

Dear all

What follows is a proposal to set up a bike bus for our school. Many schools are already up and running and all have reported very positive feedback from the school, the parents and the kids.

The purpose of this message to let parents and the school know that there is an appetite to set a bike bus up for this school.

What is a bike bus?

A bike bus is a group of cyclists traveling as a single vehicle with the aim of getting kids to school safely. A bike bus typically consists of confident adult riders riding on the outside edges of the group providing protection for the less confident within the group. Bike buses travel at the speed of the slowest riders so no one gets left behind in what should be a relaxed enjoyable experience.

What role does the school have to play in setting up a bike bus?

Typically bike buses are parent and community driven. This means that the school just needs to endorse and support the bike bus in any way that it can.

What role do parents have in setting up a bike bus?

There will typically be a group of parents that are initiating the process of starting a bike bus for the school. This group is actively seeking support from the school parents and this message is part of that process.

Once there is a general acceptance that a bike bus can be supported, the following actions need to be addressed.

- Choose a route for your pilot bike bus. Consider north, south, east and west routes. Typically, the route with the biggest catchment should be chosen.
- There are community volunteers who can sense check the route for you and carry out a risk assessment.
- Next set up a communication group, (WhatsApp), with all the parents who sign up to the bike bus.
- Let parents know that the bike bus is not an official event. It is on public roads and everyone attends at their own risk. If parents insist on the bike bus becoming an official event, then Cycling UK does offer insurance for bike buses. This does add additional admin, however.
- Your local community police will be aware that Bike buses are being set up in the city, contact them and let them know the date of your pilot bike bus. They will send officers on bicycles to you first bike bus.
- We recommend setting up a web page with details of the school's bike bus so that it can be promoted throughout the year.

Tell me what happens on the day of the bike bus

You will have communicated with your parents and the police, so everyone knows the date, the time and route of the bike bus.

Typically, a bike bus needs a lead marshal and a tail marshal. These marshals should not be responsible for any of the kids in the bike bus. However, the more marshals you can muster for a bike bus the better!

Marshals will remind parents that they should ride on the traffic side of the bike bus keeping their children alongside them. Having the marshals at the front and rear of the group and parents forming a protective barrier is what makes a bike bus such a safe way of traveling to school.

Please see the following resource for a more detailed information about setting up a bike bus. [5539.pdf \(cycling.scot\)](#)

(The End)

Here is a summary of the most important points

- Gather support from other parents for a bike bus
- Let the head teacher know you are planning a bike bus and have a meeting seeking support from the school.
- Consider north, south , east and west routes but only pilot one.
- Contact your local bike bus volunteer marshals who can arrange a discussion about choosing the start pointing for the bike bus and route to take.
- Ride the route in advance and risk assess it. (No route is perfect so don't be put off by perceived obstacles).
- Set up a WhatsApp or other communication tool for parents on that route
- Agree a date for the pilot and invite the following
 - Local Bike bus volunteer marshals x 2. They can show parents how to marshal a bike bus
 - Local community police who can ride along side the bike bus.
- Seek feedback from the police after the bike bus, they can offer suggestions about the route and suggest alternatives.
- Debrief and seek a sign off from the volunteer marshals

Don't forget to take photos, especially if the police are there. Having promo photos of police will give confidence to nervous parents that the bike bus is a safe way to get to school

Consider setting up a web site to promote the bike bus. It will have all the necessary details for parents . Here is an example school web site [George Watson's College Bike Bus – CycleJarJar \(wordpress.com\)](https://www.cyclejarjar.com/George-Watson-s-College-Bike-Bus)