

## **Cults School Walking Bus Information Evening**

**21st November 2018**

Thank you to all those who came to the information evening, it was a great turnout for such a cold and wet evening!

There were a few points that were discussed at the meeting to allow us to gain feedback and a few questions from parents that we needed to look into further; these items are as follows:

1. We discussed how the backpacks, (essential for each route) which will contain basic first aid kits, spare bibs, registers, emergency procedures etc., will be passed from one volunteer to the next. Several methods were suggested including passing the bag to the child of the next volunteer so that they could take it home with them (particularly if the parents are working and not in the playground) or leaving it at a designated place such as the office to collect. The suggestion that seemed the most appropriate however was that the volunteers will take responsibility for this and decide, according to the rota, how they will manage the handover to ensure that the next volunteer will have the bag for their walk. This seems the most sensible option as each person may have different routines and availability to be able to physically take the bag.

2. We asked about the volunteer length of service and the expectations for this. We were heartened to hear that most expected to be volunteering for at least 2 terms if not across the year. This will be beneficial to the bus continuity and also as training will be provided to each volunteer this will mean the training, particularly in first aid will be used for the bus longer term.

3. Additional routes were discussed; a service up Quarry Road is desirable, one from the bottom of Cults Avenue and a further route that crosses the playing field at the upper end of Bieldside. We welcome these suggestions and hope they can become a reality at a later date. At present we will be concentrating on initially the trial of the Abbotshall route and then rolling out the two other proposed routes. We anticipate that, perhaps after the summer term, a steering group can be set up to facilitate in the introduction of additional routes if interest continues to be present.

4. The following dates have been proposed for the commencement of the walking bus training and trial:

- training, week beginning 14th January
- trial route to commence week beginning 21st January
- full bus service (all three routes to commence) week beginning 18th February.

5. There was a query over whether the insurance covered only the children or the volunteers as well. The insurance is as follows:

*The Zurich Municipal third party liability cover, along with the AIG off site activities insurance will cover the walking bus as it is an officially authorised and organised activity. The insurance covers all pupils enrolled at the school, staff and official volunteers/parent helpers. Non enrolled children (i.e. babies in prams) travelling with parent volunteers are not covered and this should be made clear at the onset.*

6. It was asked whether volunteers would be able to bring their dogs with them on the walk

We have checked with the council on this point and as long as dogs are part of the risk assessment for the route and all parents whose children will be on that particular bus route agree to the presence of a dog, the dog is kept on a lead and the dog is of a friendly nature and used to being around children dogs can be allowed. Therefore if any volunteer wishes to bring their dog along they must ensure that this has been prearranged so that the appropriate risk assessment has been completed and that all parents and participants on their bus consent. We have decided however, that in the trial stage and the early stages of the bus scheme that we won't have dogs so that all members of the walking bus team can see how the children respond to the bus scheme without additional potential distractions.

7. As a requirement of being a volunteer on the bus, a PVG check will need to be carried out before the volunteer can help with the bus. The relevant forms are available from the school office. Where people have been checked before but the disclosure might have lapsed there is a separate form for an update, this is available from the school office. Please let them know that this is what you require.

8. Those who attended the meeting were able to pick up a volunteer signup sheet so that they could provide details of their availability. For those of you unable to attend, and wanting to volunteer, we will be sending these forms home in your child's school bag. The sign-up sheets are also available on the school website.

Many thanks again for all those who have expressed an interest in being involved with the walking bus. We look forward to seeing you all in the New Year for training and getting the walking bus scheme started.