



Setting up a Park and Stride scheme

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All you need to know to get a Park and Stride scheme started at your school.

Living Streets' Walk to School campaign reaches over 13 million people, making it one of the UK's leading behaviour change campaigns for young people. We work directly with over 750,000 children in 2,000 schools and every year thousands more take part in the national schemes and events we run, including Walk once a Week (WoW) and Walk to School Week.



What is Park and Stride?

Park and Stride is a simple initiative which involves driving part of the way to school, parking, then walking the rest of the way. It is particularly good for families that live a long way from school and find it difficult to walk the whole way. It has the added benefit of reducing congestion around the school entrance, making it safer for children to enter school.

Park and Stride is a brilliant way to encourage families to add some physical exercise to their journey to school, as well as providing some valuable social time.

To take part in Park and Stride, all families need to do is choose somewhere to park away from their school. We recommend at least 10 minutes if possible. Choosing a parking place will depend on:

- How far you think people are prepared to walk to school
- Availability of safe and appropriate parking places
- Availability of safe places to cross
- Whether or not children will continue to school unaccompanied
- Time available.

How does Park and Stride work?

Park and Stride can work in two ways:

Informal – Accompanying adults are encouraged to find a suitable parking spot away from the school gates. Their children then walk the rest of the way to school, accompanied or unaccompanied as appropriate.

Formal – Schools set up a formal Park and Stride scheme, where they designate one or more official Park and Stride parking points. This makes it as easy as possible for accompanying adults to take part, especially if there is a shortage of places to park near and around school. It's also a great opportunity for accompanying adults and their children to meet with others, walk together and socialise.

Where can we set up Park and Stride parking points?

There are many places that can be used as official Park and Stride parking points. Possible ideas might include:

- The car park of a town hall, church, pub, shop or clubrooms, where the site is likely to have suitable capacity during school start and finish times. This also has the benefit of increasing footfall for the location.
- A local supermarket, or retail park – they often have lots of space and are keen to support their local communities and enhance their green credentials.



How to set up a Park and Stride Scheme

Step 1: Map where pupils are travelling from

The first thing you need to find out is where pupils are travelling from and the route(s) which are most commonly used. You could do this by mapping home postcodes, doing an activity with your pupils to find out the most common routes to school or, at a basic level, by simply viewing the school's catchment area.

Step 2: Choose suitable Park and Stride location(s)

Once you know about the common routes to school, the next step is to choose suitable places to Park and Stride from. Accompanying adults are encouraged to park at least a 10 minute walk away from the school gates.

Step 3: Get permission

If you're able to find a local car park along or near to a popular route to school, you will need to contact the owner or manager in order to seek permission to use it. In this pack we have included a template letter that you can send to the car park owner requesting permission.

You also need to check with the car park owner to ensure that their insurance has a public liability clause in case someone is injured while using the site. Car parks that are already used by members of the public will usually be covered, but sites that do not regularly have members of the public on site, such as a business park, may not have this level of cover.

Step 4: Get support

Contact your local authority, usually the road safety or sustainable travel team, or your public parking authority, to see if they can help with getting Park and Stride underway in your school. They may be able to help by arranging schemes such as free parking for 30 minutes during school drop off and pick up times.



Why 10 minutes?

¹ Department of Health (2011). Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity for health from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers

Health – the Chief Medical Officer currently recommends 10 minutes as the minimum duration of physical activity which will have a positive contribution to health¹

Environment – it reduces congestion at the school gate

Fun – children learn new routes and see new places

Social – children and families have time to chat

Safety – areas close to school are safer as fewer people park on pavements and zigzags

What happens if we haven't got any local car parks we can use?

Sometimes there is no suitable location around the school to use for a formal Park and Stride scheme. If this is the case, ask your school if they could suggest a Walking Zone, as well as encouraging informal Park and Stride.

A Walking Zone sets a clearly defined area around the school. It has the same aim to encourage children and families to walk for at least part of their journey to and from school. Families who live in, or near, the Walking Zone are encouraged to walk to and from school every day. Those with longer journeys, who choose to drive, are asked to park safely outside the zone and to walk the rest of their journey.

More information on Walking Zones, including successful examples, can be found at www.livingstreets.org.uk/parkandstride



Promoting Park and Stride

Once you've got your Park and Stride scheme set up, don't forget to let everyone know about it. Here are our top tips for making your scheme a success:

Get the whole school on board

Speak to your Headteacher and senior management first, highlighting how Park and Stride will ease congestion and improve safety around the school gates. You can also show how Park and Stride can be added to the school's travel plan or linked to other initiatives like Eco-Schools and Healthy Schools. Once you have their support ask them to help you share the plans with the rest of the staff and governors.

Tell accompanying adults about the scheme

Include an article in the school newsletter or send a letter home explaining how Park and Stride works (you'll find an example letter included in this pack). If you have set up a formal Park and Stride site you should also include a map to show the location.

Involve your pupils

Get pupils to help create resources to promote the scheme. For example they could:

- Write persuasive letters to their accompanying adults as part of their literacy lessons.
- Design posters that promote Park and Stride, and run a competition with prizes for the best design.

Get support from the local council

Getting your local council and councillors on board will help the scheme to run more smoothly. They may also be able to lend valuable support such as parking enforcement around the school gates, councillor visits and publicity.

Become a WoW School

WoW is Living Streets' Walk Once a Week Scheme for primary schools. The scheme encourages pupils to walk to school at least once every week, and rewards children who do so with collectable badges. Since Park and Stride involves walking, children who Park and Stride are eligible to take part in WoW. For more information about WoW visit www.livingstreets.org.uk/wow

You may be able to think of other ways to promote your scheme. If so please do contact us at walktoschool@livingstreets.org.uk as we're always looking for examples of good practice that we can use as case studies.

Template letter

Requesting permission from car park owners

You can use this letter to request permission from the owner to use their car park for your Park and Stride scheme.

[Download editable version of this letter](#)



Dear [add name of contact],

I am writing to you on behalf of [add name of school].

As you may be aware, the school is working very hard to try to reduce congestion at the school gates. We hope that by doing this, the school gates will be a safer place, thus encouraging more parents/carers to walk their children to school.

One way in which we hope to do this is by setting up a Park and Stride scheme. This is a simple initiative, where parents/carers are encouraged to park their car a 10 minute walk from school and then walk the rest of the way with their children.

We are currently looking for areas where parents/carers may park and wondered if you would be happy for them to use [enter name and location of car park].

In addition to making the school gates a safer place, walking to school provides many benefits to children ranging from great exercise before school through to better concentration and performance when they get there.

We believe this provides an easy way for [business name] to get involved and demonstrate its support of all the parents, carers and children in [area] that would like to walk to school. It is also a great opportunity to demonstrate your support of the local community and families who live and work in [area] too.

If you are happy to be advertised as a Park and Stride parking point, please can you contact me on [add contact details] to discuss the scheme in more detail.

Thank you for your support,

[Name of person responsible for Park and Stride]

Template letter

Informing parents/carers

You can use this letter to write to parents/carers to inform them about the Park and Stride scheme.

[Download editable version of this letter](#)



Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may be aware, the school is working very hard to try to reduce congestion at the school gates. We hope that by doing this, the school gates will be a safer place, thus enabling more parents to walk their children to school.

We understand that not all children are able to walk the whole way to school, due to distance, parental work commitments or a variety of other reasons. One way in which we hope to help you is by setting up a Park and Stride scheme. This is a simple initiative, where parents/carers are encouraged to park their car a 10 minute walk from school and then walk the rest of the way with their children.

We are therefore asking parents to park **[at/in (enter name of designated location here)]** and walk the rest of the way to school. If for some reason this is not a suitable parking place we encourage you to choose another suitable place 10 minutes away from the school gates and walk the rest of the way.

If you have any queries regarding the Park and Stride parking point, please don't hesitate to come in and speak to **[enter the name of the school champion]**.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Name of Headteacher

The content of this pack is correct at the time of writing (March 2014).

For the most up to date information please visit
www.livingstreets.org.uk/parkandstride

or contact us at
walktoschool@livingstreets.org.uk

Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians. With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk.