Writing Active School Travel Policy

We encourage schools to adopt an Active School Travel Policy that encourages children and youth of all ages and abilities to walk and wheel to and from school. Creating an Active School Travel Policy should include the benefits of active school travel and how the school, students, and parents/ caregivers will support it. The policy should be agreed upon by school administration, and supported by the school division.

Below is a template for creating Active School Travel Policy at your school. We strongly encourage schools to use this as a baseline and adapt it to meet their specific needs.

POLICY TEMPLATE

[School Name] Policy #: [If required]

Effective Date: Revised: [To be determined]

## ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL POLICY

Purpose:

To increase the number of students actively travelling to and from school as a means to improve physical, mental, and environmental health.

Scope:

School administration, students, and parents/ caregivers.

Responsible Party:

[School Name], supported by the Active and Safe Routes to School program at Green Action Centre

Rationale:

Walking and cycling as a means of transportation are on the decline in Canada, as part of a decades-long international trend toward more sedentary lifestyles and increased dependence on vehicles. As a result, youth in Manitoba are in a state of health and environmental crisis. There is considerable evidence that confirms active school travel has vital physical, mental, and environmental health benefits.

**Benefits of active school travel**:

* Increases physical activity throughout the entire day
* Reduces traffic congestion, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions
* Results in fewer injuries when paired with appropriate infrastructure
* Increases readiness to learn and can lead to higher grades in school
* Enhances neighbourhood safety, social connectivity, and sense of community
* Promotes independence and improves safety awareness

Guidance:

At [School Name], we encourage students to actively travel to and from school by walking, cycling, and rolling, in support of their parents/ caregivers. This School Travel Policy outlines how we will be addressing and encouraging active school travel in our school community. This policy will be evaluated and re-visited periodically to ensure its relevance. For students who are unable to actively travel to school, we strongly encourage the use of public transportation, carpooling, or a park and walk system.

To ensure the success of this policy, we require feedback from our school community. If you have any ideas on how to improve active transportation, safety, and accessibility of our school community, please contact [school staff member name] or the Active and Safe Routes to School Program at Green Action Centre.

Please note that the decision as to whether or not a child is able to bike, walk, or roll to and from school safely rests with parents/ caregivers. The school is not liable in the event of an accident, injury, loss of property, or any other circumstance or incident that occurs during or as a result of active school travel.

**To encourage active school travel, [school name] will**:

* Appoint a designated Active Transportation Coordinator for the school
* Organize and support walking and cycling programs
* Celebrate those who bike, walk, or roll to school with school-wide contests and awards
* Provide necessary infrastructure (i.e. bike racks/cages)
* Participate in International Walk to School Month, Bike to School Month, and Clean Air Day
* Provide students with bicycle and pedestrian safety training
* Conduct BikeWalkRoll classroom surveys to track transportation trends
* Participate in the Healthy Schools initiative

**To make active school travel a positive experience for everyone, [School Name] expects our students to:**

* Follow the rules of the road and behave responsibly
* Ensure bikes, scooters, and skateboards are roadworthy and maintained regularly
* Behave respectively towards pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, community members, other students and neighbourhood property
* Wear a helmet and additional safety gear that ensures your safety and comfort
* Wear seasonally appropriate clothing

**For student wellbeing, [School Name] expects parents and caregivers to:**

* Encourage children to bike, walk, or roll whenever possible
* Encourage children to develop their competence and confidence in cycling (i.e. pedestrian and road safety)
* Consider walking or cycling with children to and/or from school run
* Organize a Walking School Bus or Bike Train in your school community
* Ensure bikes, scooters, and skateboards are roadworthy and maintained regularly
* If unable to actively travel to school, carpool or park a couple of blocks away and walk