



Educator's Guide



Walk & Wheel to School Month (iWalk/iWheel)

October 2018

Join schools from across Canada and around the world in walking and biking to school.

www.vernon.ca/iwalk

#walktoschool #vernonmoves

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Introduction

The City of Vernon celebrates International Walk & Wheel to School Month each October. This event is a global celebration of active transportation that promotes healthy and safe alternatives to driving to school. Vernon students, parents, and school staff join their peers from over 40 countries across the world in walking, biking, skateboarding, scootering or using any other form of active transportation to get to school.

Students, teachers, families, friends and community leaders can participate. You can participate for the entire month, one week, or even one day!

Why Participate?

- **Physical activity.** Fewer children walk to school today than a generation ago and this impacts their health. Only 9% of Canadian children meet the recommended daily minutes of physical activity. Walking to school is a simple and free way for children (and their families) to get moving.

The 2016 ParticipACTION Report on Physical Activity for Children and Youth gave Canada a D grade in active transportation with only 24% of Canadian children walking to school. In Vernon, many schools score even lower with fewer than 20% of students walking or biking to school.

- **Mental health.** Walking is good for the brain. Students who walk are more attentive, perform better in school, and are less stressed.
- **The environment.** Walking is green! Lower your greenhouse gas emissions and help improve air quality by walking rather than driving to school.
- **Safety.** Fewer cars around schools means reduced traffic congestion and safer streets for students. iWalk/iWheel is an opportunity to teach valuable road safety skills to students and to get families in the habit of choosing alternative transportation.
- **Community.** Walking can create a sense of belonging in the community.
- **It's fun!**



How do I Participate in International Walk and Wheel to School Month?

It's easy! The City of Vernon will support your school with resources such as stickers, handouts, poster, and prizes, and help out with information and activity suggestions. Your event can be a big extravaganza, or it can be simple. Here's where to start:

Short on time? This [handy guide](#) will help you plan an event in just 7 days.

Before you begin...

- Obtain approval from your school's principal to participate.
- Contact Angela Broadbent, Active Transportation Coordinator at the City of Vernon at abroadbent@vernon.ca or 250-550-7831 to let us know you are participating so that we can send you free resources.

In September/October...

- At staff meetings, get teachers on board and recruit a designated Team Leader for the event. City of Vernon Staff can give a presentation promoting the benefits of active transportation.
- Recruit parent volunteers at PAC meetings.
- Recruit teacher and staff volunteers to participate on the day of the event.
- Recruit older students to act as ambassadors and leaders to help out promoting the event as well as on the day of.
- Post posters in each classroom and around the school (provided by the City of Vernon).
- Distribute handouts to students to take home (provided by the City of Vernon).
- Include information in your September and October newsletters.
- Announce your event at your assemblies.
- Have the student office monitors give out reminder announcements leading up to the day of the event.
- Have teachers remind their students in class. Take the time to talk about the benefits of walking and cycling.
- Get tech-y and register your school on <https://bikewalkroll.org/> to track your participation and compare your results with schools across the world!

On the Day(s) of your event....

- Count participating students and record your results on <https://bikewalkroll.org/>. Each teacher can record results for their classroom through the website. You can also do a paper tally and have a volunteer enter the results.
- Draw random prizes for participating students. The City of Vernon can supply some prizes and give-aways, but you can also go big and secure some of your own prizes.
- Share the results with your students and their families. Don't forget to share on social media using the hashtags #walktoschool and #vernonmoves. Celebrate your success!

Event & Activity Ideas

These fun activities will keep the excitement going all month long and help teachers incorporate walking into their regular classroom activities:

Host a **Celebration Station** at your school in the morning before class. Give away stickers, pencils, or other small prizes to students who walk or bike to school as they arrive. Don't forget coffee for the parents! The City of Vernon is able to host celebration stations for three schools per year. Contact us if you are interested.



Try a **Walking School Bus**. Students meet at 'stops' along a pre-arranged route and walk to school together. If you don't already have a Walking School Bus program, the City of Vernon can help you plan a safe route.

Go on a **Neighbourhood Scavenger Hunt**. Take students on a supervised walk in the neighbourhood or a nearby park and find plants, animals, signs, and buildings. Pinterest has some great templates!

Going on a field trip? Can you walk all or part of the way? Or plan a **hiking field trip!**

Plan a **nutritious breakfast** on a walking day.

Incorporate a walking or biking unit into physical education class. This is a good time to teach road safety. **The City of Vernon Community Safety team can provide free bike skills classes called bike rodeos.**

Get out your calculators and **measure your impact**. How many students are participating? What percentage of the school? How long is the average walk? Can you calculate the greenhouse gas emissions you are avoiding? How many calories are you burning? How much gas money are you saving?

Get colourful! Have students create displays or banners promoting the event. Put them up around the school and the neighborhood. Or have students decorate the sidewalks around the school with sidewalk chalk.

Make a **Greening Tree** for your school or classroom. Students get to add different coloured leaves depending on how they travelled to school that day. The more students who walk, bike, or take the bus, the greener the tree gets.



Harwood Elementary Greening Tree

Start a **Walking Wednesday Club**, so students can join and walk once a week for the whole month (or longer). Encourage students to dress up and try a new theme each week.

Track a real or imaginary journey. Can your school walk across Canada? Walk the Great Wall of China? Walk to Mordor like Sam and Frodo? The distance to the moon? Calculate the real (or imaginary) distance of a journey, and use the cumulative distance your class or school walks to track your progress. Keep track over the course of a week or a month (or the year!). Your imagination is the only limit.

For more ideas and ways to incorporate walking into your classroom, visit:

<http://greenactioncentre.ca/healthy-travel/iwalk-event-ideas/>

<http://dashbc.ca/what-we-do/programs-initiatives/walk-and-wheel/> (science and social studies lesson plans in English and French)

For some schools, the infrastructure in the neighbourhood may not be conducive to walking or some students may have to travel a great distance to get to school. However, schools can still participate in **International Walk and Wheel to School Month** in one or more of the following ways:

- Make an agreement with those responsible for bussing so that the students are dropped off 1 km from the school. From this location, an adult can lead the way to school on foot!
- If this option is not possible, encourage students to walk before classes begin or during recess, perhaps around the schoolyard, to a nearby park or trail, or to another destination.
- Encourage students to walk other places outside of school time, such as the store or to visit friends. Use one of the tracking activities above for motivation, such as the greening tree or the imaginary journey.

There are many ways for children to enjoy more walking and cycling. All it takes is a little imagination!

For more information contact:

Angela Broadbent, Active Transportation Coordinator, City of Vernon

abroadbent@vernon.ca | (250)550-7831