, PTO, or Student Council Meetings and flyers can be sent home with a save-the-date announcement and a request for volunteers and committee members.

Once you have a team in place, get together to decide upon a good route and hash out logistical issues. Many committees find it helpful to have a standing meeting in the weeks leading up to the event to keep members on task.

How can we manage risk?

All participating students should receive permission from parents or guardians. A sample take-home form is included in this document.

Choose your route well in advance of the event date. Try to walk the route on your own at the time of day that your event will be held. During your test-walk,
look for hazards like unattended pets, morning commuter traffic, or blind spots caused by the sun. It is a good idea to post fliers or send letters to neighbors along the walking route well in advance of the event.

Contact the Office of Special Events at Metro Public Works and let them know about your event. If necessary, detours will be posted. You can find contact information for Public Works and other useful departments at the end of this handbook.

On the day of the event, use parent and teacher volunteers to help supervise students during the walk.

What will make our event stand out?

Walk to School Day is a celebration of physical activity and environmentally friendly transportation. Play up the celebratory aspect with performances from student musicians, decorations, or a special assembly at the end of the walk.

Recruit speakers, team mascots, cheerleaders from high schools in your cluster, or other fun community members to attend your event.

Pencil Partners and other community supporters can help create a special atmosphere on Walk to School Day by donating healthy snacks, coloring books, or other items for walkers. Appoint somebody on your committee to seek out donations and engage partners.

Is Walk to School Day meaningful year round?

Yes! Walk to School Day is a unique event, but there are many ways to continue its impact throughout the school year. Below are some ideas to expand upon Walk to School Day throughout the year:

- Host a walking challenge in the weeks before the event. Have students log their miles walked and issue awards to participating students on Walk to School Day. A challenge can help make walking a routine part of a student’s life.
- Have students create signs, banners, posters, or other materials about Walk to School Day in class. Students can research the importance of regular physical activity or make a presentation about pedestrian safety. Creative projects like essays, illustrations, or poems can help students incorporate physical activity into their personal identities. In-class
activities like these help build awareness about strategies for maintaining good personal health.

- Occasionally, state and federal funding is awarded through competitive grant processes to facilitate infrastructure improvements around schools. Funding opportunities change constantly - contact Robert Johnson at Robert@walkbikenashville.org for information about current opportunities.
- Parents who live near each other can organize a Walking School Bus where students walk to school together along a predetermined route under the supervision of parents or trusted community volunteers. Contact Robert Johnson at Robert@walkbikenashville.org for Walking School Bus organizational resources.

Who’s invited to participate?

- **Students** - even bussed students or those who live too far away can walk from a drop-off point on the day of.
- **Family members** - parents, caregivers, grandparents and other family members are all invited to join in.
- **Community volunteers** - such as members of local walking and cycling clubs who would like to help out.
- **Community leaders** - it’s a great chance to teach and reinforce habits for children that are environmentally friendly, safe and healthy.
- **All students and volunteers, regardless of ability** - join in on this celebration of active transportation.

How can we share our experience?

Participating schools are encouraged to take pictures and videos and share them on social media. Walk Bike Nashville will promote stories from participating schools on our facebook page at: http://www.facebook.com/walkbikenashville and on our twitter and Instagram accounts, @walkbikenash

Use the hashtag #walktoschool615 when creating your posts to help us share!

A sample news release is included in this handout. Schools are encouraged to tailor the release to their needs and distribute to local news outlets, as well as neighborhood associations, local blogs, and other community outlets.

If your committee has any tips or feedback about planning a Walk to School Day event, please send them to Robert Johnson at Robert@walkbikenashville.org
Guidelines for Good Pedestrian Behavior

Guidelines for Children:

- Look both ways before crossing (left, right, left again)
- Walk - don’t run - across the street
- Cross only at safe corners, even if you must walk farther
- Choose the route with fewest streets to cross
- When possible, cross streets at the crosswalk and where there are traffic signs and signals
- Obey traffic signs and signals
- Face traffic when walking on roads without sidewalks
- Watch for turning cars
- Keep from walking between parked cars
- Refuse to ride with strangers

(U.S Department of Transportation)

Guidelines for Parents:

- Group children along school routes for better visibility and driver awareness.
- When larger groups cross together it makes motorists more aware of kids crossing, increases driver compliance with stopping for crosswalks, and helps justify the installation of more extensive crossing protection devices. Look for adequate shoulder or sidewalk areas to provide refuge.
- Children are not small adults. They often act before thinking and may not do what parents or drivers expect. They assume that if they see the driver, the driver sees them. They have one-third narrower side vision, can’t judge speed and are less able to determine the direction of sounds. They are shorter than adults and can’t see over cars, bushes and other objects.

(NHTSA)
Save the Date!
Walk to School Day
Wednesday, October 10, 2018

Join fellow parents, students, and educators for Walk to School Day!

We are looking for volunteers on October 10th to help organize the event and to help out on Walk to School Day. Please get in touch if you would like to be involved!

Contact Information:

<School Name>
<Contact name>
<Contact e-mail or phone number>
Sample Parent Consent Form

Walk to School Day Consent Form
Event Date: Wednesday, October 10, 2018

Event Details:
- Walkers will gather at <Meeting Location> at <Meeting Time> on Wednesday, October 10th.
- Students will walk to school as a group accompanied by parents and teachers, and school staff.
- Following the Walk to School Day celebration, the school day will follow a normal schedule.

Why is our school participating?

Walk to School Day is a simple activity with tremendous goals:
- To experience the most accessible, enjoyable, and effective exercise – walking!
- To create a cleaner environment- fewer cars mean cleaner air.
- To teach pedestrian safety and identify safe routes to school
- To raise awareness of good or bad walking conditions in our community
- Local community leaders, parents, and children will spend valuable time together.

Please join us in focusing on health, livability and safety!

YES! I give my consent for my child to participate in Walk to School Day on Wednesday, October 10th.

Name: __________________ Teacher ________________________________

Signature: _______________________________ Date: _______

Please return this form to your child’s teacher!
Walk to School Day is Wednesday, October 10th.

Meeting Location: <Location>

Meeting Time: <Time>

Questions? Contact: <Contact Name and info>

Please turn in your parent consent form if you have not yet done so.
Sample Press Release

For Immediate Release
October 8, 2018

<Name of School> Celebrates Walk to School Day

Students, Parents and Teachers Walk for Safer Communities, Cleaner Environment

As part of Walk Bike Nashville’s annual Walk Nashville Month event, students, teachers, and parents from <Name of School> will celebrate Walk to School Day on Wednesday, October 10th. <Number of participants> from <name of school> are expected to walk in 2018.

Walk to School Day has been celebrated in Nashville since 1999. Across the county, thousands of students at more than 60 schools will take part in this annual celebration of active living, which raises awareness of the need for safer pedestrian facilities in Nashville.

<Individual school can add more details about their walk: speakers, guests, assembly with band, anticipated number of walkers, meeting place for start of walk, time of walk, etc>
Contacts

General inquiries:

Robert Johnson, Program Coordinator, Walk Bike Nashville
(615) 928-8801
Robert@walkbikenashville.org
www.walkbikenashville.org

Parade permits:

Gordon Richard, Special Event & Parade Permits
(615) 862-8597
gordon.richard@nashville.gov
www.nashville.gov/Public-Works/Permits/Film-Special-Events-Permits.aspx

Parks permits:

Metro Parks Special Events
(615) 828-8400
lisa.king@nashville.gov
http://www.nashville.gov/Parks-and-Recreation/Permits-Rentals-and-Reservations/Special-Events.aspx

Metro Council Members:

(615) 862-6780
http://www.nashville.gov/Metro-Council.aspx

School Board:

(615) 259-8487
Board.Administrator@mnps.org
http://www.mnps.org/pages/mnps/About_Us/School_Board__BOE
Walk Nashville Month is a program of Walk Bike Nashville.