

# Learn it. Do it. Live it!

## ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL IN THE ZONE



### WHY ZONE IN ON ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL?

An arrival and dismissal process that is well-designed and consistently applied:

- Promotes safety
- Encourages walking and bicycling
- Keeps motor vehicle traffic around the school to a minimum
- Avoids the vicious cycle of traffic inducing more traffic (see cartoon!)
- Addresses parent and community concerns



Does the process at your school achieve these goals? Could it benefit from some changes? If so, this LDL will help you get the best results!

### ZONE IN, NOT OUT

Zone In, Not Out is a package of resources that can help make school zones safer for all travelers, especially children. The idea for the program was part of an in-person training for Virginia Safe Routes to School local coordinators in the winter 2015. Charged with the task of coming up with a comprehensive approach to school zone safety with branding, messaging, materials, the local SRTS coordinators worked in small groups to develop an outline of the program.



The materials are available for download on the Virginia SRTS program website. The Zone In, Not Out logo can be customized with a school name. The materials offer both 'how to' information and resources for school communities to access for expanded or more in-depth information.



## ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL BEST PRACTICES

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**Plan ahead.** Set a realistic date for implementing any changes. This most likely means starting the process several months in advance. The start of school in the fall is a logical time to put into effect new procedures, so begin working in the spring so that you're ready to go by the time the next school year rolls around.

**Involve the right people.** Any adjustments to your school's arrival or dismissal procedure will require support from certain key people. The principal's approval and support is, of course, absolutely critical. Other key people include:

- PTA or other parent representative
- Crossing guard
- SRTS champion
- SRTS coordinator
- School division transportation director
- Neighborhood representatives, both residents and businesses
- Law enforcement/ school SRO

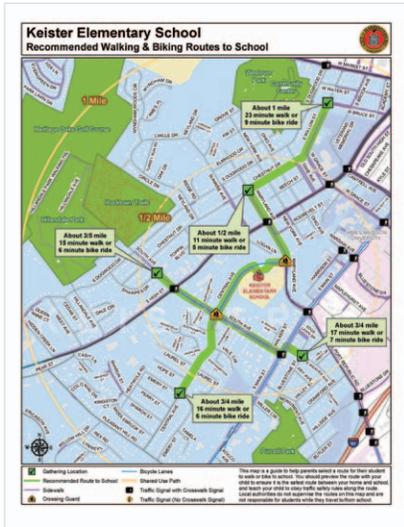
**Observe arrival or dismissal yearly.** You've probably experienced arrival or dismissal at your school, but have you truly observed it? Observing means taking a step back and seeing how arrival or dismissal works (or doesn't work) with fresh eyes. Arrival or dismissal observations are best done as a group activity involving the key people suggested above. Group observations are particularly powerful because they take in multiple perspectives and help foster consensus about what the issues are and how to remedy them. Looking for ideas about how to set up an arrival or dismissal group observation? Try our [Arrival/Dismissal Toolkit](#).

**Understand bad behavior.** Do some parents at your school flout arrival or dismissal procedures with seeming impunity? Avoid the temptation to dismiss them as inconsiderate. Understanding what motivates "bad" behavior can help you identify strategies and messages capable of shifting this behavior. For example, if parents are parking in the drop-off zone to walk their children to school, it may be because they're concerned about their children getting to the classroom safely. Additional staff or student safety patrol support may help alleviate this concern and reduce the frequency of parking in the drop-off zone.

**Communicate arrival and dismissal messages multiple times, multiple ways.** When it comes to arrival and dismissal, there's no such thing as over communicating. If you want to reach people, you need to connect with them both frequently and on their frequency. Here are some strategies for communicating about your new arrival or dismissal procedure:

- Incorporate arrival and dismissal procedures into the parent handbook.
- Develop and make readily available a stand-alone arrival or dismissal procedures document.
- Create a map showing how walkers, bikers, car-riders, and bus riders should access or depart the school during arrival or dismissal. See [Mapping In the Zone](#).
- If possible, periodically dedicate additional staff to arrival and dismissal to help communicate and reinforce procedures.
- Ask parents to sign a pledge that they will abide by the new arrival or dismissal procedures.

- Write an article in the school newsletter about the new arrival or dismissal procedures.
- Have the principal review the new arrival or dismissal procedure on Back to School Night.
- Put up signs or posters at key locations on the school campus highlighting key aspects of the new arrival or dismissal procedure.



**Walking route map for Keister Elementary School in Harrisonburg, VA**

**Take a multi-modal approach.** Schools often make the mistake of focusing arrival and dismissal communications on what drivers should do. This creates the impression that driving is the expected mode of transportation to school. If you want to encourage more students to walk and bicycle to school, communicate to parents and students that walking and bicycling are both expected and encouraged and that the arrival and dismissal procedure is set up for them. This means giving walking and bicycling equal billing in communications about arrival and dismissal, or perhaps even more than equal billing!

**Follow up with regular enforcement.**

Communicating your new arrival or dismissal procedure to parents and students is only half the task. The procedure also needs to be supported by regular enforcement. Enforcement in this context typically means strong direction to all travelers regardless of mode during the process about where they are to go. This will keep to a minimum the number of parents and students who deviate from the established procedure, and remind them about what the procedure is. Such reminders are given in the moment, as the behavior is happening or directly thereafter.

**Reward good behavior.** What about parents or students who are doing the right thing? Think about ways that you can reward them. For example, the school crossing guard might periodically hand out prizes to students who use crosswalks correctly. Such rewards can help reinforce the “good” behavior you want.

**Encourage a virtuous cycle.** The opposite of the vicious cycle of traffic inducing more traffic is the virtuous cycle of more student walking and bicycling encouraging even more student walking and bicycling. Here are some ways you can encourage this virtuous cycle.

- Prioritize walking, biking, school bus, and carpooling in communications with parents.
- Dismiss walkers and bikers before car riders
- Establish frequent a walker, biker, and school bus rider incentive program.
- Facilitate coordination of walking school buses, bicycle trains, and carpools.
- Establish park and walk locations several blocks from school.