



## Checklist: Organize a Walk or Bike to School Day Event

### 1. Identify Interest

- Secure school administration support
- Gauge interest among parents and community members
- Seek donations from PTA or local stores
- Ask children what they want from the event (recognition, prizes, themes)

### 2. Organize

- Contact Safe Routes to School Coordinator
- Recruit volunteers
  - Parents: PTA/PTO, school council, room parents
  - Staff: nurse, PE teacher, guidance counselor, principal
- Delegate specific volunteer responsibilities
  - Pre-event:
    - o Publicity, outreach, walkability or bikeability audits
  - Day of event:
    - o Leading walkers/bikers, greeting, prize distribution, photography, participant tracking
- Collect volunteer contact information
- Identify date and time
  - Schedule rain date
- Identify and map out routes
  - Conduct a walkability or bikeability audit using the walkability or bikeability checklist
  - Identify "park and walk" or drop-off locations
  - Create map using tools such as [google.com/maps](http://google.com/maps) or [communitymap.com](http://communitymap.com)
- Contact police department
  - Seek route advice
  - Invite police to participate on the day of the event
- Contact local celebrities to ask them to be walkers or greeters
  - Superintendent, city officials, mascot, local sports team, high school students
- Make signs with children for walk, e.g. It's cool to walk to school, Walking School Bus, We Love Walking

### 3. Publicize

- Posters & Flyers (see sample)
  - Date, time, map of route, how to participate
- Newsletter/e-newsletter
- Intercom or classroom announcements
- Email blasts
- Personal appeal (calls, emails) to parents in major neighborhoods
- Reverse 911 message
- Local media: newspaper, TV station
- PTA/PTO meetings
- Internet: school website, Facebook, blogs
- Press Release (see sample)
- Pre-event assembly

#### 4. Day of Event

- Welcome students when they arrive to school
  - MassRIDES giveaways: [MassRIDES Distribution Portal](#)
  - Music, healthy refreshments, balloons, local celebrity greeter
  - Classroom competition: classroom with the most participants wins a “silver sneaker” trophy or a walk or bike ride with the principal
- Take pictures
- Track number of students who participate
  - Tallies by school door, stickers on posters, signature poster/mural
- Have fun!

#### 5. Evaluate/Follow Up

- Thank all volunteers and participants
- Ask participants and volunteers to fill out evaluation form (see sample)
- Promote success of event
  - Press Release
- Share stories and pictures with your Safe Routes to School Coordinator
- Use data and enthusiasm to create a more comprehensive Safe Routes to School Program

#### 6. Turning a Walk to School Day into Walking Wednesdays

- Secure school administration support
- Find volunteers and assign specific tasks
  - Handing out prizes/traveler tickets, counting walkers/bikers, outreach using successful methods from previous events
- Track participants
  - Use successful methods from previous events
  - Traveler Tickets: Students tally their own trips to and from school on “traveler tickets” provided by MassRIDES. Upon completing a ticket, students may be eligible for a prize.
  - Pedometers: Schools can ask parents to purchase pedometers so that students can track their steps. Mileage can be logged in each classroom. Email your School Outreach Coordinator for pedometer ordering ideas and for classroom mileage trackers.
  - Pom-poms: Walkers and bikers receive a pom-pom or other small item when they arrive at school. These items are placed in a container in classrooms, and volunteers count them at the end of the day.
  - Stickers: Walkers and bikers receive a sticker that they place on posters in the school lobby, with one poster for each classroom. Volunteers count the stickers at the end of the day.





## Tips for Walking Safely to School

Walking is fun, but you need to be safe while doing it. Follow these tips to make sure you get to and from school without any problems.

### **Walk together**

Younger children should always walk with an adult. Tell your parents that walking is great exercise and a nice way to spend time together.

If your parents say that you can walk to school on your own, remember these tips:

- Walk with a friend when possible.
- Ask your parents to help you pick a safe route to school; one that avoids dangers.
- Stick to the route you picked with your parents. Don't let friends talk you into shortcuts that are more dangerous.
- When you are near the street, don't push, shove, or chase each other.
- Never hitchhike or take rides from people not arranged by your parents.
- Talk to your parents and teacher about any bullying that may happen during your walk.

### **Be seen**

Remember, drivers may not be able to see you well. Always wear bright-colored clothes and if it is dark or hard to see, carry flashlights or wear reflective gear.

### **Look for traffic**

Watch out for cars and trucks at every driveway and intersection on your walk to school. Look for drivers in parked cars. They may be getting ready to move.

### **Cross the street safely**

1. Stop at the curb or edge of the street.
2. Look left, right, left and behind you and in front of you for traffic.
3. Wait until no traffic is coming and begin crossing.
4. Keep looking for traffic until you have finished crossing.
5. Walk, don't run across the street.

### **Obey traffic signs, signals and adult school crossing guards**





## Tips for Bicycling Safely to School

Bicycling to school is cool, but you need to be safe while doing it. Follow these tips to make sure you get to and from school safely.

**Protect Your Head!** Always wear a helmet.

**See and Be Seen.** Wear brightly colored clothes so others can see you better. Don't bike at night.

**Learn Rules of The Road.** Obey traffic signals and lights, and always use hand signals when stopping or turning.

**Make Sure Your Bike is Adjusted Properly.** Tell an adult if anything is broken or wrong with your bike. Always check your brakes before riding.

**Look Left, Right, Left.** Look left, right, and left for traffic at stops signs and driveways before riding out into the street.

**Stop and walk** your bike across busy intersections.

**Stay Alert.** Use your eyes AND ears and always keep a lookout for obstacles in your path.

**Check for Traffic.** Always be aware of the traffic around you.

**Control Your Bicycle.** Always keep your hands on the handlebars. Carry books and other items in a bicycle carrier or backpack. And remember, one seat = one rider!





## Sample Parental Consent Form for Participation in Walk/Bike to School Event

[Walk to School Day event] is a component of the Safe Routes to School program. Safe Routes to School works with the community to get children to school actively and safely. This [Walk/Bike to School Day event] is an opportunity for students, parents, school staff, and the community to come together to celebrate and experience the benefits of walking and biking.

As parent/guardian of (student name) \_\_\_\_\_,

I give permission       I do not give permission

for my child to participate in the Walk/Bike to School Day event.

My child will leave from:

- home
- walking school bus or bike train
- drop off location
- other

The event will take place during [date and time]:

Signature of Child's Parent or Guardian:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

If I have any questions about the program, I can contact:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, Telephone)



## Sample Photo Release Form

Production: \_\_\_\_\_

Shoot Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Shoot Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have participated as indicated in the above program, which I understand will be produced and recorded for duplication and distribution in the United States and abroad, and I agree that the producer holds the copyright to any and all audio and/or visual materials recorded here on this date. I agree that insofar as I am concerned, this production may be edited as desired and used whole or in part for audio and/or visual media purposes, closed circuit exhibition purposes, and all other broadcast and media purposes (including but not limited to film festivals, internet, web sites, pod cast, social networking media, radio, television, print, video, photographs, sound, and home video distribution) in perpetuity in the United States and abroad.

I consent to publication of the program transcript in whole or in part and also to the use of my name, likeness, voice, and biographical material about me in connection with program publicity and for institutional promotional purposes. I agree that I will not be paid, and I expressly release the producer from any privacy, defamation, or other claims I may have arising out of exhibition, broadcast, or publication or promotion of this program.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print clearly)

*Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Can we contact you at a later date for a follow-up interview? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF PARTICIPANTS UNDER AGE 18: I represent that I am a parent (guardian) of the minor who has signed the above release, and I hereby agree that we shall both be bound thereby.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print clearly)

*Signature:* Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_





## Sample News Release Guidelines

The following template news release can be tailored to officially engage the media surrounding Massachusetts Walk and Bike to School Day, International Walk to School Day, or other events being organized throughout the year.

### Using the Template

- Fill in the bracketed areas with your organization/event information
- Contact Information: It is important to choose a point person for the news release who will be available both once the release is distributed and throughout the event. Use the contact phone number that has the greatest likelihood of reaching the person.
- Length: The ideal news release is no longer than one page in length.
- Identify Media Contacts for your local newspaper, radio station, or television station.
- Distribution: A few days or the day before the event, distribute the release to local media contacts (television, radio, and newspaper). Email, fax, mail and hand-delivery are all ways to distribute the release.
- Materials: Have copies of the news release available at the event. In addition, you may also compile a press kit, including fact sheets, backgrounders and biographies.

**Scroll down for a sample news release.**



FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE  
[Release date]

CONTACT: [Name, number  
and email]

## [City, county, area] school(s) to celebrate Walk and Bike to School Day on [date]

[City, State] – [Name of school, participating organizations, etc.] in [city] will be celebrating the benefits of a Walk and Bike to School Day on [date].

Approximately [number] students from [name of school(s) participating] will be walking and bicycling to school [day(s) of the week] along with parents, teachers and community leaders. [List any names and titles of participating community leaders or prominent figures].

The event will begin at [time] with kids, parents and community leaders walking and bicycling from [start location]. Walkers and bicyclists will arrive at the school at [time]. Other special activities associated with the walk and ride include [list any additional event details such as giveaways, using a walkability checklist or holding a pep rally].

Walk and Bike to School events work to create safer routes for walking and bicycling and emphasize the importance of issues such as increasing physical activity among children, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, concern for the environment and building connections between families, schools and the broader community.

The event is being organized by [organizing group(s)]. [Include additional information about your program and how it fits into the larger picture for the community, whether it is part of a Safe Routes to School programs, etc.]

For additional local information, please contact [name] at [phone number, if possible, give a cell phone number or other number that enables the media to contact the individual during the event].

For additional information about Massachusetts Safe Routes to School, visit [www.commute.com/saferoutes](http://www.commute.com/saferoutes).



## About the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program

- Massachusetts established the Commonwealth's Walk and Bike to School Day in 2007. In May 2010, more than 65 Safe Routes partner schools conducted over 190 events in the month-long effort to encourage walking and bicycling for school travel.
- Massachusetts Safe Routes to School, a program of *MassRIDES*, the Commonwealth's travel options program, is a service of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and is supported by the Federal Highway Administration.
- Massachusetts Safe Routes to School partners with over 380 elementary and middle schools that are attended by over 180,000 students in 121 communities (more than 30% of municipalities) across the Commonwealth to deliver the Safe Routes to School program.
- Nationally, Safe Routes initiatives are serving 7% of students. In Massachusetts, the Safe Routes program is reaching nearly 25% of kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- School partners implement comprehensive Safe Routes initiatives, involving all 5 Es necessary for success: education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation.
  - In some communities, school-related traffic can contribute up to 25 percent of morning rush hour traffic volumes, as well as significant air pollution. Walking and bicycling to school offers an opportunity for children to get physical activity as part of their daily routine, while reducing congestion and improving air quality around schools.
- Safe Routes to School is designed to address pressing transportation and public health issues. Almost one-third of high school and middle school students in Massachusetts are overweight or obese. Nationally, 19% of children age 6-11 years are overweight, more than triple the percentages from 1969.





5. I am pleased with the volunteers who walked my child/children to school. (Circle)

YES            NO

6. I think my child/children are getting more physical activity as a result of participating in the walk to school day. (Circle)

YES            NO

7. My child/children enjoyed walking to and from school (Circle)

YES            NO

8. I believe that the program has helped my family get to know our neighbors better (Circle)

YES            NO

10. What did you like about the Walk and Bike to School Day?

11. What should be changed moving forward?

Additional comments and suggestions:

Your name and telephone number (optional):

\_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

