



# Walk and Roll to School Days


Mini  
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Guide

## WHAT'S IN THIS MINIGUIDE?

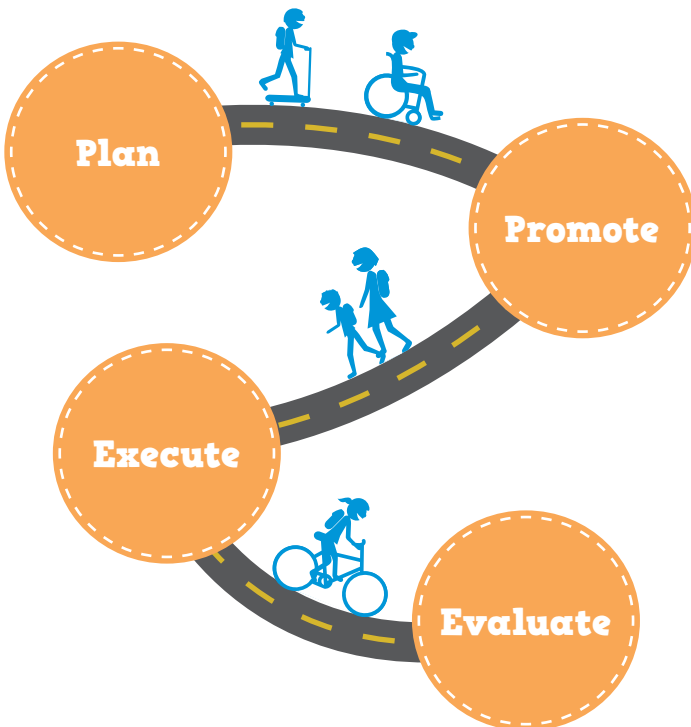
This VT Safe Routes to School MiniGuide explains how to host a successful and fun Walk and Roll to School day and related events.

In this MiniGuide, you will find:

- Basic Steps
- Event Tips
- Real World Examples

Click this icon  to access the listed resource.

## WHAT TO EXPECT



### What is it?

A Walk and Roll to School Day is a special day dedicated to walking and biking to school. Special attention is paid to remote drop-off locations, walking school buses and bike trains, and other activities to encourage families to walk and bike to school.

### Why is it important?





Walk and Roll to School events help sustain SRTS programs by building excitement among students and encouraging community participation. By devoting a special day to walking and biking, families who do not typically walk or bike to school may realize how easy and fun it is, and may be encouraged to do so more often.

### What is the level of effort involved?

**Low to moderate:** Planning logistics, coordinating with the school community, managing the event. The level of effort should decrease over time if offered regularly because planning and executing becomes routine.

## RESOURCES PREVIEW

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

- **Event Flyer** : Editable flyer to send home with students and/or distribute to community members to announce the event
- **Remote Drop-Off Letter** : Editable letter inviting parents drop students off at a remote location where students then walk to school as a group.
- **Editable Opt-Out Form** : Editable form for parents to opt-out of their child participating in a Walk and Roll to School event. Schools often see higher participation rates using opt-out forms than opt-in permission slips.
- **International Walk to School Day Sign Up** : National website where you can sign your school up for International Walk to School Day and represent your state. Vermont has ranked second in the country for participation in past years!

# Basic Steps

A **Walk and Roll to School Day** is an enjoyable, visible way to encourage walking and bicycling to school. Here are some tips for making these events successful and fun!

## FOLLOW THESE STEPS

### 1. Plan

- Gather support. Always start by seeking the principal's permission.
- Build a team and assign responsibilities. This team can consist of school staff and parent volunteers, or community members such as law enforcement officers, local bicycling groups, public health professionals and other community leaders.
- Choose a date (see **Monthly Event Ideas** on the page 3 for suggestions). Schedule it for maximum impact and participation, and encourage participants to dress appropriately for the weather. Wednesdays and Fridays have been popular days among Vermont schools.
- Assess and address any barriers to walking and biking to school (see the **Walk Audit MiniGuide** [↗](#)). Identify and map routes based on this assessment. Confirm routes with local law enforcement and invite their participation and, if needed, assistance in controlling traffic.
- Accommodate all students (see **Accommodating All Students** on page 3 for additional information).
- Consider **Walking School Buses** or **Bike Trains** where students gather at a meeting point, walk or bike together, and pick up others along the way. (See **Walking School Buses and Bike Trains MiniGuide** [↗](#)).
- Depending on the scale of your event, you can seek donations from the parent-teacher organization or local businesses if necessary.

### 2. Promote

- Advertise to parents and students—and remind students of walking and bicycling safety tips—through social media and the school website, school assemblies, newsletter articles, send-home flyers, school posters, local media, or in-school and parent-teacher conference announcements.
- Include dates in the school calendar and promote during back-to-school registration/open house.
- Send parents an Opt-Out form for those who do not want to participate.
- Remind parents and students to plan accordingly for weather conditions.

### 3. Execute

- Support students during the event: walk with them, help them cross busy intersections, or act as cheerleaders along the route.
- Greet students as they enter the school. Provide an incentive item if desired. (See **Contests and Incentives MiniGuide for Ideas** [↗](#)).
- Count the number of students walking and biking to measure progress over time.
- Consider fun and unique ways to bring variety to your event (see **Suggestions to Spice Up Your Event** on page 3 for more information).

### 4. Evaluate

- Analyze participation rates and level of effort, and ask team members to provide feedback. Adjust the event logistics as needed to encourage greater participation and/or streamline the process for the next event.
- Share photos on your school's website or Facebook page.
- Schedule your next Walk and Roll to School event.

## KEY POINTS

### FREQUENCY

At least once per year

### IMPLEMENTATION

1–4 weeks to plan +  
1 day to implement

### TEAM MEMBERS

Champion, teachers,  
volunteers

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Get permission from the  
principal before taking  
photos of children.

### EVENTS REQUIRED FOR



Remember to update your  
Partner Progress Report  
once you've completed this  
activity to advance to the  
next level! [↗](#)

# Event Tips

## MONTHLY EVENT IDEAS

<b>September</b>	Walk and Bike Back to School	<b>February</b>	Winter Walk Day (first Wednesday in February), Healthy Heart Hike (American Heart Month)
<b>October</b>	<b>International Walk to School Day</b> (first Wednesday in October) <a href="#">🔗</a>	<b>March</b>	St. Patrick's Day Walk: Go Green
<b>November</b>	Turkey Trot	<b>April</b>	National Start Walking Day (American Heart Association), Earth Day Walk and Bike, National Walk at Lunch Day (Blue Cross Blue Shield)
<b>December</b>	Jingle Bell Walk, Snowman Stride	<b>May</b>	Vermont Walk and Roll to School Day and Intergenerational Walk (first Wednesday in May), National Bike to School Day, Way to Go! School Challenge
<b>January</b>	Polar Bear Walk	<b>June</b>	End of the Year Celebration, Safety Day Walk and Bike ("Bling Yourself" award for most visible outfit)

## ACCOMMODATING ALL STUDENTS

Despite your best efforts, there will always be some students who cannot walk or bike to school. Make an effort to design your event in a manner that allows all students to participate:

- **Host a Walk at School Event.** Invite all students to walk around the school grounds during lunch or before or after classes. Provide the same rewards, incentives, and encouragement as your Walk or Bike to School Event.
- **Establish a Remote Drop-Off Location,** a pre-determined place where school buses and family vehicles drop off students who then walk the remaining distance to school in groups. Locate a drop-off site within walking distance to school and get approval from the property owner. Test and map a safe route to school from this location (see the [Walk Audit MiniGuide](#) [🔗](#)). Promote the location and route, and make sure parents or volunteers walk with the students.

## SUGGESTIONS TO SPICE UP YOUR EVENT

Not all Walk and Roll to School events have to be the same. Consider some of the following suggestions to spice up your event:

- **Themed Walk:** Students can wear school colors, a costume, or create signs and banners to carry on their walk.
- **Student Artwork:** Students can make signs art class or after school that celebrate walking or biking to school. Place signs along the walking and bicycling routes with permission from property owners.
- **Special Guests:** Invite a local celebrity, elected, official, or parent/grandparent to join the event.
- **Event Pairing:** Your school can host another event, such as a safety fair, bike rodeo, or celebration in conjunction with Walk and Roll to School Day.
- **Police Support:** Law enforcement can assist with traffic or close down a street near the school if needed for the event. They may also enjoy joining the walk!
- **Incentive Items:** Give small tokens to students who participate. Examples include a sticker, pencil, or a healthy snack.
- **Walk to School and Work Event:** Encourage parents to walk or bike to work after accompanying their children to school.
- **Contests and Competitions:** Host a schoolwide contest to increase excitement and participation rates for your event. Students or classrooms can compete for most miles per days walked or biked to school.

# Real World Examples

**1** **Ottaquechee School's** first Walk to School Day was a huge success with over 100 children and 40 parents in attendance, along with members of the Chamber of Commerce and the Select Board. The school widely publicized the event in part to alert commuters to watch for students along roads near the school. The police department sent an officer to direct traffic at the crosswalk. Many families contributed fresh fruit as healthy snacks for walkers. The school has made Walk to School Day a biannual tradition and invited a neighboring school to join them.



**2** To stress the link between walking and health, **Barre Town Middle and Elementary School** posted signs with fun facts about health and fitness along walking routes to school on International Walk to School Day.

**3** Don't limit yourself to International Walk to School Day! The **Shelburne Community School** 5th grade leadership team instituted a "Hike It, Bike It" campaign to encourage more children to walk and bike to school in May. Students walked and biked to school on Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout the month. They promoted the events by putting up signs and making announcements at school.

