



Guide for Parent-Focused Local Groups

We all know that walking to school is good for children's health and the environment. As our Family Walk to School Toolkit explains, parents we work with tell us about the benefits walking to school brings, including improvements in mood and behaviour in their children.

We hear how it's a time to connect, to enjoy time outside and to play. Yet we also hear that many of us want walking and wheeling to school to be better, for it to feel safer and to be more enjoyable and this is where our Local Groups come in, helping encourage -and enable -walking to school in their community.

Whether it is from running campaigns outside the school gates, calling on the council for safer crossings, creating school streets or getting schools to sign up to the WOW programme, we know our Local Groups can play a significant role in bringing the change we all want to see.

What we want:

Living Streets is calling for an end to the decline in Walk to School rates. A generation ago, 70% of children walked to school, now it's less than half. And a decline in walking and wheeling to school, means fewer children are getting as much physical activity as they need and too many of our schools are blighted by poor air quality and traffic congestion at the start and end of the day.

We know that to get more of us walking to school, our communities need improved walking and cycling infrastructure, cleaner air around school routes, more school streets, accessible places to play and whole community collaboration and partnership with schools to bring these things about.

One way to help make this happen is for the Living Streets WOW - [Walk to school programme](#) to be rolled out in our local villages, towns and cities.

Some helpful facts - Did you know?

- 74% - estimate of primary school children who walked to school in 1975-76.
- 48% of children aged 5 to 10 who walked to school in 2015.

- 2 in 5 parents of primary school children say they worry about pollution levels around their school.

What you can do:

Many of our Local Groups are already taking action to promote Walking and Wheeling to School and you can get a flavour of their work from this recording of [a webinar](#) we hosted in June 2022 for our Parent-Led Local Groups.

However, working with your local school is key. Talking to the staff and students will give you a better understanding of how they experience their journeys to school and what they would like to see happen to make it even better.

Once you've started that conversation, you could ask your school to get involved in:

[WOW in your local school](#) – WOW is our year-round walk to school challenge. Our WOW schools see a 30% reduction in car journeys taken to the school gates and a 23% increase in walking rates. WOW invites children to log their sustainable journeys in our Travel Tracker and can earn WOW badges as rewards. We're really thrilled that [Dr Ronx is our new WOW ambassador](#) and you can learn [why schools love WOW in this video](#).

[Park and Stride](#) - Park and Stride is a simple idea for families who live far away to still enjoy the benefits of walking to school. You can work with Living Streets to run a Park and Stride with your WOW school, or try and work with your school or an informal scheme. If families drive, schools can ask them to park a ten-minute walk from school and complete their journey on foot. It reduces traffic, congestion and road danger around the school gates whilst allowing children the chance to get active for the last part of their journey.

[Walk to school week](#) - Our five-day walking challenge is an annual celebration of the walk to school and the perfect activity to celebrate National Walking Month in May. It has been built to make pupils experience first-hand the importance of walking to school.

Campaign actions around school gates:

There's lots you can do as a Local Group to promote walking and wheeling to School. If you're planning to run a campaign making the journey to school safer, then please speak to us as we've got loads of great examples to share.

[Parent and carer guide](#): If you're a parent or carer there are lots of ways we can help get you and your family walking. We can also help make walking safer and easier in your neighbourhood and get more children at your kids' school walking.

[Safer routes to school](#): Making the roads around your school safer and less congested. Resources include:

- Email your council - call for car free zones outside schools
- School Streets Kit – your guide for creating car free school streets

[Family Walk to School kit](#) - Whether you are exploring how walking to school can

work for you, or want to campaign for better routes, our Family Walk to School Kit is here to help.

[Walk leader training](#) - By being a walk leader, you can help your colleagues and community become healthier and happier. Organised led or group walks are a widespread and well-established tool for promoting and sustaining walking.

[Anti idling resource](#) - "Idling" is when a vehicle's engine is left running while it is parked or stationary for a period of time, contributing further to already sky-high emissions in our cities' air.

[Create a parklet](#) - Parklets can transform our streets, providing places for us to stop, rest and have fun. But there are risks involved in setting up one of these mini-parks. If you're thinking of creating one, Jon and Diana's story is essential reading.

[Safer Crossings](#) - Everybody should be able to cross the road safely, directly and without delay. Crossings should be positioned in the right place and give everyone enough time to cross the road. Find out more with this page and resources.

Resources to help you

Blogs

We use the Living Streets Blog as chance to share inspirational examples of how our Local Group network is working to make their local streets safer and more accessible for children and young people. Some examples include:

[Cat Kenyon from Haringey Living Streets Group](#) talks about the success of setting up a local group after experiencing the dangers of her community with two sons in tow. She was driven to do it after using local transport and walking in her local area and witnessing dangerous driving, blocked pavements, heavy pollution and more.

Emma Hope-Fitch launched the [Love Lane Project](#). Emma pulled together the members of the community, clearing land, planting fruit trees and installing play equipment for the local children. [Croydon Living Streets Group](#) has since worked in partnership with the Love Lane Community Garden to host street parties celebrating [Walk to School Week](#) and London's green spaces.

Croydon Living Streets here also explain how the group's been [engaging with teenage girls and non-binary young people](#) to campaign for changes in our public spaces. These observations were then compiled into a manifesto for change, which will be presented to the Council. It includes a clear set of actions Croydon Council could take as part of a pledge to be a teenager friendly community.

Creating [Low Traffic Neighbourhoods \(LTNs\)](#) - also known as Liveable Neighbourhoods – stop motor vehicles from using quiet roads as shortcuts. This can support more walking, wheeling and cycling - and less motor traffic - are vital for making our communities cleaner, safer and more pleasant.

Read about how [Moortown Living Streets Group in Leeds](#) was set up by a parent and why improving walking routes to schools in his area was so important - and why Dom Jacques has set up a Local Living Streets Group.

Our [Anti-Idling Toolkit](#) was designed with the British Lung Foundation and shares some more examples of our Local Groups have taken action on idling in their community and what schools can do.

[The Clean Air for Schools Framework](#) - The Clean Air for Schools framework was developed in partnership with Living Streets. It asks school leaders simple questions to create tailored actions to tackle air pollution in and around their school, including those which promote and enable walking to school.

Write your own blog

Do you have a story to tell about what your group is doing in your area? We would love to hear your story; you can write a blog which we can publish on the Living Streets website. Use this [Blog template](#).

Hosting an Event

Events are a great way to meet new members of the community and hear their views on your local streets. However, there are some important steps to follow as you prepare for your school gate event.

Key steps before an event or campaign

[Guide to events](#) – Visit your local group resources page to find out how-to put-on events. Including the governance documents you need, to consent forms, arrow signs and safeguarding policies. Also there are templates for posters, photos to use and much more.

EVENTS



Safeguarding We recognise that the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk is of paramount importance. We have a duty of care when they are in our charge and we will do everything we can to provide a safe and caring environment whilst they attend our activities. [This policy](#) applies to everyone working on behalf of or representing Living Streets, including paid staff, trustees, volunteers, associates, supporters, members of local groups, students, or individuals on work placements.

Our safeguarding policy means that we do not allow unaccompanied minors at our events. Children at our local group events remain the responsibility of their parents at all times.

In certain situations, we can appoint or recruit someone as the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) for the event, but they must be appointed with written permission from one of the Living Streets Safeguarding leads.

Data: It's really important to promote your event well, but please make sure you follow our [GDPR guidance](#) when contacting people. Our [Guide to Mailchimp](#) has some useful suggestions on how to create an engaging message to invite people along without breaching legal requirements around how we contact people.

Photo Consent You must get written photo consent from parents and guardians to take and use any images at the event. [The photo consent form](#) is on our Local Group Resource Page.

Public Liability Insurance Our [public liability insurance](#) is provided by Towergate and covers our local groups events.

Risk Assessment You need to complete a [risk assessment](#) for any event and need to share it with the Engagement Manager, any event or host partners and your volunteers. Print a copy for use on the day.

Contact Sign Up Sheet-Don't forget to print off the [email sign-up sheet](#) so you can add people to your mailing list. Again, it's really important you carefully manage sign-ups in line with the GDPR policy.

And finally, don't forget to invite people along! Take a look at our guides to [Twitter](#) and [Mailchimp](#) to help with digital marketing to help your word-of-mouth invitations. Good luck!