

Movin'March campaign celebrates benefits of active travel for school kids

CHELSEA MCLAUGHLIN

Last updated 05:00, March 2 2017

SUPPLIED

Sixty-eight schools from around the Wellington region are involved in 2017's Movin'March initiative.

Now's the time to join a walking school bus.

The Greater Wellington Regional Council is encouraging kids across the region to get moving this month with their Movin'March initiative.

In 2016, 14,000 students in the Wellington area took part by actively travelling to school. The 2017 aim is to attract 20,000 students.

SUPPLIED

The Greater Wellington Regional Council says walking and biking to school improves physical fitness and helps develop confidence, independence, decision making and risk assessment skills, improve communication with parents and build a stronger sense of community.

Council sustainable transport manager Melanie Thornton says 68 schools are already taking part this year but more can sign up during the month.

READ MORE:

[*Getting active better for learning](#)

[*Study reveals 9 in 10 Auckland children want to walk to school](#)

[*Parents too scared to let kids walk to school](#)

[*Editorial: Let's make it safe for our kids to foot it home from school](#)

There are many positives to active travel, including increased health and fitness, perception benefits as children get to see their local area and congestion relief around schools, Thornton says.

St Anthony's School in Seatoun is involved for the second time this year.

Principal Jennifer Ioannou says the first year was "fantastic".

"The children and the parents were so excited and enthused with the whole Movin'March and they really got behind it."

The school continued active travel initiatives after the month, with Ioannou meeting children for a walking school bus from the Strathmore shops every Monday.

Ad Feedback

-50%	-52%	-54%
Platinum Plus Car Service	Heat Pump Clean & Service	Cream Huawei Band Smart Watch
\$129	\$69	\$59
Click	Click	Click

She says pupils also travel actively from Hataitai and Kilbirnie.

They arrive at school ready to learn and it is also a great opportunity to teach road safety, she says.

Parents were increasingly confident about letting their children travel without them, whether independently or in a group and it has helped build a strong community.

"I think it's a wonderful initiative and I think we definitely will be involved every year," she says.

Thornton says parents often begin with allowing their kids to actively travel to school by walking with them.

But seeing other children doing it is a good way of overcoming those nerves.

"We'd like to encourage the parents to allow their kids a little bit of that freedom if they think that's suitable," she says.

"It's just part of that process of encouraging their children to be a bit more independent."

She says it is always one of the councils most successful campaigns.

During the month students will have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities, including a passport challenge where students are encouraged to get their passport stamped for a chance to win a brand new bike and helmet, a family day on March 31, a colouring-in competition and eight new lesson plans that work across all curriculum areas to create a Movin'March unit.

For more information visit movinmarch.com.

- Stuff

more from stuff

Foods you probably are refrigerating, but shouldn't

The bar where men aren't allowed to approach women

Cafe chat: A taste of Canterbury at Gatherings

Cider maker Zeffer crowdfunds for move to Hawke's Bay

promoted stories

Dubai Mansions Offer Luxury You Can Only Imagine
Mansion Global

3 Simple Steps To Shed Belly Fat Over 40
MAX Workouts

Car Thieves Will Hate This Tiny Device
Techie Fans

Are you a strategic thinker? Test your skills with millions of...
Elvenar

Recommended by