



Irvington PTSA Walking School Bus Frequently Asked Questions

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Is the Walking School Bus an alternative to the District bus system?

No, the Walking School Bus is a PTSA-sponsored way to focus on safe walking rules and teach your kids skills they can use when they walk independently. It's a way to share the walk with your kids and your neighbors. A lot of informal walking groups grow out of these walks, but this is a more formal version. Without parent volunteers who agree to help walk others' kids to school, every parent must walk with their own kids. Our aim is safety and fun, and sometimes activities like a scavenger hunt will be a part of the walk, or prizes will be distributed at the end of the walk. Check for a volunteer at the picnic table near the entrance to Dows Lane on Thursday mornings between 7:45 and 8 AM on dates that have been designed Walking School bus days during spring and fall.

When does the Walking School Bus run?

The Walking School Bus is an opportunity to parents and kids to walk to school together practicing safe walking every Thursday morning. The seasons are generally fall and spring, for up to 9 weeks in each season. We sometimes do walks in the winter as well, but they depend on interest and weather conditions.

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Will my child be picked up?

Not necessarily. Your child should meet the group with a parent, relative or sitter and may walk with them for part or all of the trip to school. In some cases, when several conditions are met, kids can walk with another parent. 1) If a parent on your route has volunteered to walk with others' children while following the "rules of the road" – link [here](#). [scroll through to the second page to see the complete list of guidelines.]

2) Your child has agreed to follow the group rules and understands that he or she can be excluded from further walks if they do not follow the rules, as they can endanger themselves and others. If you think your child will benefit from seeing the rules, [here](#) is a link to the simplified pledge for children.

3) There are sufficient adults to provide supervision to the group according to the ratio described below.

Do I have to walk with my child?

See the answer above: Will my child be picked up?

How many adults should walk with the group at a minimum?

The ratio for adult supervision is one parent to three children for ages 4-6, one parent to six children for ages 7-10. These are the same guidelines that schools follow when taking kids on field trips, and are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control [national organization that keeps statistics on traffic injuries and fatalities.] If a parent volunteer isn't available to provide sufficient supervision for the walkers, the group may be canceled or the last to sign up will be excluded.

I can't walk with my child on a given week; Can my family member or sitter walk with him/her?

Of course! Unfortunately, due to liability, those outside of parents/legal guardians cannot supervise other kids in the group.

I feel it's unsafe for me to walk with my kids from my house. What can we do to join the walk?

A number of District families don't have sidewalks, or have to cross Route 9 without a traffic light. In the past, we have met up at stops that are close to the Aqueduct or to an accessible sidewalk. Others who do not have routes near enough to their house have joined friends in parts of the neighborhood where there is a safer route. At other times, the Irvington police have made themselves available to cross groups on Broadway.

There isn't always a perfect fit, but we'll do our best to work out a way to get you and your kids walking.

How will you get me in touch with my route?

By Monday evening/Tuesday morning of each week, you should get a group email that will include the people from your area who are walking with their kids. Please

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respond to the group so that we can get an accurate count of kid and parent walkers. As the season goes on, parents may be able to make arrangements to share the walk. Right now, one route, Lower Main Street, has a designated leader. The rest of the routes do not have a leader who has agreed to share supervision of other people's kids.

How do I become a route leader?

Email Maura at irvingtonsaferoutes@gmail.com. We will provide you with a reflective vest and a stop sign, and other supplies.

I don't like getting a lot of emails each week for these arrangements.

In the past we have had volunteers from various groups set up a signup genius for their route so that all the group members don't get the extra emails each week. If you would like to volunteer to set up the signup genius, the coordinator, Maura Gedid, can show you what has been done in the past. However, short of investing in an app [being researched] we haven't found a way to contact for last minute cancellations that does not require an extra email or text.

Does the walk ever get canceled?

You will hear from your group or from the coordinator via email early on Thursday morning if the entire walk has been canceled. Please check email before you start out if the weather forecast looks like heavy rain is possible. If someone has to drop out, particularly if a designated leader has to drop out of a single group – emergencies do come up – we ask you to contact the group directly.

Who is the coordinator for the program?

Maura Gedid is the Walking School Bus Committee chair. You can always reach her at irvingtonsaferoutes@gmail.com or 917-439-4093.

I sent in a form to sign up for the Walking School Bus, but I haven't heard about my route yet.

Please send an email to irvingtonsaferoutes@gmail.com.

I'd like my child to walk to school, but it's too far for them.

Why not drive to a nearer location and join a group further along? For reasons of time and my younger son's complaints, we have chosen to park and walk this season. Since parents get to school without cars, it also makes the return trip after drop off much faster.

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Is there more information available about how old kids are when they learn the skills needed to walk safely?

Yes! [Here](#).

All signup forms and information brochures about the walking school bus and walking safety for children are available on the PTSA website:

<http://www.irvingtonnyptsa.org/walking-school-bus-committee.html>