



## Walking Bus Guidelines for Co-ordinators/Operators

### **Shropshire Council's Third Party Public Liability Insurance**

Walking Bus operators are covered whilst driving or conducting the Walking Bus. If an incident occurs and any volunteer is thought to have been negligent, compensation claims could be made against them. However such claims would normally be dealt with by the County Council's insurers under the terms of the SCC policy rather than the individual being sued.

As long as the individual was acting in good faith and within the limits of his/her duties, and following the guidelines as detailed herein, they would be covered by Shropshire Council's policy. There is no personal accident cover provided. This would have to be taken out separately by the individual.

For further insurance advice, please contact Angela Beechey, Insurance Officer, on 01743 252073.

### **Number of Adults Needed**

- For the Walking Bus to be viable there must be enough adults to cover each journey to school on the established route. The same applies if the Walking Bus also operates at the end of the school day.
- There must be a *minimum* of two adults supervising each route – one to be the 'driver' leading the group and the other to be the 'conductor' following at the rear. This ensures that all the children can be seen and kept under control.
- Shropshire Council's recommended ratio is:
  - 1 adult to 4 children (infants) (Key Stage 1)
  - 1 adult to 8 children (juniors) (Key Stage 2)

and for mixed Key Stage 1 and 2 groups the guidance is:

- if the number of infants **does not exceed 50%** then a 1 adult to 6 pupil ratio should be used.
- if the number of infants **does exceed 50%** then use a 1 adult to 8 pupil ratio for the KS2 element and 1 adult to 4 pupil ratio for the KS1 element and add together to achieve the number of adults required.

### Examples

1) 12 children – 4 infants, 8 juniors  
Number of infants does not exceed 50%  
1:6 ratio applies = 2 operators  
2 adult operators required

2) 12 children – 8 infants, 4 juniors  
Number of infants exceeds 50%  
1:4 ratio applies for infants = 2 operators  
1:8 ratio applies for juniors = 0.5 operator  
Rounded up, 3 adult operators required

3) 20 children – 9 infants, 11 juniors  
Number of infants does not exceed 50%  
1:6 ratio applies = 3.33 operators  
Rounded up, 4 adult operators required

4) 20 children – 11 infants, 9 juniors  
Number of infants exceeds 50%  
1:4 ratio applies for infants = 2.75 operators  
1:8 ratio applies for juniors = 1.125 operator  
Rounded up, 4 adult operators required

- We recommend that adults hold hands with children under 7 years of age but realise that this is not always a practical option.

## **Training**

- All volunteers will need to be CRB checked – forms will be available from the school.
- Training will be led by Shropshire Council’s Road Safety Section.
- Each volunteer will be given a copy of the guidelines after training. Their role will have been explained and any queries they have will have been answered.
- Advice will have been given on walking and crossing roads safely with large groups of children.
- Monitoring visits may be made as and when necessary and generally on an annual basis.
- Volunteers who join the Walking Bus after the initial training session will be trained by the Walking Bus co-ordinator and issued with the relevant paperwork

## **Records**

- The school Co-ordinator should keep an up to date record of all volunteers and their contact details. Copies should be available to all volunteers.
- The school should have a record of the route/s and pick up/drop off times, CRBs and a copy of the Risk Assessment.
- Road Safety Section will keep a copy of the risk assessment and agreement form.
- Parent consent forms for children on the Walking Bus should be kept by the school.

## **Parental Consent**

Parents should be issued with Bus user guidelines and consent forms.

Parents sign to say that:

- They are allowing their children to participate at their own risk.
- They have impressed on them the need to behave sensibly and follow any instructions given by the adults in charge.

Parents must inform the Walking Bus Co-ordinator of which days the child will use the Bus and if there are to be any changes to this pattern. The school should keep the consent forms so that the Co-ordinator can enter the details on the register.

## **Bus Timetable**

- The Bus should operate to a strict timetable and not wait at any of the bus stops for latecomers, even if certain children are expected to travel.
- If the Bus operates after school, parents must ensure that they are waiting at the bus stop when their child is dropped off on the way home, unless they have given permission for them to continue home from that point unsupervised.

- If parents are not at the bus stop when the Bus arrives on the way home, the child will stay with the Bus and be taken to the end of the route. Arrangements need to be agreed within the school in the event of a parent not showing up. Parents need to remember that they are responsible for their child's safety on the way to and from the 'stops'.

## **Safety Guidelines**

- Adults and children must wear high visibility tabards. Warning signs are available to indicate that a Walking Bus may be operating.
- The route will already have been assessed for risk. This route must be used at all times. If any part of the pathway cannot be used because of a temporary blockage such as road works, the adults need to divert accordingly. Persistent problems should be reported to the Road Safety Section and an alternative route agreed.
- Where possible the need to cross roads will be kept to a minimum and specific crossing places will be used whenever possible.
- Drivers and conductors must remain with the group on the authorised route. Both parties must take care when children join and leave the Bus.
- It is a good idea for the driver/conductor to give newcomers a brief reminder about the behaviour expected and the need for Road Safety Awareness.
- Emphasise that children must listen to the conductor and driver and obey their instructions – in particular with regard to stopping and crossing.
- The driver will be in front leading the group with the conductor following at the rear so that all children can be seen and kept in order.
- The children must walk along the pavement away from the kerb in an orderly manner, and in pairs when possible, allowing other pedestrians to pass.
- Everyone should be aware of the danger when crossing driveways, especially as drivers may not notice small children.

## **Crossing Roads**

### **General Information.**

- When you are ready to cross the road, choose a safe crossing place away from parked cars, corners and junctions etc.
- We would not recommend using a traffic island with large groups of children unless it is possible to cross the width of the road in one go.
- When crossing, gather children around you away from the kerb until you have decided it is safe to cross. It may be safer and quicker to cross them in a bunch (e.g. 3 rows of 4 abreast rather than stretched out in pairs). Walk across, looking and listening as you go. When you have crossed safely, reform your group and continue your journey.

- Remember, *you are not empowered to stop traffic in order to cross*. If any driver stops to allow the group to cross, it is vital that you check that other traffic is aware of what is happening and has stopped before you step into the road. There is always the danger of other drivers overtaking the stopped vehicle.

## Using Safe Places

### Pelican or Puffin Crossing

Make sure all the group is at the crossing before the Wait button is pressed. Check that the green man shows and all the traffic has stopped before attempting to cross. Do not start to cross when the green man is flashing on the pelican.

### Toucan Crossing

Cyclists are allowed to use a toucan crossing, so watch out for them as you cross.

### Zebra Crossing

Wait until all traffic has stopped from both directions before crossing the road. Keep looking and listening all the time you are crossing.

### School Crossing Patrol

Wait until the patrol has stopped the traffic and tells you it is safe to cross.

It is always advisable to make eye contact with the car drivers before stepping off the pavement at any of the above crossings.

## Remember

- In bad weather it will take the drivers longer to stop and it is more difficult to be seen.
- Extra care should be taken if you are wearing a hooded coat or using an umbrella as they can affect hearing and vision.
- If using a pram or pushchair the child should be strapped in.
- If you have other young children hold them on reins or make them hold on to the top part of the handle of the pram so you can put your hand over theirs.
- Take care not to have prams positioned over the kerb when waiting to cross.

## Further Information

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