



Green Matters

Actions today for a healthier tomorrow

School Travel Tips

Walk and Bike

If you have school-age children, walk or bike with them to and from school whenever possible. Add baskets to your bikes to safely transport backpacks, coats and the class hamster. You'll probably converse more and you'll improve your health, air quality and personal safety.

If your child attends a public school, they can participate in the **Safe Routes to School program**. Safe Routes gives students skills and information to safely walk, cycle and ride transit. Events and incentives build community around these transportation alternatives. To learn more, go to their [website](#) or email the **Portland coordinator**. If you live outside of Portland, email the **Oregon Program Manager**.

School principals can phone 503-823-SAFE to identify traffic, hazards or barriers to walking and biking around the school. Tell your principal if any issues concern you. Safe Routes recommends the following ideas:

A walking school bus is a group of students who walk to school with an adult. It can be just two families taking turns walking with their children, or as structured as multiple routes with pick-up schedules.

A bike train is a group of students who bike to school with an adult. They follow a route chosen to ensure student safety. You can see how some **Portland schools** have participated in bike trains.

Stop+Walk decreases traffic congestion near schools by asking parents who drive kids to school to park a few blocks away and walk from there.

Take a Bus

If you live too far from school to walk or bike, send your students by school (or city) bus if available. In the **Portland Public Schools** (PPS) district, buses run on **propane**, which is cleaner than gasoline. The **Southwest Research Institute** determined that using propane cuts smog-producing exhaust by roughly 70 percent. Furthermore, most propane used in the United States is produced domestically, reducing our dependence on foreign fuel. Even a conventional school or city bus is greener than each family driving a separate car.

Carpool

If you cannot bus your child to school, find a carpool. It keeps cars off the road, allows social time before school and saves driving time because you take turns. Put a notice on your school's bulletin board, talk to other parents or use the online service **DriveLess.Connect** to set up and manage kids' carpools.

Minimize Idling

Car exhaust is the **leading source of toxic air pollution** in Oregon. It is especially hazardous to children, who breathe 50 percent more air per pound of body weight into their still-developing lungs, compared to adults. Therefore, cars idling during school drop-offs and pick-ups is a real health hazard. Here's what you can do:

- Turn off your car if you'll wait for more than 10 seconds. (You'll also save gas costs.)
- Encourage other parents not to idle at school.
- Ask the principal to post an "Idle Free Zone" sign at your school. Request a free sign from **Donna Green** at PBOT at 503-823-6114.

Other Ideas

- Create a **waste-free school lunch kit** to reduce trash and save money.
- Buy lunch foods in bulk to reduce packaging and grocery transport fuel.
- Discourage Styrofoam use. PPS alone throws away almost **four million Styrofoam trays** each year! If your school uses Styrofoam trays, ask them to use reusable trays or make purchasing them a fundraising priority.
- Reuse...at the **Library**. If you know a student who needs a book, film or magazine, explore the public library. It's an easy way to conserve resources and save money.
- Kids grow out of clothes and shoes all year long, not just in the fall. You can recycle clothes at thrift stores and athletic shoes through the **NIKE Reuse-A-Shoe** program.



A Reusable Lunch Kit Saves Money and Waste