



Walking School Bus Introductory letter and questionnaire for parents

Dear Parents

We are writing to invite you and your family to participate in the Walking School Bus (WSB) program, an innovative way for children to walk to school. This is both an international concept and an Australia-wide program that provides the opportunity for children to walk to school with their friends in Walking School Buses, supervised by adult volunteers. The program addresses the issues of childhood obesity and low fitness levels, the environment, sustainable transport, community connectivity and road safety education.

The program was established in the ACT in July 2003 and has since won a number of awards:

- The Sustainable Transport section of the ACT Sustainable Cities Award, 2006
- The 2006 NAB Volunteer Awards, NT/ACT section, State winner for Health and Well Being
- The 2007 NAB Volunteer Awards, TAS/NT/ACT section, Runner up in recognition of outstanding achievement in demonstrating best practice volunteering.

What is a Walking School Bus?

- A WSB is made up of two adult volunteer leaders who walk along an agreed route, collecting children at designated pick-up points and walking them either to or from school.
- Most routes are up to 1.5 kilometres long. This is a distance that most children can comfortably walk within 20 – 30 minutes.
- Children who live further from the school can be dropped off at a designated Walking School Bus stop.
- There is a maximum of eight children per adult.
- The service is free. It relies on volunteers: the more volunteers, the more days a WSB can run.
- The YWCA of Canberra provides police checks and public liability insurance cover for volunteers.
- Children under ten years of age have not yet developed the necessary skills and capacity to understand and interpret traffic and are therefore greatly encouraged to join a Walking School Bus.

What are the benefits of participating in the WSB program?

- increased level of physical activity for children and adults
- increased road safety skills for children
- fewer cars around schools
- reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- greater sense of community
- greater independence for children
- the opportunity to make friends
- save time by not always having to accompany your child to school
- save money on before school care and fuel costs
- a fun start to the day!

Who can volunteer to lead the Walking School Bus?

- All parents and family members 21 or over
- Parents of participating children are not required to volunteer. However, their active participation is strongly encouraged, as the success of a WSB relies on parent volunteers.

Help us get the Walking School Bus moving!

If your children are interested in joining a WSB, please complete the attached questionnaire and the Student Consent Form and return them to the school. If there is sufficient interest, the walking route, pick up points, schedule, volunteer rosters and starting date will be based on the information provided and developed through consultation with interested volunteers. Volunteers will also be contacted regarding a short induction session.

Tiffany Henderson, Walking School Bus Program Manager

Walking School Bus Questionnaire

Please complete this questionnaire if you wish your child/children to participate in the Walking School Bus. If you have any questions or need help filling in the questionnaire, please ring the Walking School Bus program on 6239 6878 or email on wsb@ywca-canberra.org.au or david.turbayne@ywca-canberra.org.au.

Your personal details will be treated in confidence.
Please return the questionnaire and Student Consent Form to the school office.

Section 1: The Walking School Bus

Name of school:

How do your children generally get to school?

Please provide the following details about your child/children who would like to use the Walking School Bus.

Child's First Name	Child's Surname	Age

Please provide the following details.

Parents' Names	
Address	
Home number	
Work/mobile number	
Home email	
Work email	

Section 2: Walking School Bus Volunteers

Would you or another adult family member (21 years or over) be willing to lead the Walking School Bus with another volunteer on a rostered basis?

YES / NO

End of survey for those answering NO to question 5a.

If **yes**, please write down the name or names of the volunteer/s and contact details.

	Volunteer 1	Volunteer 2
Name		
Contact details		

Please advise on which day/s the volunteers would be able to lead the Walking School Bus.

	Volunteer 1					Volunteer 2				
	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F
Mornings										

Thank you for taking the time to complete these questions.

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