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**Crocodile Trails in Buckinghamshire**

**What are Crocodile Trails?**

Crocodiles are escorted walking schemes similar to a walking bus. A Crocodile Trail is for children of all ages at a Primary School. It is a simple but effective way of encouraging walking to and from school.

Each route is to be risk assessed by the school and written report produced. Buckinghamshire Council are able to view written reports and pass comments.

**Why get Wild about Walking?**

Crocodile Trails can benefit children, parents, the school and the local community by:

* Promoting healthy exercise keeping adults and children fit
* Helps children develop personal and road safety skills
* Helping to reduce traffic outside the school
* Improving air quality
* Giving children the chance to learn more about their local community

**Getting started**

* First establish a need for your trail
* Do you have the support of the Headteacher?
* Appoint a route coordinator (preferably a member of staff)
* Recruit escorts
* The route can operate 1 – 5 days a week.
* Decide what route (s) you would like to use. This should allow as many people as possible to take part. Ideally it could start from a central parking area so that those travelling some distance can park and stride with you.

**What happens next?**

* Walk the chosen route and carry out a written risk assessment
* The trail must follow the same route at all times.
* Where possible chosen routes will make use of controlled crossing points, e.g. school crossing patrollers, zebra, pelican crossing etc.
* All escorts should attend Buckinghamshire Council’s Footsteps training programme.
* All escorts must be DBS checked. These checks must be obtained by the school
* All children must be trained to Stage 1 of the Footsteps Pedestrian Scheme.

**Timetable**

* Once established each route should operate on the agreed days, regardless of weather conditions. The coordinator should agree with the school a procedure to deal with unforeseen circumstances e.g. severe weather or not enough escorts to meet the required ratio.
* All trails should operate to a strict timetable and not wait for latecomers in the morning. Parents/carers are responsible for making sure that children who miss the Crocodile arrive at school safely.
* Parents must ensure that children are at the appropriate ‘stop’ at the appointed time.
* Parents are responsible for their child’s safety on the way to and from the designated ‘stop’ and on the journey to and from the school.

**Ratios**

* There must always be at least two escorts present, preferably three.

We recommend the following child to adult ratios:

* 1 escort to 4 infant children
* 1 escort to 8 junior children
* 1 escort to 6 mixed children

**Route Coordinator and Walking Escorts:**

All Route Coordinators and Walking Escorts adhere to school policies and procedures.

The Route Coordinator needs to ensure there are sufficient escorts to maintain correct ratio numbers**.**

The will also ensure that each escort meets the set criteria**:**

* All escorts must be over 18 years of age.
* All escorts must wear a high visibility tabards at all times when on the Trail. It is the responsibility of the school to provide these.
* All volunteers who wish to act as escorts must have received guidance from the school and must have received a satisfactory DBS enhanced check. Escorts who leave and then re-join the Trail will have to undergo a new DBS check if they have a break in service of three months or more.

**Parental Permission**

Parents must complete the schools consent form before their child is allowed to travel on the Trail.

Parents must ensure that their child is on time for the start of the trail.

**Trail passengers**

* All children should have completed Stage 1 of the Footsteps Practical Pedestrian scheme
* All children walking on the Trail must wear a high-visibility safety tabard. These tabards need to be supplied by the school.
* Each Trail will require an attendance register
* All children participating in the Trail will sign a pupils promise to wear their tabard and behave sensibly and considerately at all times on the Trail. Parents must stress the importance of good behaviour on the journey to and from the school. Any child who endangers themselves or others, or behaves in a manned deemed unacceptable by the escorts will not be entitled to use the Trail and may be withdrawn from the Trail at the end of the journey. The Route Coordinator and the school will have the final decision on who should or not use the trail.
* The children must walk in pairs and carry their own bags lunchboxes etc. If a route has to use a narrow footpath, children must walk in a single file. They must walk sensibly on the pavement, away from the kerb. Where possible escorts should walk next to children and always nearest to the road. Escorts and children will be expected to have due consideration to other pedestrians and allow sufficient room for them to pass.

**Emergency Procedures**

In the event of a minor injury (e.g. grazed knee) the school’s Accident Book should be utilised.

In the event of a more serious incident of medical emergency it may be necessary for one of the escorts to telephone for assistance and notify the school.

**Insurance**

Schools should check that the Crocodile journey to school is covered under their insurance policy.