

What is a WOW day?

WOW stands for Walk on Wednesdays / Weekdays and seeks to raise awareness of the benefits of walking; and support and encourage students and teachers to travel this way.

WOW days can lead to less traffic around school; improved road safety; reduced air pollution and improvements to students physical and mental health.

This guide is intended for the Green-Schools committee to give some tips on how to launch a successful WOW event. Ideally this is an ongoing initiative which becomes part of the culture within your school.

First steps:

- Schedule a Green-Schools meeting to discuss the format of your WOW day. The demographics of your school will influence what you can do. Try and take an inclusive approach and encourage all students and staff to participate in some way, irrespective of where they live or usually travel.
- Those who live within the local catchment should be encouraged to walk to school on your chosen day. Can you offer rewards or think of some incentives? Providing participants with a healthy breakfast or issue raffle tickets to walkers be entered into a prize draw can be effective.
- For those who travel by car, identify potential Park & Stride locations, which would enable them to drive some of the way and walk the rest. How can you raise awareness of these locations? Route maps can be helpful and including walking times can encourage participation.
- For those who travel by bus or are unable to walk part of the journey to school, consider extending the challenge to encourage walking outside of the school trip, e.g. A step challenge or Walk 60 minutes a day challenge.

Promotion of your event:

The greater the awareness of your event the better. Make sure you inform the whole school community!

- **Notify teachers** at a staff meeting. Teachers can be integral to the success of your campaign. Class tutors in particular, can assist in collecting travel survey data which helps you to know the effectiveness of your event. Make sure teachers know what is happening, that they are on board, and they are also encouraged to take part.
- **Notify students:** Make an announcement at assembly; use your noticeboard to display information in addition to using Teams or Email to target students directly.
- **Notify parents:** Use text service to notify them of the event.
- **Notify the local community:** Use social media to publicise your event. Don't forget to tag @greenschools_travel!
- **Make it Visual!** Make posters and arrange to use the 'We are Walking to School Today' banner available from An Taisce.
- Send out a **press release** to local media in advance of the proposed launch date.
- **Get Support!** Contact your An Taisce Education Officer, local Gardaí, Road Safety Officer, etc. for assistance on the day of the launch.

WOW GUIDE



Make it fun!

Theme your day! This will add an extra element of excitement and draw attention to the initiative. Some ideas include:

- Walk in your Jersey;
- Walk in bright colours (links with 'Be Safe and Be Seen' awareness campaign);
- 'Bling Your Shoes' challenge;
- Align with seasonal events like Easter, Halloween and Christmas.

Rewards and Incentives

Rewards and incentives are great ways to encourage participation in your campaign. Approach local businesses to ask for sponsorship of your event. You could also contact the parents association / board of management to ask for a contribution towards prizes.

Is there a local coffee kart that you could approach to set up at the Park & Stride location on the day of the event? Could a discount be arranged for walkers? Could those walking to and from school be allowed to finish school a few minutes earlier? What ideas can you think of to reward and recognise participants?

Committee roles and responsibilities

There are several roles for committee members when organising and running a WOW day from event planning, promotion and being involved on the day. Be as creative as you can and tailor the initiative to suit your school.

Evaluate your success

To assess the impact of your WOW day, you will be required to collect a travel survey on the morning of the event. Due to the size of most secondary schools, we would suggest enlisting the help of Class Tutors and ask them to complete a quick 'hands up' survey at registration.

The hands-up survey form is [here](#).

Appoint committee members to distribute and collect the survey forms, collate and upload the numbers [here](#). The data will be used to rank Ireland's most active county! Be part of the walking movement and help your county win!