Safe Routes to School
Travel Toolkit for Schools

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Executive Summary

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Travel Toolkit is a resource designed to give school administrators suggestions on how to keep students safe and socially distanced when arriving and departing from school. It provides directions for schools, students, families and the city to build a safer walking and biking environment, both in regards to road safety and Covid-19 safety.

Goals

The goals of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Travel Toolkit are:

1. Identify any issues that impact the spread of Covid-19 and the safety of students when arriving and departing from school.
2. Provide suggestions for each major form of transportation to and from school, and an order in which it is easiest to successfully social distance.
3. Explain the way in which each form of transportation can be adjusted to follow CDC guidelines and limit the spread of Covid-19.

Table of Contents

Walking to School 2
Bicycling or Riding Scooters to School 4
Busing to School 5
Driving to School 8
School Building Access Points 9

Appendix

Safety Rules and How to Stay Safe on the Roads 10
Pedestrian Pods 11
Pedalling Pods 11
Satellite Bus Stops (Suggested for Older Kids, age 7+) 12
Kiss and Walk Drop-off/Pick-Up Points 12
Bike Racks 12
1. Walking to School

During Covid-19, walking is a safer way to travel to school than the bus which is an enclosed area. However, New Jersey is a high-traffic state so students must know how to walk safely.*

a. **Walking Alone:** Students who are old enough to walk to school without the company of an adult (over 10) should be cautious of traffic. Kids should have a mask to wear in case others pass in close proximity.

b. **Walking with a Friend or Family:** Students walking with a friend should maintain a distance of six feet or 2 meters. If students can’t keep 6 feet away, wear masks while walking. Parents should say goodbye at school perimeter.

*For more information on pedestrian safety rules, see page 11 of the appendix*
c. **Pedestrian Pods:** Pedestrian pods consist of a small group of 4-6 children walking to school with one or more adults. Families can make their own pods with friends who live nearby.

i. During Covid-19, it’s important to follow safety precautions recommended by the CDC, including wearing masks and maintaining social distance as much as possible.

ii. Image shows a typical pedestrian pod. During Covid-19, increase distance between each child to 2 m or 6 feet, wear masks.

* For more info on how pedestrian pods work, and the benefits, see page 12 of the appendix

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d. **Kiss and Walk:** Locations where parents can walk and drop-off or pick-up their children. Typically located 2-3 blocks away from the school, kiss and walk locations should be determined based on age.

i. For younger students (PK-Gr. 1), locations should be at the edge of the school property, while locations for older students (Gr. 2+) can be 2-3 blocks away from the school. Parents should decide based on their child’s maturity level.
2. Bicycling or Riding Scooters to School

Bicycling or riding a scooter to school is a socially distant way to travel to and from school. However, New Jersey is a high-traffic state, and students should know how to stay safe*. NJ traffic law states anyone under 17 must wear a helmet and ride on the right.

**a. Biking or Riding a Scooter Alone:** Students who are old enough to ride alone (10+) should be cautious of traffic, wear bright clothes and a helmet, ride on the right, obey stop signs and signals, and avoid distractions.

*For more info on bike safety rules, see page 11 of the appendix

**b. Biking with a Friend or Family:** Students bicycling with a friend should ride single file and maintain a distance of 10-12 feet or 4 meters. If students cannot keep 12 feet away from each other, they should wear masks when biking to school so they do not spread Covid-19. In addition, students should follow the same rules noted above under Biking Alone.

*For more information on bike safety rules, go to page 11 of the appendix
c. Pedalling Pod: A small group of children (3-4) biking to school single file with one to two adults. Pod will pick up children at predetermined stops at scheduled times along a route. Photo shows a typical Pedal Pod. During Covid-19, it’s important to wear masks and maintain social distance of 10-12 feet between cyclists to prevent spread. See safety tips under Biking Alone.

* For more info on how pedalling pods work, and the benefits, see page 12 of the appendix

3. Busing

Busing with Covid-19 is a challenge as it is an indoor space. Masks, social distancing, hand sanitizer, cleaning, and airflow are all important factors to consider for student safety.

a. Boarding: Students should wear masks, line up outdoors at each stop and keep 6 ft. distance between each family group. A bus aide can direct students to maintain distance, take temperatures, and allow one student to board at a time. Anyone with a temperature above 100.4 F or 38 C should not board.
b. Capacity and Seating:

i. Student capacity should be reduced by 25-50% to allow space

ii. Students should enter from the front, walk to the rear, and take seats in the back row first to avoid walking past each other. See diagram below and order of seating from 1-6.

iii. Seating should be limited to one student per row on each side except for members of the same household. Leaving an open row between filled rows is ideal unless partitions have been installed between rows which will allow every row to be used.

iv. Windows and roof hatch can be left open to promote outside airflow. The bus should provide a hand sanitizer station near the entrance.

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c. Satellite Drop-Off Sites (for Kids Ages 7+): To limit the number of students arriving at school en masse, satellite bus stops are recommended. A satellite bus stop is located two to four blocks away from the school, where students can be safely dropped-off, and stay distanced from others. Plan stops in safe areas or on streets with access to sidewalks and in areas with crossing guards and crosswalks. Students then walk a few blocks to school.

*For more info on satellite bus stops and the benefits, see page 13 of the appendix*
d. **Bus Exit Plans:**

Exit Option 1: All students should exit the bus in reverse manner, starting with the students in the front, and ending with the students in the back. An aide can help students get off and maintain 6 ft of distance as they walk towards the school. Kids should be taught to maintain distancing and avoid walking close together.

Exit Option 2: Open the rear exit emergency door and use a portable ramp or steps to allow students in back to exit to speed up the exit process.
4. Driving

While driving is one way for those who usually take the bus to remain physically distant from other students, drop-off locations are often crowded, making distancing a challenge. In addition, driving increases traffic congestion and increases air pollution in school zones. For those families who decide to drive students, it’s recommended to set up kiss and walk drop-off areas.

a. Kiss and Walk Drop-off/Pick-Up Points: Kiss and walk drop off/pick up areas are locations where parents can drive and drop-off or pick-up their children. Typically located 1-3 blocks away from the school, locations should be determined based on student age.

*For more info on Kiss and Walk areas and the benefits, see page 14 of the appendix

5. School Building Access Points

Keeping students physically distanced as they enter and exit the school building is another way to keep students safer. Use chalk, paint or tape on ground to keep students from gathering in groups

a. Inside and Outside of the School:
   i. Use Multiple Entrances/Exit Doors to reduce congestion. Assign students to specific doors nearest their classroom. To avoid crowds, check temperatures at outdoor stations or at Kiss and Walk areas. Anyone with a fever over 100.4 F/38 C should be sent home.

   ii. Use Staggered Arrival/Dismissal Times: This limits the amount of students entering or leaving the building at one time.
b. Surrounding Streets:
   i. Close Select Streets:
      1. Work with traffic police to close some streets around the School perimeter to make walking, biking, satellite bus stops, and kiss and walk locations safer for students. See NACTO guide for pandemics for outdoor classes, health stations, and ideas from other countries and School Streets.
      2. Instruct walkers and bicyclists to use the closed streets to approach the school so they’ll be safer from traffic.
         Municipalities may be able to paint temporary bike lanes on roads kids frequently travel to get to school. Lawn signs or chalk stencils (with city permission) on routes to school can remind students about physical distancing and be fun.
   ii. Develop One Way Streets: With some parents wary of sending their kids on the bus, more students will be walking and biking to school.
      1. Work with local traffic police to create one way streets in the morning and afternoon to provide more space for kids to walk and bike to school.
Appendix

1. Safety Rules and How to Stay Safe on the Roads
   a. Pedestrian Safety Tips:
      i. If you’re walking with friends, walk six feet apart
      ii. At every intersection and corner STOP, LOOK both ways, LISTEN & WAVE at drivers before crossing
      iii. Wear bright clothing or backpacks to be visible to drivers
      iv. Cross only at corners, use crosswalks
      v. Obey the pedestrian signals, don’t cross on red or yellow
      vi. Listen for cars, trucks, vans and emergency vehicles
      vii. Be alert - do not wear headphones while walking
      viii. Do not use your phone or any distracting devices while walking
      ix. Keep your eyes open and scan your surroundings
   b. Bicycle/Scooter Safety Tips (applies for e-bikes and e-scooters too):
      i. NJ law requires anyone 17 and under to wear a helmet
      ii. Stop at driveways, look both ways to be sure it’s safe to ride
      iii. Wear bright clothes, have a bell and lights on bike, use hand signals
      iv. Ride single file, in a straight line, and on the right with traffic
      v. Kids may ride on the sidewalk, but ring bell and call out “passing on the left” to warn pedestrians
      vi. At intersections, push button, wait for green/walk signal, look both ways, and over your shoulders to make sure no cars are turning before crossing, wave at drivers, dismount and cross in the crosswalk
      vii. Put a sticker on your helmet or bike with name, address and phone number in case of emergency

2. Pedestrian Pods:
   a. How they Work
      i. 4-6 students wearing masks, in pairs, 6 ft apart
      ii. 1-2 adults at the front and the rear with stop paddles and safety vests
      iii. A background check for all adults participating or families who know each other can form their own walking pod.
   b. Benefits
      i. Students:
         1. Learn pedestrian safety with adult guidance and supervision
         2. Get exercise and arrive at school alert and ready to learn
3. Learn the neighborhood and get fresh air
   ii. Parents:
       1. Get exercise and spend time with their children
       2. Take turns with other parents to walk kids to school
       3. Save gas by leaving the car at home
   iii. Schools and Communities:
       1. Reduce traffic congestion near and around schools
       2. Decrease air pollution and auto emissions
       3. Reduce bus costs and lower school budget

3. Pedalling Pods:
   a. How they Work
      i. 2-4 students ride single file, keep 4-6 ft apart, masks & helmets
      ii. 1-2 adults at front/rear with bright vests, masks and bike helmets
      iii. A background check for adults participating or families who know each other can form their own pedalling pods
   b. Benefits
      i. Students:
         1. Learn bike safety with adult guidance and supervision
         2. Get exercise and arrive at school alert and ready to learn
         3. Learn the neighborhood and get fresh air
      ii. Parents:
         1. Get exercise and spend time with their children
         2. Take turns with other parents to ride with kids to school
         3. Save gas by leaving the car at home
      iii. Schools and Communities:
         1. Reduce traffic congestion near and around schools
         2. Decrease air pollution and auto emissions
         3. Address bus reductions, reduce bus costs and lower budget

4. Satellite Bus Stops (for Older Kids, age 7+)
   a. How they Work
      i. A satellite bus stop is located two to four blocks away from the school, where students can be safely dropped-off, and walk to school
      ii. Plan satellite bus stops in safe lots or on a street with access to sidewalks and in areas with crossing guards and crosswalks.
      iii. The number of satellite bus stops is dependent on the number of students, and number of safe locations to set up these points. Schools may ask a faith-based org.or merchant if their parking lot can be used as a safe drop point in the early AM
b. **Benefits**
   
i. Reduces congestion around the school.
   
ii. Makes the street environment around the school safer for students by keeping buses away, and reduces bus emissions and idling fumes
   
iii. Kids get exercise as they walk a few blocks to school

5. **Kiss and Walk Drop-off/Pick-Up Points**
   
a. **How they Work**
   
i. Kiss and walk drop off/pick up areas are locations where parents can drop-off or pick-up children. Typically located 1-3 blocks away from school, locations should be based on age.
   
ii. For students (PK-Gr. 1), locations can be on school property, while locations for gr. 2+ can be 1-3 blocks from school
   
iii. Locate these areas on streets away from where students who walk or bike are traveling to get to school
   
b. **Benefits**
   
i. Reduce traffic congestion in front of the school
   
ii. Keep walkers and bicyclists safer because there are less cars
   
iii. Help students get some exercise as they walk to the school
   
iv. Provide more space for students to socially distance

6. **Bicycle Racks**
   
a. Post signs to (i) reinforce physical distancing and (ii) remind students to wear masks. Consider releasing kids who bike a few minutes early so they have time to get bikes while taking turns and social distancing.
   
b. If rack spaces are not typically full, block off every other spot to reinforce distancing. If there are enough rack spaces, assign parking to individual students (and leave additional parking for students or visitors who don't ordinarily bike).
   
c. Use of bike racks may require following disinfection protocols or may be prohibited altogether, as set by local or state health guidance.
   
d. Designate additional places for bike parking, such as along a fence