



Arrival and Dismissal

Mini
saferoutes.vermont.gov
Guide

WHAT'S IN THIS MINIGUIDE?

This VT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) MiniGuide explains how to manage arrival and dismissal procedures to improve conditions for walking and biking around your school.

In this MiniGuide, you will find:

- Basic Steps
- Strategy Examples
- Real World Examples

Click this icon  to access the listed resource.

What is it?

Arrival and dismissal periods can be problematic for parents and students, regardless of whether they are on foot, on a bike, or in a car. Congestion, double-parking, and Disorderly pick-up and drop-off can contribute to unsafe conditions.

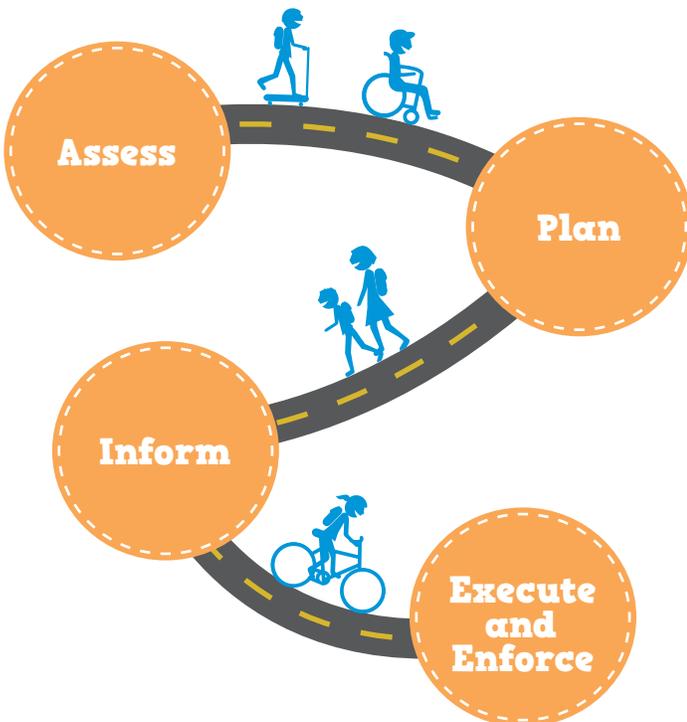
Why is it important?

Schools can take steps to improve the efficiency and safety of arrival and dismissal activities, resulting in improved conditions for parents and students.

What is the level of effort involved?

Moderate: Observing conditions, updating school rules and policies, communicating rules with parents, and monitoring parking lot at arrival and dismissal to enforce rules and practices.

WHAT TO EXPECT



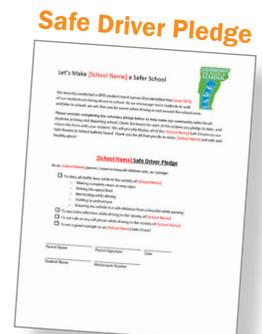
RESOURCES PREVIEW

Additional resources from VT SRTS and the National SRTS Resource Center are linked or available for download on the VT SRTS website:

- **Safe Driver Pledge** : Editable pledge for parents to sign, pledging to drive safely and follow the school's traffic rules.
- **No Idling Background Sheet** : Information sheet on the dangers of idling for parents.
- **"Parents, Avoid Being a Traffic Hazard" Flyer** : Information sheet on safe driving tips, especially in the context of arrival and dismissal.



"Parents, Avoid Being a Traffic Hazard" flyer



Basic Steps

Arrival and dismissal periods are by nature busy times for a school. The majority of students and their families convene in a central place in a small window of time, which can create congestion and confusion. Although this will likely always be a busy time, schools can take steps to improve the efficiency and safety of walkers, bicyclists, and drivers during arrival and dismissal.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS

- 1. Assess** Either as part of a Walk Audit or a stand alone activity, the School Champion and school staff should observe arrival and dismissal and record issues or unsafe behavior. Common concerns include students running around vehicles, double parked vehicles, missing sidewalks or crosswalks, idling vehicles, and long lines of vehicles.
- 2. Plan** Develop strategies to address issues identified in the assessment. See the examples on the next page. Discuss the strategies with school staff, Parent Teacher Organization, and others who may be interested or involved in implementing.
- 3. Inform** Once you have developed new plans and policies to address arrival and dismissal, communicate these with school staff, students, and parents. Parents can be informed with backpack fliers or one-on-one discussions with school staff. You can print and distribute the **“No Idling” background sheet** [📄](#), **Safe Driver Pledge** [📄](#), and **“Parents, Avoid Being a Traffic Hazard” flyer** [📄](#) to communicate the importance of safe driving.
- 4. Execute and Enforce** Begin executing your selected strategies to improve the arrival and dismissal process. Enforce your new and/or existing policies and procedures. School staff can monitor the school parking lot area for unsafe behavior or lack of adherence to the new arrival and dismissal policies.

KEY POINTS

FREQUENCY

Communicate twice a year, monitor regularly

IMPLEMENTATION

1 month

TEAM MEMBERS

Champion, Regional Expert (Technical), Teachers and Administrators

Strategy Examples

These are some examples of strategies that schools can use to address unsafe or chaotic behavior and congestion in school parking lots. This is not an exhaustive list; schools are encouraged to think creatively about addressing issues. Consult the Regional Experts in your area for further ideas.

EXAMPLES

Encourage Students to Walk/Bike to School

While this strategy may seem obvious, shifting modes helps alleviate vehicle congestion at the school grounds.

Designate Drop-Off / Pick-Up Queue

Designate a space for vehicles to queue for drop-off and pick-up, away from biking or walking areas. This queue can be directed by volunteers during arrival who can escort students from the vehicle to the school or sidewalk leading to the school.

Grant Priority Dismissal for Walkers/Bicyclists

Staggered dismissal times allow students who walk and bicycle to leave the parking lot before vehicles begin exiting. This is an incentive for students to walk and bike as well as a way to help them exit the parking lot before potential vehicle conflicts.

Establish Remote Drop-Off

Designate a location within walking distance from school where students can be dropped off and walk the rest of the way to school. School buses can also drop students off at a remote location to allow them to walk as well. Remote drop-off locations can help reduce traffic congestion at the school.

Build Sidewalks

Build sidewalks or paths along the perimeter of the parking lot or connecting to local street sidewalks to provide a space for students walking and biking.

Install Crosswalks and signage

Install crosswalks and signage to help prioritize pedestrian movements in or adjacent to parking lots. This also helps separate pedestrians from vehicles.

Communicate on Rules, Safety, and Etiquette

Distribute information to parents on parking lot rules and safety. Information can be delivered via backpack fliers, Parent Teacher Organization meetings, discussion with teachers, etc. You can print and distribute the [“No Idling” background sheet](#), [Safe Driver Pledge](#), and [“Parents, Avoid Being a Traffic Hazard” flyer](#) to communicate the importance of safe driving.

Monitor Parking Lot

Monitor the parking lot and address drivers who may be breaking rules / driving unsafely.

Paint Artwork on Pavement in Parking Lot

Paint colorful shapes or images to signal drivers to slow down. These markings can also celebrate school spirit.

Enforce No Idling on School Parking Lot

Establish a “No Idling” zone where parents can park their vehicles but can not keep them running / idling. This addresses air quality around the school. The [“No Idling” background sheet](#) includes additional information on the importance of not idling.

Real World Examples

1

Troy School staggers dismissal times to allow students who walk or bicycle to leave first, which allows them to clear the parking lot before most of the vehicles. The school worked with the municipality to update school zone signage and crosswalks around the school to improve the visibility of students walking and bicycling to and from school.



2

Rutland Intermediate and Middle Schools adopted two strategies to avoid conflicts between walkers/bicyclists and vehicles. First, the school dismisses students walking, bicycling, riding the bus, or being picked up in a family vehicle through different exits. Walkers and bikers leave through the rear exit, bus riders leave through the side exit where buses are lined up, and car riders leave through the front exit where there is a traffic loop. Crossing guards are stationed at nearby intersections. Second, the school staggers dismissal so that walkers and bikers can clear the area before vehicle traffic begins.