

## Why do Canadians drive their teenagers to school?



Although 65 per cent of students live within a 30-minute walk of their school, only 35 per cent actually walk on a regular basis – and this number is declining every year. We can all agree that we want what's best for our children. Parents will cite lack of time, the weather, stranger danger, congested streets, etc. However, each trip we take is giving our children less of an opportunity to be active, reducing their safety and the safety of other children, and having a detrimental effect on our environment, both locally and at a global scale.

## What's the safest way for my teen to get to school?

Ideally, considering their immediate and future well being, a teen's safest trip to school would be:

- **Active** – giving them a chance to be outdoors in the fresh air, improve their health and build a healthy relationship to physical activity;
- **Trustworthy** – in a community with which they are comfortable and familiar, with lots of foot traffic and activity;
- **Healthy** – in an environment free of smog and pollutants;
- **Sustainable** – not negatively impacting their environment or their future wellbeing;
- **Secure** – free of threats from automobile traffic.

## Increasing Daily Physical Activity

Teens who are physically active are healthier and perform better at school. An inactive lifestyle deprives a teen of these benefits, while making them more susceptible to a host of illnesses, from mental illness to obesity to heart disease.

The good news for parents is that it's easy to get kids active. Modelling an active lifestyle has a strong influence on the activity level of children. By incorporating physical activity into a child's routine, we can build lifelong positive associations with a healthy lifestyle.

## What are transportation-related emissions?



A running automobile produces and releases a number of pollutants into the air – every one of which is problematic. Many pollutants can cause or exacerbate both chronic and acute health problems, especially among youth, as their bodies are more fragile than those of adults and are still developing. Some emissions introduce toxins into our immediate environment, destroying habitat and poisoning our soil and water. Others contribute to large scale environmental problems, such as ozone depletion and climate change.

## What can you do to help McMath Students and Staff?

- Follow school guidelines for drop-off and pick-up procedures;
- Let your teen walk to school daily and only drive if absolutely necessary;
- If you must drive, create a carpool with others to reduce the traffic congestion on school property;
- Drop your teen off the property and let him/her walk the last block free of threats from automobile traffic;
- Use only allocated drop off areas (east parking lot and round-a-bout) to reduce the out-going traffic