

# school commute buddies



Walking, biking, or rolling to school is a great opportunity for students to get fresh air, have fun, exercise and get to know their neighbourhood better.

There's safety in numbers!  
Meet up with friends and neighbours to walk, bike, roll or bus together.



## additional information

**What is the legal minimum age for children to walk, bike, roll or take public transit to/from school without adult accompaniment?**

There is no legal minimum age for children to be left unsupervised in British Columbia. Canada Safety Council guidelines recommend that children under the age of 10 not be left alone.

Parents and caregivers should consider the capabilities of child(ren) to determine when they are able to safely navigate roadways and intersections and access public transit.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to build the capacity of their child(ren) and assess their readiness to use active and sustainable transportation without an adult.



## did you know?

**Among the top dangerous driving behaviours in B.C. school zones are:**

- Speeding
- Distracted driving
- Making U-turns
- Stopping in no stopping and no parking zones
- Ignoring/rolling through stop signs
- Failing to obey crossing guards



[www.crd.bc.ca/ready](http://www.crd.bc.ca/ready)

## live too far or no time to walk?

### Your commute matters!

When you decide not to drive door-to-door, you help reduce traffic congestion and make streets and school drop off/pick up safer for all.

### When you need to drive, consider:

- Finding an alternative drop off/pick up site a block or two away where you can safely park and walk to school.
- Driving part-way and meeting up with your school commute buddies to walk, bike or roll the rest of the way together.
- Inviting others to join you. There's safety (and sustainability) in numbers!

## crossing basics

**STOP** Approach the street carefully. Wait a step back from the curb until traffic has stopped or passed. When possible, use crosswalks or traffic signals.

**LOOK** Left, right, left and shoulder check.

**LISTEN** Remove your headphones or put your phone or text conversation on hold so that your focus is on the road and you can hear oncoming traffic.

**LOOK AGAIN** Make eye contact with drivers and cyclists and wait until they have stopped or passed before crossing.

**WALK** When the intersection is clear, start crossing and keep looking for approaching vehicles and bicycles.

# plan your route

Selecting your safest route can be simple or complex, depending on the location and distance between your home and school.

It is important to determine:

- 1. Where you will walk, bike, roll or bus.**  
When walking, choose sidewalks or paths where possible, even if that means the trip will take a bit longer.
- 2. Where you will cross streets.**  
Choose routes with the fewest and safest streets to cross. For example, cross where there is a crossing guard, crosswalk or traffic light and avoid busy, high-speed or multi-lane roads where possible.
- 3. How much time you need.**  
Time your route to arrive 5-10 minutes before the bell.



**did you know?**  
children's walk pace is about 8 mins/500m

## tips for success

- Practice the route together!
- Have conversations about any potential concerns.
- Check-in regularly to discuss experiences openly and adjust as needed.

# how to be a school commute buddy

Drivers have a responsibility to obey the rules and watch for pedestrians and cyclists, but you can't always count on them to keep you safe.

**Here's how you can be a responsible road, sidewalk and trail user:**

## BE ALERT

- Be aware of your surroundings and always look out for vehicles and other road users.
- Be careful at intersections and make eye contact with fellow road, sidewalk and trail users.
- Listening to music or using your phone are dangerous distractions that make it hard to hear or notice approaching traffic when you are walking, cycling or rolling.

## BE VISIBLE

- Wear bright or reflective materials.
- Use lights and reflectors on your body, backpacks and bikes.
- Where possible, stay on sidewalks and pathways. When there is no sidewalk, walk single file facing traffic so you can see approaching vehicles and they can see you.

## BE PREDICTABLE

- Learn, understand and obey the rules of the road, traffic signals and signs.
- Cross at traffic lights, crosswalks or with crossing guards whenever possible.
- Communicate your intentions using your voice, hand signals, eye contact, lights or bells.

## BE COURTEOUS

- Safely share the roads, sidewalks and trails by practicing good etiquette.
- Remember to keep to the right, yield to others, mind your speed, alert others before passing, keep dogs on leash and respect the environment.
- Show mutual respect to fellow road, sidewalk and trail users and be kind if they make mistakes.

