



**Family Connection
Walking Wednesday's
starts September 16th**

**Walking Wednesdays –
Every Wednesday, Walk
to School!**

September 2020

Supporting our School's health and well-being through Active School Travel – Pilot Project Phase 2B

Dear Families

As we prepare to return to school, it's important that we remain focused on supporting our physical and mental health well-being and keeping our school zones safe. COVID-19 has led to changes in our day-to-day lives, and we all need to do our part to ensure the welfare of those around us. Active School Travel is one way we are encouraging our families to stay healthy and safe and so we need your help! We are asking all families and students to use active modes to travel to and from school as often as possible (walk, cycle, and scooter).

As you may recall, this project began in April 2019 and will continue throughout the 2020/2021 school year. A number of activities have been carefully developed that encourage healthy and safe school zones. Below is a description of the activities that will take place.

- **Education**
 - **Walking Wednesdays** – All students and families are encouraged to walk and cycle every Wednesday for the entire school year. When participating, remember to maintain follow public health guidelines and maintain physical distance of at least two metres (or six feet) away from other people.
 - **Weekly Announcements** – We encourage your child to submit an announcement about why it's important to walk and cycle to school. Announcements will be made weekly so there is ample opportunity throughout the school year for your child to participate. It's also a great way for your child to practice their writing skills.
- **Classroom Competition**
 - A classroom survey will be conducted once a month to calculate all students' modes of transportation to school. The class with the highest fraction of Active School Travel (walking, cycling etc.) will be recognized for that month.
- **New Family Connection Group Walking Wednesdays**
 - This initiative is to assist families with getting to know each other and building healthy neighbourly relationships by walking to school together. Group walking is supported by Public Health agencies across Ontario following public health guidelines and maintaining physical distances. It limits the number of adults entering school sites and assists parents who may not be able to participate in active modes all the time to find other means of doing so. Students and families are invited to meet once a week at the designated meeting spots in the community and



walk to school together to build connections with their school community and to help facilitate more walking to and from school. When participating, remember to follow public health guidelines and maintain a physical distance of at least two metres (or six feet) away from other people. Over time, as neighbours connect, they may make their own arrangements to walk more often as they wish. See attached map for meeting locations and Q and A for further details. This initiative begins September 16th.

- **Sidewalk Markings and Signage**

- Our school community has installed Active School Travel encouragement signs and sidewalk markings along various routes. The signs indicate 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes distance points from the school and the sidewalk markings are stencil activities within approximately 500 metres of the school. See map attached for signage locations and poster for visuals.

If you choose to drive your child to school, park your car a few blocks away and walk the rest of the way to support safe physical distancing for all. Follow all street signage and obey parking bylaws.

Being active helps to build strong immune systems and keep children healthy

Please review COVID-19 [active school travel and pick-up and drop-off guidelines](#) for more details.

If you have questions regarding this program, please email activeschooltravel@ycdsb.ca

Sincerely,

Fabio Nardo and York Catholic District School Active School Travel Team

Family Connection – Walking Wednesdays

The Family Connection activity encourages families to meet once a week on our School’s chosen walking day, **Wednesdays**. There will be signs posted in the ground at the meeting spots. Families are encouraged to meet at the location nearest to their home and walk to school with other families, while following public health guidelines and maintaining physical distance. Driver awareness increases when more kids are out walking and this results in safer school zones. ****If you choose to participate in this activity please follow all public healthy guidelines and maintain physical distancing. Where physical distancing is not possible, wear your mask.** Please review map for meeting spots and attached Q&A for more detail.

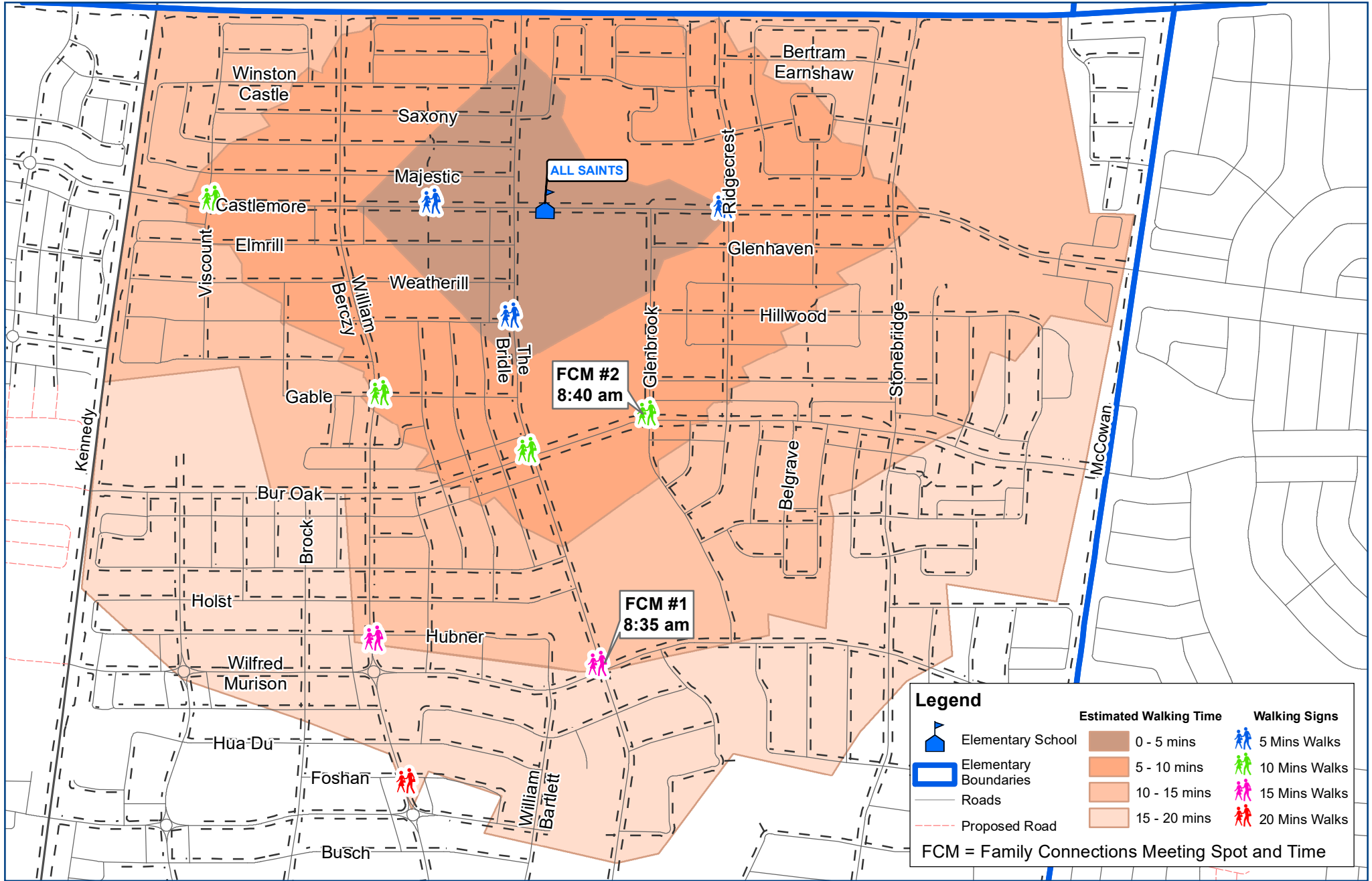
Family Connection – Group Walking

Meeting Spot



Active School Travel Map

All Saints CES



Legend

	Elementary School		0 - 5 mins		5 Mins Walks
	Elementary Boundaries		5 - 10 mins		10 Mins Walks
	Roads		10 - 15 mins		15 Mins Walks
	Proposed Road		15 - 20 mins		20 Mins Walks

FCM = Family Connections Meeting Spot and Time



Active School Travel Pilot

School Zone Tools

You may notice some **NEW** School Zone Tools around your school community. Please review the tools below so you understand what they mean.



Wayfinding Signage

Informs students how far it is to walk or bike to school. Also a great place to meet up with others and walk/bike together!



No Stopping Signs on Street Adjacent to School.

Stopping a vehicle, including for pick-up or drop-off of students, is not permitted during the times shown.



No Parking Signs

Parking is not allowed during the times shown.



Ladder Crosswalks

Enhances visibility of people crossing the road



Sidewalk Stencils

Fun activities for students and families on the walking route!



Supervised Crossing

Locations where a crossing guard is available to assist with crossing the street.



School Zone

Advises drivers they are entering a School Zone, slow down and be aware of the presence of students.

We encourage all families and students to use active modes to travel to and from school as often as possible (walk, cycle, and scooter). When doing so please follow public health guidelines and maintain physical distance.

Q & A Walking Wednesday Family Connection Group Walking Program

What is the Family Connection Group Walking Initiative? Who is going to be walking together?

The Family Connection Group Walking initiative is a program designed to connect school families to walk to school together. Families are encouraged to walk to school with their children and other parents and students on the school's designated walking day (for example Walking Wednesdays). Families will meet at the pre-designated location closest to your home, and will then walk together in a group to school. Over time, as neighbours connect, they may make their own arrangements to walk more often as they wish. Families should follow public health guidelines, including physical distancing, when participating in group walking initiatives.

What is the purpose of the Family Connection Group Walking initiative?

The purpose of this initiative is to encourage walking/cycling/scootering and riding the bus more often to school. The Family Connection Group Walking initiative will assist families with getting to know each other and build healthy neighbourly relationships so that they feel comfortable making arrangements to walk to school together.

Why are you promoting this program?

The school is participating in a project in partnership with the York Region District School Board and York Catholic District School Board, the City of Markham, York Region, Green Communities Canada and the Government of Ontario to implement Active School Travel programming to:

- Encourage walking/cycling/scootering and riding the bus to school
- Increase physical and mental well-being
- Improve social and academic performance
- Reduce traffic congestion on and around the school site
- Reduce the school's environmental footprint

Since 2019, our school, with our community partners, have been working on encouraging active school travel, and developing tools and sharing information with families to support this.

Provincial, regional and municipal government policies encourage active school travel. This pilot and the programs planned, help support this policy in advancing active school travel.

Who assumes responsibility for my child?

Like on all school days, the guardian /caregiver of the child will assume responsibility for their own child. It will be the guardian/caregiver's decision to participate. ***There are no official escorts or guides provided by our school, school board, municipal or regional staff.***

Where do I meet other families and what is the route?

The meeting spots can be located by an H-Frame sign, which notes “meeting spots” and the community partner logos. The spots are also highlighted on the walking map your school would have provided your child. The walking route is the most direct and connected sidewalk route to school and is highlighted on your respective schools walking map. If you need a copy of the map please contact your School Principal.



How do I know my child has arrived safely to school?

As per the Safe Schools Arrival policy, all York Catholic District schools have an automated notification system to contact parents who have not reported their child absent. The automated notification system will contact parents at multiple contact numbers until one of the designated contacts are reached. If our system is unable to reach a designated contact after 20 minutes, office staff will follow up.

What happens at the end of the day?

This initiative only officially takes place in the morning on your schools designated walking day. Should you choose to create your own walking group at other times, you may organize one on your own.

How do I contact someone to walk with my child?

You cannot contact anyone through the school, the school board or municipality to walk your child(ren). The purpose of this initiative is to encourage families to participate in group walking and build connections among each other. Should you build a relationship through this activity you may choose to make your own walking arrangements. The program is designed to bring families together to get to know each other better, build trust and form their own connections with other school families.

Will this be taking place all year round?

This initiative will take place in the 2020/2021 school year for the entire school year rain, snow or shine.

Be sure to follow public health guidelines and maintain physical distance at meeting spots and as you walk to school. Where it is not possible, wear your mask.

Happy Walking!