Walk and Bike to School Day:
A weekly, monthly, or single event that encourages students to walk and bike to school

This event is the main activity that instills the Safe Routes to School program as part of the culture of your school. During a Walk and Bike to School Day, volunteers can host a greeting table with food and/or simple rewards for students who walk and bike to school. Walking School Buses or Bike Trains can be organized as a way to encourage groups of students to travel together. Special remote drop-offs for buses and parent drivers can also be organized for those students who live beyond a reasonable walking or bicycling distance from school.

The regularity of the event’s occurrence varies according to the school. Examples include:

- Walk & Wheel Wednesdays (or similar weekly event through the school year)
- Trekking on Third Thursdays (or similar monthly event)
- Walk & Bike Challenge (1-5 times a week, for 4-6 weeks in the spring and/or fall)
- International Walk & Bike to School Day (every October) and/or Maine Walk & Bike to School Week (every May)

The more frequently Walk and Bike to School Days occur, the greater likelihood for a long-term increase in the number of students walking and bicycling to school.

Walk and Bike to School Days encourage a healthy and active lifestyle and have the following outcomes:

- Reduction in traffic congestion and vehicle speed near schools
- Reduction in air pollution (and associated child respiratory effects) and fewer greenhouse gas emissions
- Improved academic performance and classroom behavior
- Improved social networks between students – also between adults and students
- Students learn safe walking and bicycling behavior
- Students experience independence and build their self-confidence
- Reclamation of community streets so that they are safer for walking and bicycling
- A sharing of the joys of walking and biking

For more information see back of this sheet and check out www.MaineSafeRoutes.org. Also, please contact:

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Checklist for Walk and Bike to School Day

1. **Get Partners:**
   - Find 2-3 interested volunteers to help coordinate the event
   - Contact the school administration and PTO/PTA about the event and enlist their support
   - Recruit teachers/volunteers for various roles (greeting students, leading walking school buses, meeting buses at the remote drop-off location, etc.)

Here’s a list of people to potentially involve and to draw from as volunteers:

**School:**
- Principal & other admin.
- PTA/PTO rep
- Parents & students (especially students who already walk & bike to school)
- Teachers (start w/Physical Education & Health teachers)
- School nurse
- Transportation director
- School Improvement, Wellness, and/or Safety committee
- School crossing guards
- Facilities/custodian rep
- Service learning team

**Community:**
- Community members, includes retired people
- Neighborhood association members
- Local businesses
- Local pedestrian, bicycle and safety advocates
- Hospitals
- Service Clubs (e.g. Rotary, Kiwanis)
- Health Clubs
- Health Insurance Companies

**Local Government:**
- Elected city/town/county officials and/or staff rep
- Traffic engineer
- Local planner
- Public health rep
- Public works rep
- Law enforcement rep
- EMS/Fire Dept rep

2. **Plan - work with partners to plan the celebration**
   - Decide what type of event fits your school and community.
   - Determine whether the event will be weekly for a number of weeks, once a month, or one day.
   - Decide what modes to use (e.g. informal or more formal Walking School Bus, Bike Trains, and/or remote drop-off site for buses – see specific Maine Safe Routes Program tip sheets on these topics)
   - Develop banners and signs in addition to the posters available from Maine Safe Routes to School Program.
   - Solicit funding or donations of food and other rewards. Contact Maine Safe Routes to School Coordinator for available incentives list; Contact local businesses for donations of refreshments and/or other small freebies.

3. **Register Your Event**
   - Register with Maine Safe Routes to School Program: www.MaineSafeRoutes.org - to access additional materials and win prizes for your school

4. **Promote Your Event!**
   - Post signs and banners at the school
   - Send event flyer to parents through backpack mail
   - Post event announcement in school newsletter and website
   - Ask principal to make loudspeaker announcement(s) and/or send e-mail preceding the event