



# Drive-to-Five

## Planning Guide



### What is drive-to-five?

Drive-to-five is a program designating legal and walkable locations within a five minute walk from the school. Using these locations disperses traffic away from the congested school area, creating a safer school commute for all. This program can be structured various ways to fit specific school circumstances.

## Option 1: Just an email

Schools that cannot commit any school council time to a drive-to-five program may elect just to send out an email (or phoner or School Day notice) to parents, encouraging those who drive to drop off and pick up their children at locations about a five minute walk from the school. Older students can walk on their own, and parents may park and accompany younger students. See appendix A for a draft email.

## Option 2: Mapping and Signs

For schools that commit a little more parent council time to a drive-to-five program, a simple version of the program involves mapping out five minute walking locations from the schools, putting-up signs and sending out emails.

### 1. Map out five-minute walk locations from the school

First, determine several areas that are a five minute walk from the school, and that are safe and convenient places for parents to drop-off and pick-up their children. School councils can either do the mapping themselves along with their children, or can work with the school to have teachers do the mapping with their classes. These locations should be located in areas that:

- Have ample room for parking
- Are convenient for parents (are in the direction of where students live)
- Are not inconveniencing anyone else (such as neighbours or businesses)
- Are safe (low vehicle traffic, well lit, completed sidewalks, no midblock crossing necessary)

### 2. Gain permission to erect signs

Speak to homeowners near the designated drive-to-five locations to gain their permission to erect signs periodically on their lawn. A signed agreement may or may not be necessary.

### 3. Put-up drive-to-five signs

Either the night before or the morning of days that are being promoted as drive-to-five days, put up the drive-to-five yard signs provided by Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region at the mapped-out drive-to-five locations.

### 3. Send out drive-to-five promotion email

See Appendix B for a draft email to parents for Option 2.

## Option 3: Add Greeters

For schools that are able to commit a bit more time to a drive-to-five program, this version of the program is the same as the second option but adds parent greeters at each mapped out drive-to-five location.

### **1. Follow steps 1, 2 and 3 of Option 2**

### **2. Parent greeters at each mapped out drive-to-five location**

Fifteen minutes before school starts, have parent volunteers located at each mapped-out drive-to-five location. This is a nice way to promote the program and to get parents comfortable with the idea of dropping their kids off at locations five minutes from the school. If possible, also have volunteers at these locations again after school; this way students can have a trusted adult to wait with them until their parents arrive for pick-up at the mapped-out drive-to five locations.

At high schools, these volunteers are not necessary for supervision, but could still be used to draw attention to the program. They could be cheerleaders, eco-club members, or sports teams, for instance, with posters, swag, or noisemakers that help celebrate those students who want to make a difference.

## Option 4: Add the Walking School Bus

For schools that are able to commit even more school council time to a drive-to-five program, this version of the program is the same as the third option but adds parents at each mapped out drive-to-five location that actually walk the groups of students to and from school.

### **1. Follow steps 1 and 2 of Option 3**

### **2. Parent walkers at each mapped out drive-to-five location**

In addition to the parent greeters that welcome students and their parents to the mapped-out drive-to-five locations, also add parent volunteers to walk with the students to and from school. This is a great way to get parents and students really comfortable with the drive-to-five program and the mapped-out walking routes.

## Appendix A: Email to parents (Option 1)

Dear parents,

Our school encourages all students to get to and from school in active ways. There are many benefits for students to walk, cycle and roll to school – including physical and mental health benefits, environmental benefits, and traffic safety benefits. There are many resources available at [stswr.ca](http://stswr.ca) under the ‘Walk Zone’ tab to support parent efforts to help their children get to and from school in active and safe ways.

Having said this, we know that sometimes parents do need to drive their children to and from school. In these cases, we encourage a “drive-to-five” approach in order to keep traffic away from the school site where so many little bodies are on foot. We urge parents to determine safe locations roughly a five-minute walk from the school where they can drop-off and pick-up their children before and after school. Older students can walk on their own from the drop-off location. Parents can park and accompany smaller children.

Taking a “drive-to-five” approach to getting students to and from school has many benefits. Students experience both physical and mental health benefits by breaking up sedentary time before and after school. Walking and cycling also makes for safer and more connected communities, because we get to know neighbours and other families, and we reduce traffic congestion around the school. It is also excellent bonding time when parents walk or cycle with their children to and from school.

Thank you for supporting our students to get to and from school in the safest and healthiest ways possible.

Sincerely,

## Appendix B: Email to parents (Options 2, 3 and 4)

Dear parents,

Our school encourages all students to get to and from school in active ways. There are many benefits for students to walk, cycle and roll to school – including physical and mental health benefits, environmental benefits, and traffic safety benefits. There are many resources available at [www.stswr.ca](http://www.stswr.ca) under the ‘Walk Zone’ tab to support parent efforts to help their children get to and from school in active and safe ways.

Having said this, we also understand that sometimes parents need to drive their children to and from school. In these cases, we encourage a “drive-to-five” approach. We urge parents to drop-off and pick-up their children before and after school at locations that are roughly a five-minute walk from the school. To support parents, our school council and staff have already mapped-out safe drive-to-five drop-off and pick-up locations.

These locations are:

- location 1
- location 2
- location 3

The locations are marked with drive-to-five signs. [Parent greeters will also be present at the locations.] [Parent greeters will also be present at the locations and additional parent volunteers will walk the students to and from the drive-to-five locations.] Older students can walk on their own from the drop-off location. Parents may park and accompany their younger children.

Taking a “drive-to-five” approach to getting students to and from school has many benefits. Students experience both physical and mental health benefits by breaking up sedentary time before and after school. Walking and cycling also makes for safer and more connected communities, because we get to know neighbours and other families, and we reduce traffic congestion around the school. It is also excellent bonding time when parents walk or cycle with their children to and from school.

Thank you for supporting our students to get to and from school in the safest and healthiest ways possible.

Sincerely,