



# Walking School Bus FAQ (Volunteers)

## What is a Walking School Bus (WSB)?

In the search for ways to make walking to school safer, more fun and more convenient, communities are finding that walking school buses can make a real difference. A Walking School Bus (WSB) is simply a group of children who walk to school together under adult Supervision, following a specific route and schedule.

## What are the benefits of a Walking School Bus?

A walking school bus has several meaningful impacts on the community and participants including:

- Peace of mind for parents – Ensures their children get to school safely and on time
- Convenient – no need for parents to drive/walk their children to school
- Healthy, social and fun way for children to travel to school
- Fresh air and exercise before the bell rings = more alert students in class, less stressed
- Exposes youth to a life-long healthy habit of sustainable transportation
- Teaches youth independence and familiarizes them with their community
- Decreases congestion around the school and increases safety to all pedestrians
- Reduces vehicle emissions

## Who can be a WSB Volunteer Leader?

Anyone who is interested in working with children, active transportation, giving back to their community and environmental sustainability is a great fit for the WSB volunteer position! Volunteers must:

- Attend an information session
- Complete a screening interview
- Provide three character references
- Provide a recent (within 6 months) clean Vulnerable Sector Police Record Check
- Undergo provided training
- Commit to a minimum of 2 shifts a week

## What are the duties of a volunteer WSB Leader?

The WSB volunteer will accompany a paid WSB Leader walk the route with the OSC employee and the children. WSB volunteers are trained and participate in an Ottawa Police Check for the vulnerable sector. The role of the WSB volunteer is to ensure student safety to school, a minimum of 2 mornings per week.

## Where are WSB services offered? How are the routes determined?

## When are the shifts?



Shifts are during the morning only and vary based on school bell times. Total commitment each morning is approximately 45 minutes prior to the school bell.

## Who uses the WSB and how many children will I accompany?

The number of children along the route varies by registration numbers. The WSB will be led by a paid OSC staff member at all times, with you as additional support. Each WSB has an adult to child ratio of 1:10 unless accompanied by a junior leader. WSB's will not exceed 30 participants.

## What training and equipment is provided?

**WSB Volunteers receive the following:**

- AODA Customer Service Training (Condensed)
- Cold Stress - A Guide to Working Safely in Cold Environments Training
- Understanding Human Rights Training (AODA Edition)
- Occupational Health and Safety Awareness Training for Workers in Ontario
- Heat Stress Awareness and Prevention
- Integrated Accessibility Standards- Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment)
- Integrated Accessibility Standards - Information/Communication and Employment Standards Training
- Integrated Accessibility Standards - Transportation Standard Training
- Workplace Violence and Harassment Training for Employees (Ontario - Bills 168 and 132)

## How many shifts will I have?

Volunteers are asked to commit for a minimum of 2 shifts per week. You will work with other volunteers and the WSB Leader to determine a schedule. Each shift is approximately 30-45 minutes in length.

## What if I cannot make it a shift I committed to?

If you are unable to make a shift it is important to find a replacement by asking another volunteer who is on your route. Otherwise, contact the person in charge of your route. We will do our best to find someone to replace you as per the policies and procedures in the WSB Volunteer Handbook

## What happens during increment weather?

In general, the WSB will operate in all weather conditions including days when the yellow school buses are cancelled. However, in the case of freezing rain or other extreme weather events (as determined by the Ottawa Safety Council) it may be cancelled. Parents/caregivers will be notified no later than 30 minutes before their WSB is scheduled to start via an email AND phone call from the Ottawa Safety Council.

## Is there any risk involved for volunteers?



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301 Moodie Drive, Suite 103  
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Ph. 613-238-1513 Fx. 613.238.8744  
info@ottawasafetycouncil.ca

In the event of an incident, all WSB volunteers and Leaders are insured by Ottawa and have liability coverage. WSB Leaders are trained in first aid and CPRC and walk the route prior to picking up children each morning to ensure the route is safe to walk.

## How do I sign up?

Sign up, choose and attend the next information session that you are available for at <<LINK>>.

Once you have attended an information session and determined you are interested, the OSC will contact you to obtain three character references, conduct an interview to determine your suitability and request that you obtain a Vulnerable Sector Police Record Check before starting your volunteer duties.

For more information, please contact the OSC at [info@ottawasafetycouncil.ca](mailto:info@ottawasafetycouncil.ca)