

## Activity Plan - The Five Minute Walking Zone



### Introduction

This document sets out ideas for the creation of a five-minute Walking Zone around a school. It is suitable for adaptation for different age groups and incorporates many curriculum areas.

### Background

The number of children walking to school is in serious decline, thus affecting health, concentration and social networks. Although many parents must drive to school, almost everyone could walk the last part of the journey - thus clearing the school gate of congestion and providing regular daily exercise.

### Method

1. Discuss the health and environmental benefits of walking as a form of regular exercise and survey current travel choices of the children.
2. Using large-scale maps plot the existing routes used to walk to school and discuss any potential hazards / trouble spots.
3. Describe the possibility of a 5 minute zone around the school in which walking would be encouraged and ask for views on how large this zone should be (a five minute walk is approx. 450 metres).
4. Discuss how a 5 minute walking zone could be marked out. Key issues in marking out the zone are that signs, posters etc should not distract motorists, should not be permanent but should last long enough to become familiar, and should not look like vandalism. (For example you might choose to use ribbons around trees, footprints chalked on the path, stickers on bus shelters / lamposts). Design and produce markers, stickers etc.
5. Choose potential routes radiating out from the school in all the directions currently walked by the majority of children. (Routes should be fully risk assessed before the children proceed with this activity and fluorescent jackets should be provided.)
6. Establish groups of children according to which direction they normally travel from and hence which route they would be most likely to use for the last leg of their journey to school. With parental help, walk out with these groups using a digital watch to measure 5 minutes of walking. Stress the importance of correct road safety behaviour and allow the group to walk at their own pace, neither lingering nor hurrying. Whilst walking take photographs / make notes of any potential hazards along the route. After precisely five minutes the group leader should shout "STOP" and members of the group should make a mark with chalk on the path.
7. As a group decide where to place the marker / sign / poster to indicate a five-minute distance from the school. Place the indicator marker in a suitable place, ideally within 5 metres of the location chosen. You may like to make up a name for the site (e.g. Conker-Tree Corner etc)
8. Return to class and discuss routes, hazards and the positioning of the markers. Mark the 5 Minute Walk Zone on the large map and transfer this to a smaller map capable of being included in the school newsletter.
9. Devise an 'identity' for the school's walking zone. Allocate a project team to promote the scheme through posters, leaflets etc, to design suitable signs.
10. Share this work with the rest of the school, perhaps in an Assembly, and encourage all journeys from within the walking zone to be done on foot. Pupils that travel from further afield should be encouraged to 'Park & Stride' from a safe and socially responsible parking place outside the zone.