

## 11. WALKING SCHOOL BUS

<b>Officer responsible</b> City Streets Manager	<b>Author</b> Paul Cottam, Safe Routes to School Co-ordinator
Corporate Plan Output: Information and Advice to Council	

The purpose of this report is to firstly update the Committee on the 'Walking School Bus' project being undertaken, and secondly to provide information on the upcoming 'Bike a Kid to School Day' being held during this year's Kidsafe Week. News of these events is also available on the Council's recently updated Safe Routes To School site, at [www.ccc.govt.nz/saferoutes](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/saferoutes).

### WALKING SCHOOL BUS PROJECT

Safe Routes to School surveys show that one factor for parents who drive their children to school that would encourage more walking was if it was carried out as a group, and with supervision. The Walking School Bus (WSB) could be a solution that satisfies some of these needs. The WSB aims to maximise child road safety on the school journey, and to encourage healthy exercise habits in children. It works through a group of families forming a roster to take turns at walking their children to school, and is made up of children who are 'picked up' from their homes on a designated 'route' by a rostered parent 'driver' who walks them to school.

This year we have been working with a Wellington research firm, Pinnacle Research, to investigate the effectiveness of the Walking School Bus as a method to encourage alternatives to car travel to school. Pinnacle Research received funding from the Public Good Science Fund to carry out their research, and approached the Council for schools to investigate, given our record in advocating safe and active travel to school.

Four schools are taking part in the project: Paparoa Street, Gilberthorpe, Wairakei and Beckenham. The schools were surveyed on their interest in forming walking school buses. Meetings were then held at the schools to organise walking school bus groups, and establish routes and rosters. The WSBs were formally launched on 1 September this year. An article on the launch appeared in the *Press*. Green MP Rod Donald acted as an inaugural 'co-driver' for one of the WSBs at Paparoa Street School. They have formed nine WSBs, which operate on a variety of times and days according to the needs of the families involved. The four schools' WSBs will be monitored.

A WSB kit was developed to support and encourage families to take part. The free kit includes reflective safety sashes, hats, drink bottles, travel cards, fridge magnets and wordfinds. It is available to parents at all Christchurch schools who wish to form WSBs. It is hoped to refine a process from the research project that can be applied to school communities, with the Council acting in a supporting and facilitatory role.

### BIKE A KID TO SCHOOL DAY

A 'Bike a Kid to School Day' is being organised by the Council for October 18<sup>th</sup> this year, as part of Kidsafe Week. The event is targeted at Christchurch primary schools, and is a day when parents will be encouraged to cycle their children to school. Even City Councillors with children could take part. The aim is to encourage cycling in general, and safe, supervised, and healthy travel to school in particular.

Children who take part will be eligible for prize draws featuring cycle accessory packs. Families are also able to take their bicycles into selected cycle shops beforehand for a free cycle check, and receive a rebate on the purchase of a cycle helmet. Sheppard Industries Ltd is supporting the event.

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.