

Meridian Heights is promoting active transportation to school. What does this mean?



Physical and Mental health

Walking or cycling to school regularly gives your child opportunities for daily physical activity that will help him or her avoid chronic disease and lead a healthy, happy life. Students who get physical activity in the morning arrive at school more alert and ready to learn.

Environmental well-being

Reducing the number of cars at schools improves air quality, creating healthier environments where children spend a great part of their day.

Happiness

Those who walk and cycle the school route enjoy a deeper connection to their community and find joy in nature and people along the way; all of which leads to less stress and less depression.



Safety

You will have noticed that at drop-off and pick-up times at our school, there are many vehicles mixed with pedestrians. Despite new crosswalks and better monitoring of the bus zones over the years, we still are concerned about our children's safety.

FOR THOSE FAMILIES WHO CHOOSE TO DRIVE, WE ARE PROPOSING A SHIFT IN TRAFFIC AWAY FROM THE WEST AND NORTH SIDE OF OUR SCHOOL. WE WISH TO SEE PARENTS DROP OFF STUDENTS ON 44 AVE, ON THE SCHOOL SIDE OF THE STREET. THE TOWN OF STONY PLAIN WILL SIGN THIS AS A TEMPORARY PARKING ZONE (DROPOFF ONLY).

WHY? Students dropped off on the south, on 44 Ave, only need to cross our school fields to get to the school. This is a healthy walk of less than a block. It is much safer than crossing any of our streets at busy times. It reduces traffic near the school. See map on next page.

Parent champions

Action-oriented parents who care about children's health and the environmental effects of car congestion are needed. Lead your school to greater physical, mental and environmental health:

- Let your children walk/cycle to school, if they're not on a school bus
- Watch out for all children in the neighbourhood – drive very carefully near our school
- Share your observations in surveys

Please contact our Parent rep, Crystal Harnum, crystal_maunder@hotmail.com or our Principal, Cheryl Johnson, cjohnson@psd70.ab.ca if you'd like to help with getting the message out to parents.

The time it takes to walk or cycle?

An average Kindergartener can walk one kilometre in ten minutes! 30 minutes of physical activity at the beginning of the day can boost metabolism, incremental sharpness for 4-10 hours and can help your child sleep better at night.

Sometimes arranging for children to walk/cycle together so that fewer parents need to supervise the journey works well.





Convenience?

Some parents tell us they are on the way to work or other destinations every morning, so they might as well drop their children off in the morning. But many other parents believe the benefits of a little exercise in the morning are well worth letting their children make the journey with a walking or cycling group instead.



If you think about the hassle and danger of congested traffic near the school, that quick drop off might not be so convenient, after all. You might even want to join the action and walk or cycle to your destination, too!

The weather?

In Canada, we face some unique weather issues. But even in Yukon Territory, where much of the extreme cold, winter day is shrouded in dark, children are expected to go outside for recess down to -30 C, as long as they keep moving.

School children all across Canada spend 15-50 minutes outside at a time for recess and should be dressed appropriately to take advantage of that time for fresh air and open spaces. If they are equipped for that outdoor time, they will also be equipped for the walk to school.

The Biggest Risk is KEEPING KIDS INDOORS

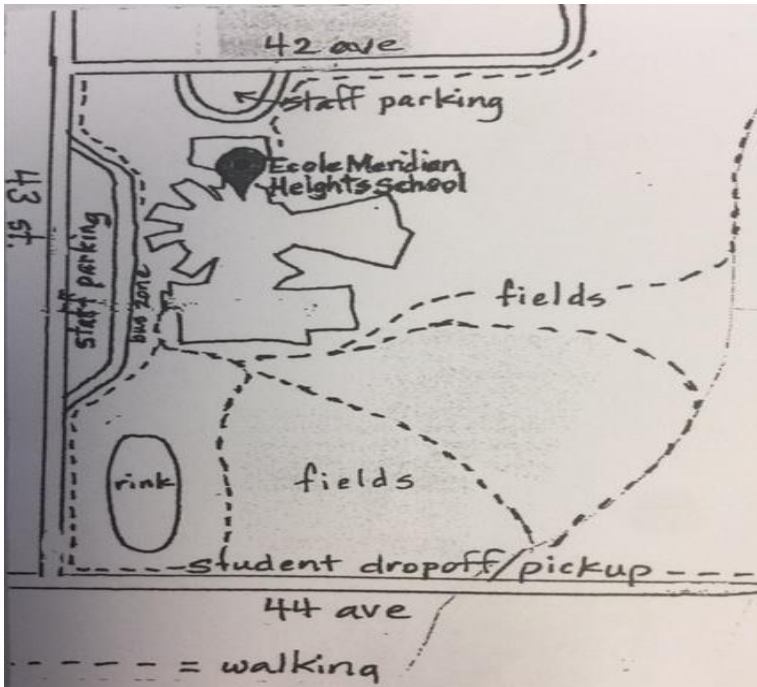
Encourage your children to engage more fully with their outdoor environments in a variety of weather conditions. When children are supported to take risks, they have more fun and learn how to assess and manage risk in all areas of their lives.

The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth www.participaction.com



"Having (the kids) walk and bike when they can to school has been excellent for them in terms of getting a little bit more activity every day. I think they're happier when they get to school and even when they get home. I know when they walk it's a great feeling for them."
Bruce Krentz, parent

Starting in September, 2018, please consider dropping and picking up your children on 44 Ave, if they must be driven to school...



Your children will be safe crossing the fields. Your children will get an active walk. Your vehicle will not idle and create more pollution and congestion around the school.

Please do NOT use our staff parking lots to drop or pick up children. And please remember to never move your vehicle when busses are actively on our school property.

