



TOOLKIT

Moncton's Guide to: ACTIVE & SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (ASRTS)

Provided to you by:





M O N C T O N

ASRT'S TOOLKIT

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Active & Safe Routes to School in Moncton

What is *Active & Safe Routes to School*?

Active & Safe Routes to School is a national program, developed by Go for Green, to promote the use of active transportation to and from school. The program promotes the many benefits that are associated with using active transportation, such as increased physical activity, safer communities, and environmental responsibility.

What is Moncton's *Active & Safe Routes to School Toolkit*?

The best way to get more physical activity into our day is to combine it with time we are spending doing something else- such as traveling to school. To help, the City of Moncton with guidance from School District 2, developed this toolkit that contains the resources needed to help promote walking and wheeling to school more often and more safely.

This is not a new concept, in fact there are several walk/wheel to school programs are being promoted across the world, from Canada to Sweden, to Australia, each with their own twist on the same idea: to promote active transportation to and from school.

This toolkit is a collection of resources to be used to start a walk/wheel to school program and that can be designed to suit the needs of your school community.

TOOLKITS INCLUDE:



- ✎ Steps to starting your Active & Safe Routes to School and *Active School Bus* programs
- ✎ A *School Zone Safety Audit* package to help determine if streets are walkable and bikeable.
- ✎ Promotional materials to help advertise your program
- ✎ Activities that link the main themes of this program to school curriculum
- ✎ And more!

Contributions:

We would like to acknowledge and thank the District 2 Health Action Committee, the Principals and students at Hillcrest and Evergreen Park Schools, the Codiac RCMP, and all of the volunteers who have been instrumental in piloting this program in their neighbourhoods. Their support and participation was integral in setting up the steps for this toolkit. Their help is the reason that we are able to provide this resource to other schools in Moncton.

Thanks also to the Province of New Brunswick, who through the Active Communities Grant Program helped to fund the creation of this program.

Making your trip to school...

Active & Safe

There are a number of steps to take when starting an *active & safe routes to school* program. Over the next several pages, these steps will be outlined in detail, giving you direction on how to set up a program that works for you.

Keep in mind that these items are offered as a guide only and should be adapted to suit the specific needs of your school community.

BE CREATIVE KEEP IT SIMPLE HAVE FUN

Here is a quick overview of the *Active & Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) Toolkit*'s Step-by-step process

Step 1: Starting an ASRTS program at your school

- * This step is best carried out by school administrators

Step 2: Collecting information on How we travel to school, before & after

- * Surveys should be sent by school administrators
- * Results can be compiled once the committee is formed

Step 3: Informing the School Community

- * Hold a public information session; introduce the idea to the wider school community
- * Help recruit more volunteers for safety audits, active school buses, and the ASRTS committee

Step 4: Establishing your ASRTS Committee

- * What is the role of the committee?

Step 5: School Zone Safety Audits

- * What is a School Zone Safety Audit?
- * Who do we contact if safety issues are identified?

Step 6: Starting an Active School Bus program

- * What is an Active School Bus
- * How do you design Active School Bus routes?
- * How do you manage your volunteers?

Step 7: What's Next?

- * How to move forward, ideas on how to expand your program.
- * A place to add ideas from your committee/students/parents

STEP 1

Starting an ASRTS program at your school

To set up a successful program, it is important for the school administration or a community champion to take the initiative to set something up. Whether the initiative comes from the Principal, Vice Principal, a teacher, the Parent School Support Committee (PSSC), Home & School Association, or an interested parent, it is important for someone to take on the task of starting an *Active & Safe Routes to School* program until volunteers are recruited to carry on the program.

STEP 1 outlines the tasks for the initial stages; a *to-do list* for getting your program started .

- ◆ Task 1: Send home a School Travel Survey (see Appendix A)
 - ◇ This will allow you to find out how students are currently getting to and from school.
 - ◇ After the program is well- established, send home a second survey and compare results
 - ◇ **STEP 2** (p. 6) outlines this in more detail.

- ◆ Task 2: Hold an Information Session
 - ◇ Also found in Appendix A, is a letter template that can be sent home to invite parents/guardians and students to attend an information session about Active & Safe Routes to School
 - ◇ Send home a voicemail or email to parents with this same information
 - ◇ If you have the resources, provide food for those attending and free childcare for any younger children. This will help reduce barriers so that parents can attend the presentation.
 - ◇ **STEP 3** (p. 7) outlines this in more detail.

- ◆ Task 3: Recruit volunteers
 - ◇ Volunteers will be needed for the following roles.
 - Active & Safe Routes to School Committee
 - Active School Bus Route Volunteers
 - School Zone Safety Audit Volunteers

 - ◇ Please note: Until a volunteer base is established, ask your school's Parent School Support Committee (PSSC) or Home and School Association to help with **Steps 1-3**. This is also the best way to inform them about what is going on in their school as well as having a group who can help recruit volunteers

 - ◇ **All Active School Bus Volunteers must have a criminal records check conducted.** [See *Appendix E: Liability for the Active School Bus.*]

STEP 2: Collecting information; before & after

Collect baseline data:

- ◇ **Send home a School Transportation Survey (Appendix A)**
 - ◇ The survey will help to determine how children are getting to school now; before an ASRTS program is started
 - ◇ Break down the results by where people live to show any areas around the school where there are a lot of people walking/wheeling. Results may also show that there are places where people are not walking/wheeling.
 - ◇ Let the results help to determine where an Active School Bus is most needed.
 - ◇ It may also help you understand why some currently choose to walk/bike and why some choose not to.
 - ◇ Overall, surveys will help you understand the current situation. After the program is established, re-evaluate so that you know whether or not the ASRTS program has increased the amount of students actively commuting to school.
- ◇ **Conduct simple in-class surveys**
 - ◇ An easier way to determine how many students are walking/biking to school is by in-class “hands-up” surveys (*See Appendix B-10*).
 - ◇ Have teachers submit their results to the office and designate a member of the committee to pick them up.
 - ◇ Although not as comprehensive as the send-home surveys, an in-class survey may allow you to survey a greater number of students.
 - ◇ Note to teachers: To get students more involved, have them chart the results for one week

After collecting baseline data

- ◇ **Compile the results**
 - * Results for the School transportation survey, can be compiled in the ‘**Survey Results Database**’ in Appendix A on the *Toolkit CD*
- ◇ **Once your ASRTS program has been established (after 3-4 months), do a second evaluation.**
- ◇ **Compare results of second survey to baseline data and summarize results**
- ◇ **Communicate any relevant results with the school administration and the school community.**
 - * If results show an increase in walking/biking, congratulate students and their families and thank your volunteers.
 - * If no increase is shown, what issues were indicated as barriers. Highlight the importance of the school zone safety audit in improving safety for those who are walking/biking in our neighbourhoods

STEP 3

The Information Session/Public Meeting

Hold a meeting at the school to present the Active & Safe Routes to School program to the school community, invite both parents and students to attend. This is an important step for recruiting volunteers as well.

WHO TO INVITE

- ◇ Parents/caregivers and students
- ◇ School Principal, PSSC, and Home & School Association, Teachers
- ◇ Your School's Community Liaison Police Officer
- ◇ City Engineer, City Councilor
- ◇ Your School District Liaison Officer

THE PRESENTATION

- ◆ **Step 1:** Give an overview of what Active & Safe Routes to School is
 - ◆ Highlight the **3 main benefits** of this program (Physical Activity, Safety, and Environmental Responsibility)
 - ◆ See Appendix A for presentation template
- ◆ **Step 2:** Explain the **2 main components** of Active & Safe Routes to School
 - ◆ The School Zone Safety Audits
 - ◆ The Active School Bus
- ◆ **Step 3:** Ask questions
 - ◆ *Ask parents:* Why do/don't you walk/bike to school with your children?
Why do/don't you allow your children to walk/bike?
 - ◆ *Ask students:* Why do/don't you enjoy walking/biking to school?
 - ◆ *Ask the group:* Are there any 'informal active school buses' in the area already?
Why are you interested in having an Active School Bus in your area?
 - ◆ Ask other questions as you see fit.
 - ◆ **Note:** Asking these questions can be helpful in determining if the parents and students have different views on why they do or don't walk/cycle.
- ◆ **Step 4:** Open the floor to questions from parents/caregivers and students.
 - ◆ Ask your invited guests (RCMP, City representative, District representative, School Principal) to be on hand to answer any questions that relate to their area of expertise.
- ◆ **Step 5:** Identify potential routes for the School Zone Safety Audits and the Active School Bus
 - ◆ Using the your school's Active & Safe Routes to School Map, get parents to point out areas that would benefit from an Active School Bus (**Step 6**)

ASRTS PROGRAM POINTERS

- a. **Start small.** Most schools will start an Active School Bus *walking* program once per week. As it grows, more days and routes can be added, and an active school bus for bikes could be created.
- b. **Recruit volunteers.** Have a volunteer sign-up sheet at the presentation, with a description of what each role entails (See Step 4, p. 8). Remember that as your program grows, so will your volunteer base- talk to other parents who are walking already.
- c. **Communicate with your school community.** If something is working well- celebrate it! If not, ask why is it not working!

Step 4: Establish a committee

To ensure that your Active & Safe Routes to School program will succeed and grow, it is important to have a group of volunteers who will look at the program each year and continue to expand.

The Active & Safe Routes to School Champion Committee

- ◆ Your committee should consist of 5-7 volunteer members who have an interest in seeing this program through until at least the end of the year.
- ◆ Consider representation from following groups to sit on your committee:
 - * Parents/Caregivers
 - * Home and School Association
 - * Parent School Support Committee (PSSC)
 - * School Principal, Vice Principal or Physical Education Mentor
- ◆ If representatives from some of these groups are not able to sit on the committee, assign the role of liaison to one of your committee members to ensure that these groups are kept informed.
- ◆ Decide on location, timing and frequency of meetings. Meetings should be more frequent at the beginning of the school year when you are getting everything started.

SAMPLE: Active & Safe Routes to School Champion Committee Roles & Responsibilities:

** Please feel free to adapt these to suit your group

Goal: To oversee the Active & Safe Routes to School Program at your school

Objective 1: To oversee School Zone Safety Audits

- ◇ Recruit volunteers to help conduct safety audits
- ◇ Compile results passed in by audit volunteers.
- ◇ Pass along results of audits to appropriate person/organization.
- ◇ Communicate results to the School administration.

Objective 2: To plan routes for Active School Bus, walk/bike to school program

- ◇ Determine what routes are most important, create “active bus stop” routes
- ◇ Recruit volunteers to lead those routes
- ◇ Create list of back-up volunteers
- ◇ Ensure that all Route volunteers have Criminal Records clearance.
- ◇ Reassess Active School Bus, routes, times, process
- ◇ Communicate periodically with Route leaders to ensure everything is functioning smoothly.

Objective 3: To adapt the ASRTS program as it grows

- ◇ Recruit new volunteers when necessary
- ◇ Add new elements to the ASRTS program
- ◇ Add new Routes once demand grows and more volunteers make themselves available.
- ◇ Coordinate follow-up on any issues which arose from the School Zone Safety Audits
- ◇ Communicate with the School Administration or Parent School Support Committee (PSSC)

Step 5: Making your School Zone Safer

Any *Active & Safe Routes to School* program is based on 3 main concepts: Physical Activity, the environment, and safety. Step 5 outlines the process for making your school neighbourhood safer for walking/wheeling through a *School Zone Safety Audit*.

The School Zone Safety Audit

- ◆ *Appendix B* contains the tools that volunteers need to assess the safety, in terms of walkability and bikeability of the school neighbourhood.
- ◆ The best way to recruit volunteers to help with a safety audit is to ask people who live on the streets that you have designated for an audit, to take on this task. This is a one-time commitment that can take anywhere from 1/2 hour to 1 hour depending on the length of their section.
- ◆ Safety audits help to identify any potential safety concerns, that may limit someone's ability to walk in that area. It also helps to connect you to the appropriate contacts to try and resolve the issue(s).
 - ◆ The best times of day to conduct a safety audit are during the morning and afternoon pick-up and drop-off times, where there is generally more traffic in the area and more students walking/wheeling.
- ◆ Have volunteers submit their completed audits to the school's main office and arrange to have a committee members pick them up.
 - ◆ Once the committee has compiled the results of the all of the audits, fill out the form and send any issues, which the committee has determined as important, to the appropriate contacts as listed in the audit.
- ◆ Consider sharing the results from the audits (both positive and negative) with the school administration and the wider school community.
 - ◆ Ask about including some information in the next school newsletter, voicemail, or email home to parents.
 - ◆ If your school has a website, this could be a great venue for sharing!

If you are interested in learning about what the traffic and pedestrian counts are in your area, Contact the City of Moncton's Engineering and Environmental Services Department for more information.

STEP 6

Rev up your own engines for the Active School Bus

What is an *Active School Bus*?

An *Active School Bus* happens when a group of students, led by parent volunteers, travel to school together using active transportation (like walking, biking, or jogging). Usually starting out as a walking group, they sometimes evolve to include groups that bike, or even jog together. The idea is to connect kids who are, and those who want to start, walking to school.

Active School Buses do not generally run in the winter due to unpredictable weather conditions. Normally, they run from September-October/November and start up again in the spring or once the snow has melted and sidewalk conditions are better.

Essentially it works like a school bus, only instead of an actual bus, we use our bodies to get to school. An *active school bus* can follow along a designated route, stopping at a number of ‘*active bus stops*’ to pick up students along the way.

It is important to note that because this works very similarly to a traditional school bus, it is still the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children are at the “*active bus stop*” on time so that they do not miss the “bus”

How the *Active School Bus* works:

- ◇ Each “Active School Bus needs a ***route leader*** who starts at the top of the route and travels all the way to the school.
 - ◇ All adult volunteers must have a criminal record check done through the RCMP.
 - ◇ *See Appendix E*
- ◇ When there is more than one adult volunteer, other volunteers can join at the “*active bus stop*” closest to their house. Keep in mind that it may take a couple of trial runs before the group knows what works best for them.
 - ◇ There are many factors that can contribute to the structure of your *active school bus*; the more students participating, the more volunteers you’ll need.
 - ◇ Not all of your volunteers need to be adults: if there are older students on the route, ask them to help out! Many schools have student leadership groups. Consider asking them to take part in their neighbourhoods
- ◇ The Active School Bus has room for **all** students

Choosing your *Active School Bus* routes- Design guidelines to follow

- ◇ What are the natural paths that students take to get to school?
- ◇ What are the main streets that connect to the school and that bring students in from side streets?
- ◇ What is the safest route?
 - ◇ Where are the sidewalks, crosswalks, minimal street crossings, etc
 - ◇ Refer to your school zone safety audits (**Step 5**)
- ◇ Where do your volunteers live?
 - ◇ You don’t want your volunteers to have to drive to their route, as it defeats the purpose.
 - ◇ If volunteers live too far away to walk all the way from home, what is a natural meeting point to start a route?

Step 6 (cont.) The Active School Bus

How to get the information out

- ◇ Send a note home to families in the School’s newsletter, website or Facebook site.
- ◇ Make announcements on the school’s PA system. Ask your principal about allowing a student to make the announcement and tell why (s)he likes walking to school
- ◇ Put up posters on the school’s community bulletin board, or next to the school’s *Active & Safe Routes to School Map*
 - ◇ Note: if your school does not have a map, please contact your School District liaison
 - ◇ Refer to Appendix D for smaller maps.
- ◇ Hold an information meeting at the school, or better yet, along one of the proposed routes.
 - ◇ If you have an *active meeting*- Pick participants up along the way then have a more in-depth conversation at the end of the route (the school).
- ◇ See **Appendix A** for promotional materials

Figure: Sample of an Active School Bus Schedule.

HILLCREST SCHOOL “ACTIVE SCHOOL BUS” ROUTE # 1: BURLINGTON AVE.				
START	STOP #2	STOP #3	STOP #4	ARRIVE
@ CORNER OF BURLINGTON & WEST ST	@ CORNER OF BURLINGTON & LAKEWOOD	@ CORNER OF BURLINGTON & ARLINGTON	@ CORNER OF BURLINGTON & PARLEE	HILLCREST SCHOOL VIA PARLEE DR
7:55AM	8:00AM	8:05AM	8:10AM	8:15AM

Managing your Active School Bus Routes and Volunteers

- ◇ Once routes for your *active school buses* are determined and you have volunteers, create a contact list including:
 - ◇ Name, home phone #, email, home address, route they are helping with
 - ◇ Refer to the *Active School Bus Volunteer Package* in **Appendix C**
- ◇ Give each route leader a copy of the school zone map (**Appendix D**)
- ◇ Decide on a start date for your first *Active School Bus*. **Make it a big deal!**
 - ◇ Consider starting on a day that holds other significance, such as International Walk to School Day (October), Earth Day (April), or a day that is significant to your school
 - ◇ Don’t delay your kick-off if there is no “special” day to start it on. Just the fact that you are starting an *Active School Bus* program is reason enough to *celebrate!*
 - ◇ Invite key community supporters to participate in your kick-off event, such as:
 - ◇ Members of City Council, RCMP, etc
- ◇ Ask Volunteers to wear identifiers of some kind.
 - ◇ Check with your school about “*Active School Bus*” safety vests.
 - ◇ If none are available, determine if there is money available through the school to purchase some. Can you get something donated?
 - ◇ **Hint:** If there is enough to share, route leaders can keep a supply of identifiers at home. Leaders can distribute them to students along the route, and then collect them when they reach the school.

The Active School Bus Rules!!!

Please note: The following rules have been adapted from Go for Green's rules for a walking/cycling school bus (www.goforgreen.ca/asrts).

Please add or remove rules as needed, to fit with your program needs.

The Active School Bus RULES!!

- Rule 1. All Adult volunteers must have a criminal record check done for their school. (Appendix E)
- Rule 2. If identifiers, such as safety vests or hats, are available, all route leaders must wear their identifier for the entire route.
- Rule 3. If a route leader cannot lead their *Active School Bus* for any reason, they are to contact a back-up as soon as they know they cannot lead the group
- Rule 4. All *Active School Buses* go, **rain or shine** on their scheduled date. It is important to keep the message consistent so that parents and children do not question whether or not there will be an active school bus that day.
- Rule 5. If you have set specific "*active bus stop times*", the group must wait at the stop until that time to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Rule 6. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to have their child to the stop on time. If they are late, they risk missing the *active school bus*.
- Rule 7. The *Active School Bus* follows safe pedestrian rules, such as those outlined in the City of Moncton's Crosswalk Safety Brochure (Appendix C).
- Rule 8. All participants in the *Active School Bus* must stay with the group and not run ahead or lag behind.
- Rule 9. All participants must respect the volunteer route leader and follow their directions.
- Rule 10. For safety reasons, there must be a separate *Active School Bus* for pedestrians and cyclists.

STEP 7

What Next?

In year 1, you collected your baseline data (Step 1), compiled the results from your safety audits (Step 5), and started your active school buses (Step 6).

...NOW WHAT?

Active & Safe Routes to School Timelines (Years 2, 3, 4, ... N)

SAMPLE

SEPTEMBER

Hold an ASRTS meeting.

- ◇ Invite past ASRTS committee members, route leaders, and school liaison
- ◇ Determine your tasks for year “N”
 - Starting up the *Active School Bus*
 - * Deciding on days (same as last year? Add another day?)
 - * Addition of new routes (can we add another, do we need to remove one?)
 - * Advertising the routes and start dates to the school community
 - Following up on any issues identified from the School Zone Safety Audits
 - * Have issues been resolved? Is there a reason to re-do a past audit or to audit a new section?

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

- ◇ Decide when the *Active School Bus* will **stop** running for the winter season and let the school community know of this date.

MARCH/APRIL

- ◇ Decide when the *Active School Bus* will **start** running again for the spring season
- ◇ Talk to the school about sending information to new Kindergarten students- Could this be part of their welcoming package?

MAY/JUNE

- ◇ Review past year and plan your strategy for next year
- ◇ Any issues to be looked at for next year?
- ◇ What went well/not so well
- ◇ Host a get together with all route volunteers to thank them for their contribution. Your school may have a volunteer appreciation event.

Refer to IDEAS ([Appendix F](#)) when planning from year to year. Make this information available to route leaders who can make their active school buses fun!

CONTACT INFORMATION



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Thank you

*to all the volunteers and community partners who helped to
develop an Active & Safe Routes to School Program in Moncton*

