

Active School Travel

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NSTS and Niagara Region Public Health have partnered for several years to provide Active School Travel programs to local schools. IN 2018 we received a grant from Ontario Active School Travel to support enhanced programs.

In the 2019-20 school year, we supported 26 elementary schools and with the grant we were able to collect data to understand the model of travel of students to school, complete walkabouts in school communities with partners, pilot a walking school bus and enhance [pedestrian safety resources \(/walk-zone/pedestrian-safety-video\)](#).

We have more work to do to support students walking and wheeling to school. For more information, please email AST@nsts.ca.

Why Active School Travel

If you live in your school's walk zone, your child can enjoy many benefits of a walk to and from school such as:

- Boosting readiness to learn and academic performance

- Decreasing levels of stress

- Increasing levels of happiness

On days when you may need to drive, consider a safe drop off location away from the school and let your child walk the last five minutes. This will allow them to enjoy the benefits of physical activity and help you avoid congestion around your school.

New for the 2020-21 School Year

Encouraging Active School Travel to School

The Ministry of Education

(<https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-reopening-ontarios-schools#section-9>) and Niagara Region Public Health

([https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/covid-](https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19/reopen/schools.aspx)

[19/reopen/schools.aspx](https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19/reopen/schools.aspx)), encourage families to chose active school travel, and walk, bike, scoot or skateboard, to school to reduce congestion is school loading zones and to ease pressure on bussing demands.

If you need to drive, consider a safe drop-off location away from the school and let your child(ren) walk the last five minutes. This drive to five program has been adopting in other areas of Ontario, Canada and Internationally.

Pedestrian Safety Video

Blue the Butterfly presents a video for families to enjoy together [Tips to Be Safe on Your Walk to School \(/walk-zone/pedestrian-safety-video\)](#) to help support your active travel to school or to the bus stop.

Teaching Tools

School nurse and public health play a critical role in providing Active School Travel programming. Please visit [Niagara Region Public Health Teaching Tools \(/https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/schools/curriculum/active-school-travel/default.aspx\)](#) available for school teachers and parents/guardians to teach students about safe practices related to Active School Travel.

Practice your route

Walking to school is faster than you think

Walking home from school can take less time than driving, especially if you have to arrive early to find a parking spot. You can practice a route with your child and time it as a way to prepare for the journey to school. Most families who live within 800 metres of school can walk there in only ten minutes.

School Crossing Guards

Your municipality provides School Crossing Guards, to help with your child's journey to school. Keeping children safe is their number one priority. Click [HERE](#) (</walk-zone/municipal-crossing-guard-program>) to learn more about your school's crossing guard.

While you try out a walking route with your child, you can check their readiness using the [\(http:\)Sidewalk Smarts Passport](#) (<https://www.stswr.ca/wp-content/uploads/Sidewalk-Smarts-Passport-Printable.pdf>).

Cycling Safety Education

Heart Niagara (<https://heartniagara.com/heart-niagara-kids/cycling-safety/>) provides cycling safety education to Grade 5 and 6 students in schools throughout Niagara. This year this in school program may not be possible.

Heart Niagara is working on online tools to support continued student cycling safety education. Please check back here later in September 2020.

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