

Starting a Walk Together Group



SmartSteps
FOR FAMILIES



A Walk Together Group is an arrangement between families in a neighbourhood to take turns to walk children to and/or from school or other destinations.

As participating children get older, they can walk together without adults.

Benefits of Walk Together Groups:

For children

- Improving concentration and learning outcomes
- Enjoying and maintaining a healthy physical habit
- Gaining independence when they begin to walk without supervision
- Learning safe pedestrian behaviour

For parents and carers

- Sharing responsibility so that children can walk more often
- Enjoying quality time with children in a relaxed setting
- Saving money on car use and avoiding driving in busy traffic
- Reducing car exhaust pollution

For everyone

- Enjoying fresh air and physical activity
- Getting to know the neighbours

A Walk Together Group runs in the way you and other families choose - see overleaf for tips to get yours started.

Supported by



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Find other families

Talk to parents or carers you see at school, in the playground or supermarket about children walking to or from school. Find out their interest in joining you in a Walk Together Group and taking turns walking with children. Alternatively, place a notice in the school newsletter, local classifieds or a shop window.

If you can, arrange to plan the Group with interested families, so everyone is involved and shares responsibilities. Invite people to talk about the Group over coffee or at a barbecue, choosing a time and place so that participating children can play.



Start small if you need to

Some Walk Together Groups are large, but they can be small if only a few families are interested. Walk Together Groups can grow as others join over time.



Check your availability

Identify who is available to walk children to school, and on which days of the week. Even one or two days of walking are better than none.



Decide on a walking route

Choose routes that allow available parents and carers to collect and walk with other children on the way. The route will depend on where participating families live, and it may vary depending on the parent or carer that is walking the Group.

Children may like to be involved in route planning as well; ask them to help you identify the school, homes, meeting points and walking routes on a map. Create the map online using [Walking Maps](#). For guidance, refer to the [Families guide to Walking Maps](#).

To find out how suitable a street or route is for children to walk, refer to [Smart Steps: for Families – How child-friendly is your street?](#)



Have fun!

A Walk Together Group should be enjoyable. If you have challenges, stay positive. Remind yourself and others in the Group of the great benefits for everyone involved. If you are encouraging and enjoying walking, chances are your children will too!

Consider ways to make the Group more fun. Perhaps alter the route, walk with a dog, stop for a milkshake along the way or do an activity as you walk (see [Smart Steps: for Families – Activity Sheets](#)).



Get involved even if you live far from school

If you drive children to or from school, identify a location a reasonable distance from school where children can be dropped off or collected. This gives children the chance to walk part-way, and it improves congestion at the school gate. Consider a Walk Together Group that walks children to school from this point.

If children travel to or from school by public transport, consider walking them to a more distant stop or station. Alternatively, children could get off public transport at an earlier stop or station and walk to school from there.

Consider a Walk Together Group for another situation, such as children travelling from school to swimming lessons or netball training.

If you have concerns that an area around your child's school is not suitable for children to walk, suggest to the school that they register for [Smart Steps: for Primary Schools](#) and undertake the class walkability project.

Need more advice? Contact Victoria Walks – We are here to help you make streets and neighbourhoods better for walking.