

STARTING A BIKE BUS. THE BASICS.



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WHY START A BIKE BUS?

It's no secret that here in New Zealand there are fewer children biking to school these days. This puts many of our children at greater risk of obesity and other health conditions related to a sedentary lifestyle. A bike bus helps kids get to and from school in a health, safe and fun way.

WHAT IS THE BIKE BUS?

A bike bus is similar to the walking bus and provides another way for schoolchildren to get to and from school in a safe way. Escorted by two adults (a "Driver" leads and a "conductor" follows), the group cycles to school along a set route, each school day in much the same way a school bus would drive them to school. Just like a regular bus, bike buses stop at designated "bus stops" and at "pick up times" in which they pick up children. It's a great way to start and finish the school day and a great way to get fit and have some fun with friends.

START SMALL.

When you start your bike bus remember that it can always grow. It makes good sense to start with a small bus just to see how things work. Start in a neighbourhood where you find a group of keen parents and children and other supporters.

HOW TO START. (adults).

1. Invite these families to bike with you.
2. Pick a safe route and give it a test run. (*riding without children*).
3. Decide how often you will run the bike bus.
4. Have fun.

PICKING A ROUTE. ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

1. How busy is the route during the time you will use it and is there plenty of room for your bike bus?
2. Will it be easy for cyclists to cross the street where necessary?
3. Do drivers behave well in this area? Do they yield to cyclists? Do they speed?
4. Does the area feel safe? Are there any dogs roaming or people loitering?

SET THE SAFETY RULES.

It's important to use the bike bus as an opportunity to reinforce the rules for safe cycling.

Rule 1. Everyone must wear a certified safety helmet.

Rule 2. Everyone must wear a high visibility (hiviz) jacket.

Rule 3. Bikes must be in safe working condition and have good brakes.

Rule 4. All children must cycle between the "bike bus driver" (*the adult in the lead of the group*) and the "bike bus conductor" (*the adult at the back of the group*).

SUPERVISION.

Make sure that you have a good "Adult-to-child ratio for your bike bus. This will vary depending on the age group of the children. For younger ones it has been recommended 1 adult for every 3 children and for the older ones 1 adult for every 6 children. It's best to err on the side of safety so we'd suggest the more adult supervision the better.