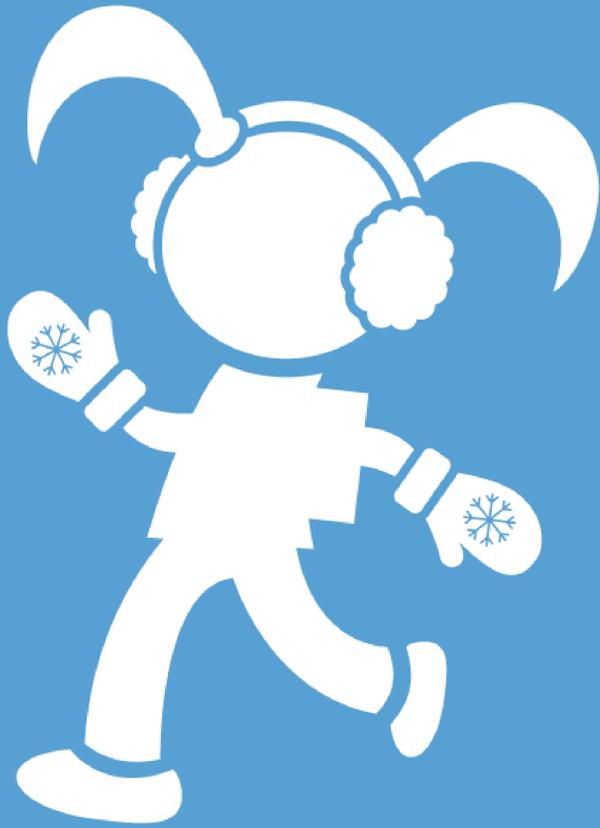

February 2026



WINTER WALK GUIDEBOOK

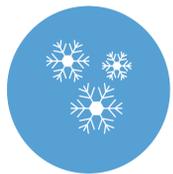


East Central Wisconsin
Safe Routes to School

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Winter Walk Month is a fun, seasonal way to motivate students and families to bundle up, get outside, and enjoy winter walking. It's also a great time for schools to run challenges, share safety tips, and support healthy habits despite the cold.

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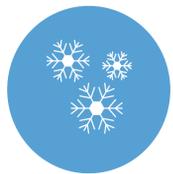
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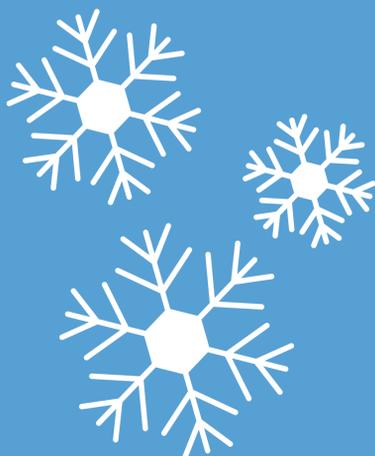


What is Winter Walk?

Winter Walk encourages students to walk and roll to school, even on cold days. Schools can choose to host a single day event, a themed week, or promote walking throughout the entire month.

Fresh air and sunlight offer year-round health benefits. Research shows that students who get physical activity before school complete learning tasks more quickly and accurately.

Winter Walk provides schools the flexibility to plan activities that work best for their school community and schedule.



Why Should Schools Participate?

- Supports student health, focus, and readiness for learning.
- Reduces traffic congestion around school campuses.
- Promotes safe, active transportation habits.
- Encourages family engagement and pedestrian safety conversations.
- Builds a sense of community through shared activities.

Is It Safe to Walk in Winter?

Yes, as long as those walking are prepared!

Encourage students to:

- Dress in layers so they can adjust as they warm up. Wear hats, gloves, warm socks, and appropriate footwear.
- Low light and snow can make walkers harder to see, so wear reflective gear and bright winter clothing.
- Use shorter, slower steps on icy or packed snow. Teach students to “walk like a penguin” to practice safe winter walking movements.

Promoting Your Event

Student Involvement

Involving students in the planning can boost excitement and participation.

Some ideas include:

- Have students create a Winter Walk display for the school entrance.
- Older students could help write daily announcements or tips.
- Student leadership groups or Safety Patrol can create neighborhood route maps highlighting crosswalks, flashing beacons, and crossing guard locations.

Staff Engagement

A successful event requires support from staff. Consider the following:

- Present the plan at a staff meeting.
- Create a sign-up sheet for one-day events.
- Prepare tracking sheets for weekly or month-long events.
- Provide a ready-to-send message for teachers to share with families.
- Encourage staff to participate in the walk.

Parent Communication

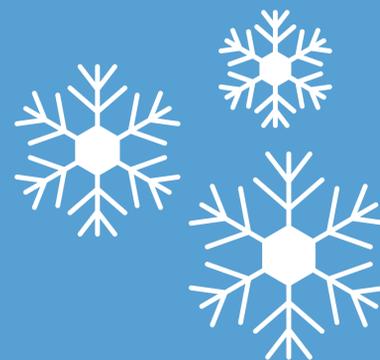
Parents ultimately decide how students travel to and from school.

Remind parents the benefits of walking to school:

- Walking together is a great opportunity to teach pedestrian safety.
- Students who walk or roll often arrive more relaxed and ready to learn.
- Fewer cars mean less congestion and safer arrival areas.

Communication Tips

- Share Winter Walk information in school newsletters.
- Post on school social media.
- Send a reminder the day before a one-day event.
- Add the event to the school calendar.



Winter Walk Options

Schools can tailor participation to their community.



PLAN A ONE-DAY EVENT

- Meet and walk to school as a group.
- Host a school-wide morning walk around the school campus.
- Combine with a spirit day or wellness event.



WALK ALL MONTH

- Track walking, biking, and rolling on a classroom or hallway chart.
- Celebrate “Winter Walk Wednesdays”
- Highlight safe walking routes throughout the month.



ENCOURAGE OUTDOOR ACTIVITY AT HOME OR AT RECESS

- Sledding
- Skating
- Shoveling
- Snowmen or fort building
- Neighborhood walks



PROMOTE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY CONVERSATIONS

Use the activities in this guidebook to spark important conversations about safe walking in winter, or any time of the year.

If walking or rolling to school isn't an option,

... schools can still participate by having students log outdoor physical activity during the school day or at home.

All schools are encouraged to enter the WINTER WALK PRIZE DRAWING.

Fill out this [FORM](#) by January 15th noting the activities being planned for Winter Walk. Four schools will win a prize package to be delivered with the toolkit.



Prize Package Includes:

- ✓ Ten Ways to Hear Snow by Cathy Camper
- ✓ Don't Break the Ice board game
- ✓ Penguins on Ice cognitive puzzle game
- ✓ Snow Shovels
- ✓ Fun Snow Molds penguin, snowman, gnome
- ✓ Fort-Building Blocks
- ✓ Pongdemonium active game

WINTER WALK TO SCHOOL MONTH ACTIVITY TRACKER

Track active transportation during Winter Walk to School Month. Laminate and display this poster in your classroom or in the hallway. As students arrive to school, mark down their travel mode for the day of the week with a dry erase marker.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY

W = Walk
B = Bike
R = Roll

Walking in winter can be a little tricky so it is important to ...

WALK WISE

Vocabulary

PEDESTRIAN - A person walking along a road or in a developed area.

This includes people walking, running, on a scooter, skating, or using a mobility device.

ALERT - Paying attention to what is going on around you.

EYE CONTACT - When two people look into/at each others eyes.

VEHICLE - A car, truck, van, SUV, motorcycle, semitruck, or a bicycle.

CAUTION - Great care given to avoid possible danger.

PREDICTABLE - Anything you see or know before it happens.

Scavenger Hunt

Keep your EARS and EYES open

Do you HEAR?

- a vehicle in front of you?
- a vehicle coming up behind you?
- a vehicle engine in a driveway?
- a bike tire rolling on the pavement?
- someone ringing a bike bell?
- a semi-truck?
- emergency vehicle sirens?

Do you SEE?

- a turning vehicle?
- the blinker of turning vehicle?
- vehicle moving
- a vehicle stopped for a pedestrian?
- an emergency vehicle with flashing lights on?
- the white lights on the back of a vehicle backing up?

Walking in winter can be a little tricky so it is important to ...

WALK WISE

How do you stay ALERT?

Fill in the blanks.

WORD BANK						
stop	walk	you	head	vehicles	predictable	eye

1. Listen to what is happening all around _____.
2. Watch for turning _____.
3. Wait for vehicles to _____ before crossing a roadway.
4. Make _____ contact with drivers that have stopped.
5. _____, don't run across streets.
6. Keep your phone down and your _____ up.
7. When you stop at the curb before crossing, you are walking in a _____ manner.

1. you 2. vehicles 3. stop 4. eye 5. walk 6. head 7. predictable

Places to use extra CAUTION

Unscramble the following words to learn the places you need to use extra caution around vehicles.

1. kgpirna tlo _____
2. Idiskwae _____
3. sbuy yrwdowaa _____
4. wrevdayi _____
5. dghtiel nnstiecertio _____
6. scakwoslr _____

Ask parents, caregivers, and teachers to tell you what skills they use in these areas to practice pedestrian safety.

1. parking lot 2. sidewalk 3. busy roadway 4. driveway 5. lighted intersection 6. crosswalk

Walking in winter can be a little tricky so it is important to ...

WALK WISE

Benefits of walking with a GROUP

Draw a line to connect the beginning and the end of each sentence.

- A group of children is more easily seen ▪ someone is missing or unsafe.
- Children watch out for each other and notice if ▪ responsible behaviors.
- Children pick up different skills from one another and learn ▪ by drivers than a child walking alone.
- Always stay with the group and do not ▪ adjust to driving more cautiously.
- When drivers see a group they ▪ run ahead or fall behind.



If you were to go on a walk, who are some people you could walk with?

Beyond Left - Right - Left

When preparing to cross a roadway, it is important to stop and look **Left**, then **Right**, then Left again. (cars from the left are closer to you)

Beyond that, you also want to look **Behind** and in **Front** of you for turning vehicles.

Wait for vehicles to stop and make **eye contact** with the driver before walking in front of their vehicle. You want to make sure they see you.

Do the same as you walk past a **driveway**.

Look for vehicles **turning** into driveways or pulling out of driveways.

If you see white lights shining on the back of a vehicle, it means the vehicle is backing up or waiting to back up.

Again, **stop** and make eye contact with the driver before walking in front of their vehicle.

Find the bolded words from above in the word search below.

E D R H U H P R D A
 K R I M G O E N A L
 M I G S T H I N P Y
 L V H S D H K D U C
 F E T G E F G D O J
 T W F B R F R O N T
 I A L T J Z C N A L
 A Y Q T U R N I N G
 W A F R A T M S P S
 E Y E C O N T A C T

Walking in winter can be a little tricky so it is important to ...

WALK WISE

Can Drivers See You?

True or False - Write **T** for True or **F** for false

- ___ When walking during the day, it does not matter what you wear. Drivers will always see you.
- ___ Drivers see fluorescent colors faster and from further away than standard colors.
- ___ Wearing a fluorescent jacket, backpack, or clothing will help drivers see you during daylight hours.
- ___ Dark conditions are during sunrise, sunset, cloudy days, rainy days and nighttime.
- ___ When walking at night it doesn't matter what you wear, drivers will always see you.
- ___ Dark conditions make it more difficult for drivers to see you walking or on a bike.
- ___ To be sure drivers see you at night, wear reflective gear.
- ___ Wearing reflective gear on your ankles, knees, and wrists draws more attention because of the movement.

What to know at LIGHTED INTERSECTIONS



- Take this paper home.
- Review this sign with an adult.
- Learn what to DO and WATCH FOR at a lighted intersection.
- Ask an adult to take you to a lighted intersection. Together practice how to cross.
- Always watch and wait for vehicles to stop before you walk.
- Always look behind you and ahead of you for turning vehicles.
- Continue to watch for moving vehicles as you cross the street.