

**Comhairle Contae  
Fhine Gall**  
Fingal County  
Council



# **Walking & Cycling Bus Starter Pack**

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# Walking Bus

A walking bus is a healthy, fun and safe way to create a culture of walking to school among students.

A walking bus is a parent led initiative that supports children walking to school.

The Walking Bus follows a set route and has designated stops along the way, with the last stop being the school.

Each walking Bus needs at a minimum, one driver, one conductor and one rover. This should cater for up to 20 children, anymore, would require extra helpers.



# Cycling Bus

A cycling bus is essentially a mobile cycle lane where parents guide children to school by bike.

Cycle Buses are a fun and safe way to introduce Children to cycling to school.

Cycle Buses can have a single meeting point at a central location or a number of stops along a designated route, each school will be slightly unique on what works best for them.

Each Cycling Bus needs at a minimum, One Lead Cyclist, One Sweep at the back and two Rovers to keep the group inside the cordon. This should be suitable for 18 Children.



# Step by Step Guide

## Step 1 - Contact Active Travel

Fingal County Council has two Walking & Cycling Officers who are there to support you in setting up a Walking or Cycling Bus. The first step, is to contact Emma or Stephen.

## Step 2 - Meet with The School Principal

It is important to get as much buy in from the school as possible, meeting with the Principal is a great second step. Here you can outline the route and ask the school to push the message to other parents. You can also ask if the walking/Cycling Bus can be named on the Pupil Personal Accident Insurance.

## Step 3 - Identify your preferred Route and Assess

You know your community best, so the next step is to select a potential route for your Bus and then Fingal can help assess the route with you for safety.

## Step 4 - Pop Up Bus

Once you have your route finalised, Fingal can assist you with a couple of pop up buses. This allows you to advertise the bus, gauge interest and identify potential volunteers.



# Step by Step Guide

## Step 5 - Identify Volunteers

Once you have completed a couple of pop up buses, we can help bring together a meeting of all interested volunteers for your route.

## Step 6 - Volunteer Responsibilities and Guidelines

When we meet with all potential volunteers we can set out guidelines for taking part, identify roles and decide on the timetable for the Walking or Cycling Bus. i.e. will it be one day a week or everyday etc? Again, each bus will have a set up that is suitable for them.

## Step 7 - Training

Once we have Steps 5 & 6 done, the next thing is to practice the route as a group, take a couple of mornings and walk/cycle with just your own children. This will help you understand the unique elements of your route. Some of this will have been identified on your pop up buses as well.



# Step by Step Guide

## Step 8 - Waivers/Consent Forms

Anyone taking part in a Walking or Cycling Bus should have a parent/guardian sign a consent form. This gives the Volunteers permission to bring your child to school and should also remove any liability from you should an accident happen like a trip or a fall.

## Step 9 - Set up a WhatsApp Group for Parents!

I know, another WhatsApp Group! While it might seem annoying, it's very handy for alerting parents to meeting points, time changes or cancellations. WhatsApp Polls are great for getting an idea how many to expect. The Fingal Team can help with admin to get you started.

## Step 10 - Get Going!

Once you have all the pieces in place, the last thing is to pick a start date and get going. Don't worry though, we won't cut you loose, we're here to help on any issues you might face.



# FAQs

## **Q. What is the ratio of supervisors to children?**

**A.** A minimum of two adults should supervise each walking bus. We would recommend a minimum ratio of 1 supervisor for a group of 8 children Walking and 6 per group Cycling.

## **Q. Does the bus operate in bad weather?**

**A.** Walking/Cycling buses operate in almost all conditions. The exception being Orange or Red Weather Warnings.

## **Q. What happens if a volunteer is unable to supervise on a particular day?**

**A.** Volunteers will be organised into a Rota by the Leader based off the availability they have provided. If for some reason they can't volunteer on a given day, you should look for another volunteer to replace them. Keeping an 'on call' volunteer each week is handy for this.

## **Q. Is Garda Vetting Required?**

**A.** Yes, all volunteers should be vetted. While the activity is technically not a school activity, most schools will oblige and take on the role of organising the vetting.





# FAQs

**Q. What is the procedure in the event of an accident or injury to a child during the journey?**

**A.** In the unlikely event of a serious injury the supervisors should contact emergency services followed by the Childs parent/guardian. A database of all contact details will be created and passed on to all volunteers.

**Q. Do Walking/Cycling Buses Operate for Drop Off and Collections?**

**A.** The majority of Buses only do the drop off to school in the morning, a lot of children go to after school activities or finish at different times of the day. The ability to include collections will vary depending on how available your volunteers are.



# Essential Forms

## Sample email to Parents

Date 01/01/24

Re: Walking/Cycling Bus Initiative

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing to ask you if you are interested in taking part in a walking bus in our area.

This will mean regular exercise for our children and also may help reduce traffic congestion around the school in the mornings. So what is a Walking Bus? A walking school bus is a fun and healthy way for children to get to and from school safely. It is a scheme that involves parent volunteers walking children to school along a set route.

The walking bus will have an adult 'driver' up the front and an adult 'supervisor' at the rear. The children walk along a set route picking up additional 'passengers' at specified 'bus stops' along the way. Along the way children can chat to their friends, learn valuable road safety skills and gain some independence. A Bus Route will be established with various stops along the way, but we are depending on other parents to volunteer as 'drivers' and 'conductors'.

There will be a meeting on the >date< to discuss the walking bus in more detail and to find out whether or not this suggestion has your support. You can Register [HERE](#) (insert Link)

I think this would be a wonderful opportunity for both the children and the parents involved. Looking forward to meeting you.

Yours Sincerely,

Comhairle Contae  
Fhine Gall  
Fingal County  
Council



# Essential Forms

## Sample Consent Form

(best done as an online form)

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred Stop: \_\_\_\_\_

### REGISTER OF CHILDREN ON WALKING/Cycling BUS

Child 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Class/Age \_\_\_\_\_

Child 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Class/Age \_\_\_\_\_

Child 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Class/Age \_\_\_\_\_

Child 4: \_\_\_\_\_ Class/Age \_\_\_\_\_

Our Child/Children walked to school before joining the walking bus: Yes/No

Is your child currently covered by Pupil Personal Accident Insurance under the School & Leisure Activities 24 hour policy? Yes/No

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian)

Walking Bus Agreement I agree to wear the reflective jacket whenever I walk with the bus. I will listen to the volunteers and behave sensibly while walking with the bus. Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Child/Children)

I wish my child to use the walking/cycling bus. He/she will travel to/from school each week unless I inform you otherwise. I have explained to my child about the need for sensible behaviour and indemnify the walking/cycling bus volunteers from any accidents that could occur as a result of my Childs participation.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian)



# Essential Forms

## Volunteer Register

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone 1: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer as a supervisor for a Walking Bus. I am available on the following Days (list): \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisors of the walking bus are required to

- Agree to undertake Garda Vetting.
- Agree to participate in supervisor training.
- Organise a replacement if unable to fulfil your post.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: Name of Bus Leader



# Contact Information

For more information or to register your interest in a Walking or Cycling Bus please contact Emma or Stephen through the emails below

**Walking & Cycling Officers**

**[Emma.court@fingal.ie](mailto:Emma.court@fingal.ie)**

**[Stephen.mcginn@fingal.ie](mailto:Stephen.mcginn@fingal.ie)**

For more information on other Active Travel Initiatives in Fingal please contact

**Fingal County Council Active Travel Unit**

**[active.travel@fingal.ie](mailto:active.travel@fingal.ie) or visit**

**[www.fingal.ie/activetravel](http://www.fingal.ie/activetravel)**

