

# Active and Safe Routes to School

Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) promotes the use of active and efficient transportation for the daily trip to school.

Promoting students' physical well-being through active and safe routes to school is identified as a strategy related to the operational priority of student and staff **well-being** (<https://www.wrdsb.ca/learning/2016-19-operational-goals/well-being/#.WQx5nNlrIdU>) in the **Strategic Plan** (<https://www.wrdsb.ca/learning/#.WQx4z9lrIdU>). The key performance indicator is the number of schools with school travel plans that increase active transportation to school.

The Waterloo Region District School Board is a partner in the Active and Safe Routes to School workgroup of Waterloo Region because:

It's Healthy!

- Active students are more alert and ready to learn
- Active kids do better in school and in life
- Active school travel is an important source of **Daily Physical Activity** (<https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/dpa.html>) (DPA)
- The principles outlined in **Ontario's Foundations for a Healthy School** (<https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/foundations.html>) are promoted

It's Clean!

- It's environmentally friendly and can reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Schools can earn points towards the **Ontario EcoSchools** (<https://www.ontarioecoschools.org/>) certification

It's Safe!

- Community safety is improved by adding "eyes on the street"
- Active school travel reduces vehicular traffic and congestion around schools

It's Educational!

- Students learn about the built and natural environment through exploration

It's Fun and Easy!

- Students (and staff!) enjoy social time with friends and the fresh air

## What is Active Transportation and Active and Sustainable School Transportation?

Active transportation refers to any form of human-powered (non-motorized) travel such as walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, scooter, or skateboard. Students who are bussed can also be encouraged to use active transportation to get to the bus stop.

Active and Sustainable School Transportation (ASST) emphasizes the importance of incorporating active transportation with sustainable transportation modes, such as using public transit, carpooling or riding the school bus.

## Active School Travel Programs in WRDSB Schools

- **School Travel** (<https://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/active-and-safe-routes-to-school/school-travel-planning/>) **Planning** (<https://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/active-and-safe-routes-to-school/school-travel-planning/>) – A comprehensive process that involves researching and assessing the barriers to active school travel to develop and implement action plans.
- **Wayfinding** – Signs posted and activities painted on sidewalks within 400 metres of Waterloo elementary schools. The signs and painted activities (e.g., hopscotch, paw prints, numbers painted on sidewalks and walking routes) are intended to encourage more children to walk or bike to school and to address a perceived barrier of being too far from the school to do so. Learn more about this project through the **process evaluation report** ([https://chd.region.waterloo.on.ca/en/researchResourcesPublications/resources/ASRTS\\_SchoolSignagePilotProc](https://chd.region.waterloo.on.ca/en/researchResourcesPublications/resources/ASRTS_SchoolSignagePilotProc)) completed after the initial pilot.
- **Walking School Bus** (<https://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/active-and-safe-routes-to-school/walking-school-bus/>) – The WRDSB is currently collaborating with the **Canadian Cancer Society** (<https://www.cancer.ca/walkingschoolbus>).

and Block Parents of Waterloo Region on a walking school bus pilot program. A walking school bus is a convenient way for children to walk to school safely with adult supervision. Similar to a regular school bus, the Walking School Bus follows an established route. Students are picked up and dropped off at planned stops (may be at the student's home if it is along the route or at a designated spot nearby). Groups of approximately 8 students walk to school together under the supervision of a trained adult volunteer.

- **Cycling into the Future – Student Bicycle Training** (<https://www.cyclingintothefuture.com/>) – Retired WRDSB teacher Philip Martin has developed a bicycle training course for Grade 5 students. This course is designed to help students become safe and confident riders. It also gives teachers and parents resources to support and extend learning from the training sessions. Participants take part in 5 sessions, with an option for a sixth—scheduled to meet the needs of teachers and their classes. To learn more, or book training for your school, contact **Philip Martin** (<mailto:beatles49.pm@gmail.com>).
- **iWalk (International Walk to School Week/Day)** (<https://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/international-walk-to-school-month/>) – An annual event in October to promote walking to school. Prizes are awarded for schools that choose to participate.
- **Ontario EcoSchools Program** (<https://www.ontarioecoschools.org/>) – Schools can earn points towards an Ontario EcoSchools certification when participating in Active and Sustainable Transportation programs (under the Environmental Stewardship section). Some examples of environmental action/campaign ideas include: if the whole school participates in a walk-to-school week to kick off campaign; throughout the week/month/year students track their steps to school; celebrate with a “Golden Shoe Trophy” presented at an assembly. Check out the **EcoSchools page** (<https://www.ontarioecoschools.org/news/active-and-sustainable-transportation/>) for more Active and Sustainable Transportation resources.

## Special Walk to School Days

- International Walk to School Day (**iWalk** (<https://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/international-walk-to-school-month/>)) – October
- Winter Walk to School Day/Crossing Guard Appreciation Day – February
- Spring Walk to School Day (also Earth Week) – April

Other key active, safe and sustainable transportation annual events include:

- **International Walk to School Month** (<https://www.iwalktoschool.org/>) – October
- **UN Global Road Safety Week** (<https://who.int/roadsafety/week/2015/en/>) – May
- **EcoAction Challenge** (<https://www.ontarioecoschools.org/events-news/ecoaction/>) – May
- **Bike Month WR** (<https://www.waterloo.ca/en/gettingactive/Bike-Month.asp>), **Thumbs Up WR** (<https://thumbsupwr.com/>) – June
- **Clean Air Day** (<https://greenactioncentre.ca/content/clean-air-day/>) – June
- **Commuter Challenge** (<https://commuterchallenge.ca/>) – June
- **Healthy Commute** (<https://www.pollutionprobe.org/healthycommute/>) – June

## Active Transportation Charter

Did you know the WRDSB has an Active Transportation Charter? The Charter serves to remind everyone that active transportation is an important component of a healthy lifestyle and contributes positively to learning. The Charter reinforces the importance of active transportation supportive policies, infrastructure, and programming. It guides staff, student, parents and the Board of Trustees to consider how activities and decisions can encourage active transportation.

You can find out more about the charter **Active Transportation Charter** (<https://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/active-and-safe-routes-to-school/active-transportation-charter/>).

## How do I get my school involved in Active & Safe Routes to School?

If you are interested in learning about what ASRTS can do for your school, contact **WRDSB Planning** (<mailto:planning@wrdsb.ca>).

## Who are the current ASRTS Partners?

The following partners support ASRTS in Waterloo Region:

- Region of Waterloo
- City of Waterloo
- City of Kitchener
- City of Cambridge

- Waterloo Regional Police Services
- Block Parent
- Canadian Cancer Society

For more information on Active and Safe Routes to School programs and initiatives, please visit:

- **Region of Waterloo Public Health (active transportation website)**  
(<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/exploring-the-region/active-transportation.aspx>).
- **Region of Waterloo Public Health (Active and Safe Routes to School website)**  
(<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/active-and-safe-routes-to-school.aspx>).
- **Ontario Active School Travel website** (<https://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/>).
- **Metrolinx school travel website** (<https://www.metrolinx.com/en/projectsandprograms/schooltravel/asst.aspx>).
- **Region of Waterloo Public Health (school health) website**  
(<https://chd.region.waterloo.on.ca/en/partnersProfessionals/School-Health.asp>).

This information expires once printed. Please always refer to the online version for the most current information.