



**WALK & BIKE TO
SCHOOL TOOLKIT**

Updated: January 2017

OVERVIEW

Because we want to make it as easy as possible for everyone to participate in Bike and Walk to School Day, we've created an online toolkit with everything you'll need to prepare for and promote the event!

See below for what's included in this toolkit:

- Backpack Letter
 - Sample text that can be used as backpack mail to send home with students. The letter informs families about Walk and Bike to School Day and opportunities for participation. Feel free to copy and paste the text into a Word document and print it for distribution.
- Sample Email
 - Email text may be used by the school and/or the PTA to reach the entire school community. You can copy and paste the text directly into your email message. Make sure to EDIT the text where appropriate and enter your school's information in the fields indicated.
- Sample School Communication
 - Text that can be used in any communications (Newsletter, Listserv, etc.) to share your school's involvement in Bike and Walk to School Day this year.
- Sample Newsletter Article
 - Text for a school newsletter to be disseminated to families, staff and faculty as a fun way to get everyone excited about Bike and Walk to School Day. Make the article eye catching by including photos.
- Safety Tips
 - We all share our streets and we all play a role in making sure everyone stays safe when they bike and walk to school, so we have put together some safety tips that you can distribute to your families.



BACKPACK LETTER

Dear Arlington Public Schools Families:

Each May, Arlington Public Schools (APS) and the County's WalkArlington and BikeArlington programs collaborate on an international event called **Bike and Walk to School Day**. Part of a month-long celebration, the event encourages students to walk or bike to school while teaching them about the health and environmental benefits of walking and biking. Walk and Bike to School Day also raises community awareness about the importance of pedestrian and bicycle safety education, safe routes to schools, well-maintained walkways, and traffic calming in our neighborhoods and around our schools. Bike and Walk to School Day [INSERT YEAR] takes place on the morning of Wednesday, May [INSERT DATE].

This year, more than 30 Arlington public schools are expected to participate in Walk and Bike to School Day. APS and County officials will join students and parents at some schools as they walk and bike to campus. Volunteers, staff, and officials will also greet students on arrival at school.

Of course, we all know that many Arlington students already walk or bike to school every day. Arlington Public Schools are participating in this year's Walk and Bike to School Day celebration as a tribute to the many students who walk and bike to school every day and in recognition of Arlington's demonstrated commitment to biking and walking.

To help your family get ready for Walk and Bike to School Day, WalkArlington and BikeArlington have prepared an online toolkit of resources, including the following:

- Walk and Bike to School Day Safety Tips
- Walk and Bike to School Day Fact Sheet
- Top 10 Reasons to Walk and Bike to School (for students)
- Walk and Bike to School Day Step-by-Step Tips

Families who are interested in volunteering and/or participating in Bike and Walk to School Day 2014 should contact their individual school for more on ways to get involved. And be sure to mark your calendars!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

WalkArlington & BikeArlington
WalkArlington.com | BikeArlington.com

SAMPLE EMAIL

Subject: Bike and Walk to School Day on May [INSERT DATE]

To: _____ [All Families/PTA Members/School Wide]

From: _____ [School Principal/PTA President/Point Person for Walk and Bike to School Day]

Bike and Walk to School Day is coming up fast. More than 30 Arlington Public Schools (APS) have committed to participate in this annual event by encouraging students to walk and bike to school on May [INSERT DATE]. Countywide participation is being supported by Arlington County's WalkArlington and BikeArlington programs.

Part of an ongoing effort to encourage students to walk and bike to school, Walk and Bike to School Day also teaches students about the health and environmental benefits of walking and biking. Some of these benefits include keeping young people healthy and strong as well as teaching them how to safely navigate streets in their neighborhood. These active transportation modes also help students stay alert in class and provide quality time with parents and friends.

By partnering with WalkArlington and BikeArlington on Bike and Walk to School Day, APS hopes to raise community awareness about the importance of pedestrian safety, safe routes to schools, well-maintained walkways, and traffic calming in our neighborhoods and around schools.

In fact, APS and Arlington County have partnered on Walk and Bike to School Day every October since 1999. This Walk and Bike to School Day effort builds on the strength of past collaboration and the involvement of individual schools in marking the day as we see fit.

Here at _____ [NAME OF SCHOOL], we plan to _____ [DESCRIBE PLANS, VOLUNTEER NEEDS, OTHER SPECIFICS]. Of course, many of our students already walk and bike every day, so Walk and Bike to School Day will be a celebration of your year-round efforts as well as an opportunity to encourage more _____ [NAME OF SCHOOL] students to give biking and walking a try!

For more information on our participation in Walk and Bike to School Day and ways to get involved, please contact _____ [SCHOOL CONTACT POINT] at _____ [EMAIL ADDRESS] or _____ [PHONE NUMBER]

We encourage you and your family to review our school's plans and consider taking part in Walk and Bike to School Day.

For more on Walk and Bike to School Day around the nation and here in Arlington, visit walkbiketoschool.org, WalkArlington.com or BikeArlington.com.

Thank you!

[NAME AND TITLE OF SENDER]

SAMPLE SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

To promote the great health, safety, environmental and social benefits of walking and biking to school, [Arlington Public Schools](#) (APS) and Arlington County's WalkArlington and BikeArlington programs are taking part in Bike and Walk to School Day. Students at schools across the County are being encouraged to walk or bike on Wednesday, May **[INSERT DATE]**.

Here at _____ **[NAME OF SCHOOL]**, we plan to _____ **[DESCRIBE PLANS, VOLUNTEER NEEDS, OTHER SPECIFICS]** on May **[INSERT DATE]**. Of course, many of our students already walk and bike every day, so we'll also be celebrating your year-round efforts on Walk and Bike to School Day while we encourage more _____ **[NAME OF SCHOOL]** students to give walking and biking a try!

For more information and resources and resources, visit walkbiketoschool.org, WalkArlington.com or BikeArlington.com.

SAMPLE NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

School Crossing Zone Ahead:

Walk and Bike to School Day Coming Up on May [INSERT DATE]

How did you get to school when you were a kid?

Today, fewer than 15 percent of all school trips are made by walking or biking. And more families are driving their kids to school instead of walking, biking, or taking the bus. These trends affect everything from childhood obesity to traffic congestion to air quality.

Enter Arlington Public Schools (APS), Arlington County's WalkArlington and BikeArlington programs, and Walk and Bike to School Day.

On May 6, APS, WalkArlington, and BikeArlington join forces to coordinate participation in this national event. Walk and Bike to School Day, which has been held every year since 1999, encourages students to walk or bike to school while teaching the health and environmental benefits of walking and biking. Walk and Bike to School Day also raises community awareness about the importance of pedestrian and bike safety, safe routes to schools, well-maintained walkways, and traffic calming in neighborhoods and around schools.

Bike and Walk to School Day takes place in Arlington on the morning of Wednesday, May [INSERT DATE]. Here at _____ [NAME OF SCHOOL], we plan to _____ [DESCRIBE PLANS, VOLUNTEER NEEDS, OTHER SPECIFICS]. Of course, many of our students already walk and bike every day, so we'll also be celebrating your year-round efforts on Walk and Bike to School Day while we encourage more _____ [NAME OF SCHOOL] students to give biking and walking a try! For more information on our participation in Walk and Bike to School Day and ways to get involved, please contact _____ [SCHOOL CONTACT POINT] at _____ [EMAIL ADDRESS] _____ [PHONE NUMBER].

We encourage you and your family to review our school's plans and consider taking part in Walk and Bike to School Day!

For more information and resources and resources, visit walkbiketoschool.org, WalkArlington.com or BikeArlington.com.

A little foot and pedal power can go a long way!

SAFETY TIPS

To help you stay safe wherever you go in Arlington County, visit www.WalkArlington.com and www.BikeArlington.com for tips on “Sharing the Way” on Arlington trails, whether on 2 wheels or 2 feet, and [being a “PAL” —Predictable, Alert, and Lawful](#)—on Arlington’s streets.

Everyone:

- Walk/bike with a buddy and/or make sure you have enough adult supervision en route to and from school.
- Never cross the street against a light, even if you don’t see any traffic coming.
- If there are no crossing guards, traffic lights or crosswalks, cross at intersections.
- Before crossing, make eye contact with any drivers in cars approaching the intersection or crosswalk to make sure they see you.
- Never cross in the middle of a block.
- Wear reflective material to make sure you are visible to street traffic.

Walkers:

- Cross the street at marked crosswalks and intersections.
- Before crossing, look left, right, then left again.
- Stand on the sidewalk when waiting to cross the street.
- Watch for turning vehicles.
- Use pedestrian push buttons when available.
- Begin crossing the street on “WALK.” Do not begin to walk after the upraised hand signal appears. Many Arlington intersections also have countdown traffic signals that show how much time you have left to cross.
- When crossing at an intersection without a signal, make your intentions clear to drivers through eye contact or hand signals showing that you plan to cross. Make sure drivers in all lanes can see you before starting to cross.
- When sidewalks are not available, walk facing traffic.
- Cross behind the bus in a crosswalk when possible. Watch out for trucks and buses backing out of parking spaces and driveways.
- Remember that bike riding *is* allowed on the sidewalks in Arlington. Although cyclists must yield to pedestrians, try to make room for them to get by. Often there is room for all if everyone acts with consideration.
- Take off earbuds and headphones so you can hear what’s going on around you.
- Don’t text or talk on the phone.
- Stay visible after dark and in bad weather with lights, light-colored clothing and reflective gear. For additional resources on pedestrian and bike safety for elementary school students, visit walkbiketoschool.org