



# Pollution Punch Card Program



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## GUIDEBOOK

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# Introduction to the Pollution Punch Card Program

## Table of Contents

Steps for the Coordinator's To Do List	3
Step #1: Contact your School Administrators & Arrange for Volunteer Help	4
Step #2: Suggestions for Coordinating Donations	5
Step #3: Prepare the Materials for the Program	6
Step #4: Getting the Word Out – Publicizing your Frequent Walk and Roll Program	7
..... - Poster Tips	8
Step #5: Running the Frequent Walk and Roll Program	9
Step #6: Wrapping up the Frequent Walk & Roll Program (FWR)	10
Conducting the Program: Frequently Asked Questions	11
Sample Letter to Parents	12
Sample Frequent Walk • Roll Card	13
Sample Donation Letter	14
School Newsletter Announcements	15
Loudspeaker Announcements	16
Sample Poster	17
Going the Extra Mile – other programs	18
Safety Tips for Parents	21
Want Safe Routes to Your School?	22

The Safe Routes to School program promotes walking & bicycling as part of your school's culture.

The Pollution Punch Card program is a way to encourage frequent walking and bicycling over a period of one or more months. Students get a Pollution Punch card, and on every day they walk to school, the "Pollution Cloud" on their card is punched or marked. When all six Pollution Clouds are punched, their completed card can be utilized for an incentive such as a raffle. The suggested length of time to run the program is 6 weeks (with one punch day per week), however, a school can organize the program for any time period, depending on how it is implemented.

This handbook has all the tools you need to organize a Pollution Punch Card program. There are ideas for teachers & parents; as well as sample documents, & safety tips you can use to educate your community about walking & bicycling regularly.

## Steps for the Coordinator's To Do List

### Step #1

- Inform the school administration & the PTA of the program.
- Determine the duration of the program & amount of Pollution Punch Cards you will need

### Step #2

- Determine incentive (i.e. raffle, special activity for kids who have cards filled, etc) & obtain funding or donations if needed

### Step #3

- Develop & photocopy parent letters
- Obtain or print Pollution Punch cards
- Communicate to teachers the process & location for handing out & turning in Pollution Punch cards.
- Make a raffle box for completed cards (if doing a raffle)

### Step #4

- Create & hang posters promoting program
- Publish program announcement in school newsletter
- Distribute parent letters & cards to students

### Step #5

- Check in with classes mid program (or periodically) to remind them to bring their cards on Walk/Roll-Punch days
- Ask Principal to make loudspeaker announcements to encourage children to participate

### Step # 6

- Make sure all the Pollution Punch cards have been turned in at end of program, before incentive is conducted
- Coordinate incentive &/or distributing prizes to student(s)

## Step #1: Connect with School Administrators & Arrange for Volunteer Help

### Support Power

To have a successful Pollution Punch Card Program you need support from administration, school staff, teachers, parents and students.



- **Principal:** Set up a short meeting with your principal to inform them of the program & obtain permission. **Ask the principal or school secretary to put the Pollution Punch Card Program information on the official school calendar, & list serve.**
- **Parent Group:** Work with your PTA . They are a great resource for communicating the events to parents & are great volunteers. You can also request donations for the grand prize(s).
- **Volunteers:** Recruit volunteers to distribute the teacher & parent letters & the Pollution Punch cards to the teacher's mailboxes or classrooms, & promote the program around the school.

## Step #2: Suggestions for Coordinating Donations

### People Power!

#### At least one donation (prize) volunteer:

Make donations happen.

Donation requests, follow-up calls to the business, & pick up can be time consuming, so try to find someone to help.

#### Donation Letter Template Available

An electronic version of the Pollution Punch Card donation request letter is available in the Pollution Punch Card page of our website at:

[www.sonomasaferroutes.org](http://www.sonomasaferroutes.org)

- **An Prize Coordinator:** This can be one or more parents who take charge of obtaining the prize(s). Interested teachers and student groups can also take charge of the prize program.
- **Request Donations:** The group or the prize coordinator requests donations or raises the funds to obtain a grand prize and/or other prizes.
- **Prizes through Safe Routes to School:** A limited number of end-of-program prizes may be available to eligible schools through the Sonoma County Safe Routes to School program, as funding permits. Contact [saferroutes@bikesonoma.org](mailto:saferroutes@bikesonoma.org) or 707-545-0153 for more information about becoming an eligible school.

## Step #3: Prepare the Materials for the Pollution Punch Card Program (PPC)

### Supplies

- A letter to teachers explaining the program and thanking them for their role in supporting it.
- Letter to the parents with instructions for the program
- A supply of enough Pollution Punch cards for the duration of the program (for a 6 week program, a good estimate is the enrolled # of students)
- Program flyers & posters
- Grand Prize(s) for the Participants i.e. T-shirts, a Bike or Bikes, Gift Cards, Certificates, etc

### Teacher & Parent Letter Template Available

An electronic version of the Pollution Punch Card parent and teacher letters are available on the PPC page of our website at:  
[www.sonomasaferroutes.org](http://www.sonomasaferroutes.org)

- **Teacher Packets:** Prepare & distribute a packet to each teacher. Sample letters and cards are included at the end of the guidebook. *The Sonoma County Safe Routes to School program can provide a number of eligible schools with a supply of Pollution Punch Cards, as funding permits.* The packet contains these three items:

- 1. One letter to teacher explaining the PPC Program
- 2. Letters to each parent in class explaining the PPC
- 3. A supply of PPC cards for their students.

The students should start out with one card and a letter to their parents explaining the PPC and how to participate. **On special Pollution Punch Card/Walk-Roll Days, their cards get punched or marked with a sharpie or pen.** Cards may be punched or marked by parents, designated students or teachers, this is a school team choice.

## Step #4: Getting the Word Out – Publicizing the Pollution Punch Card Program (PPC)

### Communication Power!

There are many ways to inform parents, school staff & students about this program. Find out how your school communicates with parents, staff & students, & choose as many distribution channels that are available to you as possible.

#### Ways to Get the Word Out:

- Put up posters
- Send the first letter home, then send other reminder flyers home
- Get something in the newsletter
- Phone parents or use phone tree or “Robo-Call” system
- Announcements to the school & to parents at parent meetings
- Notify teachers
- Use school e-mail listserv or email blast(s)

- **School or Classroom Assemblies:** Make announcements about the upcoming PPC program during a school assembly, or in classrooms, soon before parent letters & cards go home (even that same day is fine).
- **Backpack Mail:** Send home the packet of parent letters & cards through backpack mail.
- **School Newsletter:** Put an announcement in your school newsletter. A sample newsletter announcement is included in this guidebook. *Make sure to verify the deadlines well in advance for getting something in the newsletter. **This may also be a good way to recruit volunteers.***
- **Loudspeaker Announcements:** This is a great way to inform kids & get them excited about the PPC Program. A sample loudspeaker announcement is included in this guidebook.
- **School List Serve or Email Blast:** Easy paperless, & similar to the newsletter
- **Posters:** Hang posters around the school reminding children to walk to school & to mark their cards!

## Step #4: Getting the Word Out – Poster Tips

### Great Phrases:

PUNCH OUT POLLUTION!  
WALK OR ROLL TO SCHOOL!

WE ♥ WALK & ROLL

BE COOL! WALK OR ROLL TO SCHOOL!

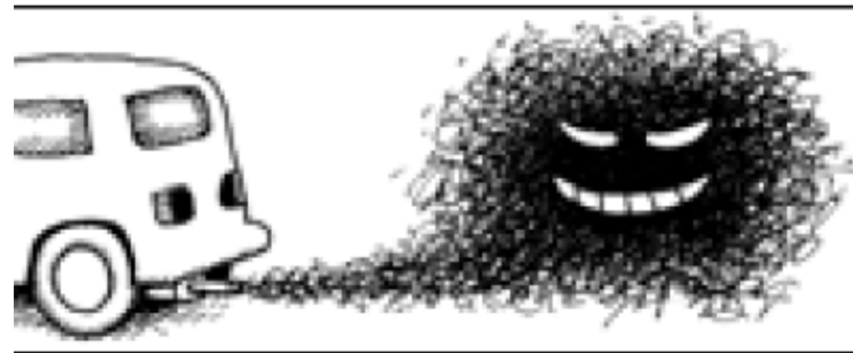
REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT  
WALK OR ROLL TO SCHOOL  
WHenever YOU CAN

DON'T FORGET TO GET YOUR  
POLLUTION PUNCH CARD PUNCHED  
ON WALK/ROLL DAYS!

STAMP OUT POLLUTION WITH WALK &  
ROLL!

WALK & ROLL OUT POLLUTION:  
IT'S FUN, IT'S HEALTHY,  
LESS TRAFFIC, LESS EMISSIONS!

- **Recruit a poster making crew:** Hand made banners or posters are always a great attention getter. This could be a great art project for an after school program or an enthusiastic art or classroom teacher. Talk to after school directors or art teachers to organize poster or banner making activity, or organize one yourself with parents & children you know.
- *When you involve kids in the organizing, they are more likely to participate in the program!*





## Step #5: Running the Pollution Punch Card Program



- **Checking in:** check in with the classrooms mid program (or periodically) to remind the students to hold onto their cards, bring them on each Walk/Roll Day and to turn them into their teacher or designated area when the Pollution Punch Card program is over
- **Middle of the Program Reminders:** Make, or have the principal make announcements to the classrooms or over the loudspeaker to remind the children to bring their Punch Cards Walk/Roll “Punch” days.

## Step #6: Wrapping up the Pollution Punch Card Program

### Donation Letter Template Available

An electronic version of the Pollution Punch Cards six to a sheet is available on the Pollution Punch card page of our website at [www.sonomasaferoutes.org](http://www.sonomasaferoutes.org)

- **Pollution Punch Cards:** When the kids have all the Pollution Clouds punched or marked on their cards, have the teachers or students put the cards in a designated box in a central location i.e. school office.
- **End of the Program Incentive:** Set up a date & time at the end of the program to hold a raffle or other incentive (i.e. smoothie party). This can be at an assembly or a special gathering during recess or lunch. Before the incentive make sure all of the Pollution Punch cards are collected. Be sure to publish the name of the program winners in your school's newsletter.

## Conducting the Program: Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) **Who should punch or mark the cards?** Typically, cards are punched or marked by parents or student leaders when students arrive at school on Walk/Roll Days. However, some sites choose to have teachers punch or mark cards in the classrooms. Kids can keep the cards themselves, or teachers can hold onto them for the duration of the program.
- 2) **Don't kids cheat if teachers are punching cards in the classrooms?** We have found that generally, kids are honest, and the few that are not do not detract from the overall goal of the program. However, to minimize temptation to cheat, we strongly suggest that teachers remind students to be honest, and that they try to be generally "aware" of how students arrive to/from school, just by getting to know their students. It is also a good idea to get a special "puncher" that is a different shape than a typical hole punch.
- 3) **How should cards be distributed and collected?** The best system is for teachers to distribute & collect the cards. Generally, this system requires little effort by the teacher and has been well received in pilot SRTS schools. However, cards may also be distributed in the morning on the first Walk/Roll event to kids who walked & rolled that day.
- 4) **What does the teacher do with the cards that are turned in?** A collection box can be set up in the office, and teachers can send cards down to the office at the end of the program, making sure that all cards are turned in by the last day of the program. Cards can also be collected from students on the last Walk/Roll day.
- 5) **What about kids who take the bus or cannot walk or bike for other reasons?** It is up to an individual school to modify the program to be more inclusive if they wish. Some schools have chosen to allow children who take the bus to walk at recess or lunchtime, and have their teacher or yard duty punch the card. Other schools have chosen to allow kids who cannot walk or bike at least 6 times during the course of the program to walk or bike for 15 minutes outside of the school day, and have their card punched or marked by a parent.
- 6) **How do I conduct the end of program incentive?** Set up a date and time at the end of the program to hold the raffle. This can be at an assembly or a special gathering during recess or lunch, or even just over the loudspeaker. Be sure to publish the name of the program winners in your school's newsletter!
- 7) **Why should I choose Pollution Punch Card rather than Frequent Walk/Roll?** Pollution Punch card works best in association with a weekly Walk/Roll Day event. Frequent Walk/Roll can happen independent of Walk/Roll Days.

# English Sample Letter to Parents

(Spanish version available in the Pollution Punch Card page of the SRTS Website)



Dear Parent or Guardian,

Today, your child received a Pollution Punch card from his or her teacher. The Pollution Punch Card Contest begins on *(fill in date)* and continues for (#) weeks, every *(fill in day)*, until *(fill in date)*.

The contest hopes to decrease traffic congestion and harmful car emissions in and around the school zone and encourage walking and bicycling as a healthy, fun, and social habit. Students can build responsibility and organizational skills by planning ahead to walk or bicycle every day, which helps to integrate these good habits as a natural part of their daily lives. Plus you and/or your child will be able to enjoy the fresh air and wonderful times of getting to school together and be eligible for some fun awards!

**To participate, just have your child follow these simple steps:**

1. Walk, bicycle, scooter or skateboard to school every *(fill in day)* between *(fill in beginning date)* and *(fill in end date)*.
2. If you are unable to walk/roll from home, walk or roll with one of the Walking/Bicycling School buses from the *(fill in meet-up locations or mention that students/families can park and walk from a location ¼ or ½ mile away)*.
3. Attach your card to your backpack or somewhere where it can't be lost and will always be with you when you arrive at school on *(fill in day)* mornings.
4. Volunteers will be in front of the school *(or mention how/where cards will be punched)*, ready to punch cards of walkers or rollers who have them ready every *(fill in day)*.

**Help (School) reach our goal of saving at least 2000 lbs of Carbon Emissions & Pollutants in *(fill in months)*!**

***(choose which option(s) you will use for your school – below are examples of possible options)***

- Students who participate all six weeks will get to *(fill in reward, such as participate in pizza party, play a game, make/receive bicycle-blended smoothies, etc)* at a special event in *(fill in month, date can be TBA)*.
- Students who participate *(insert #)* or more times will be entered into a raffle for *(insert prize(s))*.
- Every child who turns in a card with at least one punch will receive a special Walk & Roll gift.
- Each week during the contest, the classroom with the highest percentage of walkers/rollers will receive the coveted "Golden Sneaker" award, and we will announce how many carbon emissions and pollutants we saved!

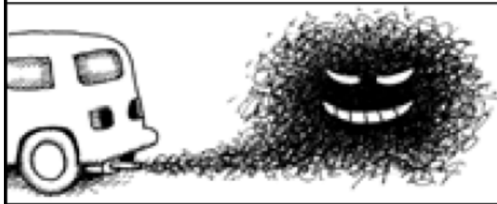
Below is an image of the card your child received today. If your child did not receive one, please request one from his/her teacher or from the school office.



Thank-you for your cooperation!

*The (School) Safe Routes to School Team*

# Sample Pollution Punch Card



**SAFE ROUTES TO  
SCHOOL**



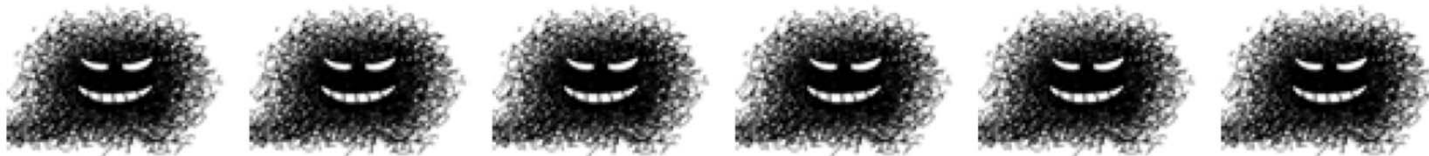
## **POLLUTION PUNCH CARD**

*Be cool....walk or roll to school!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**ELIMINATE SIX CAR TRIPS!**



There are 6 cards per each 8.5 x 11 page  
(available on the Pollution Punch Card page of the SRTS website)

## Pollution Punch Card Donation Request Letter

Manager's Name

Name of Business

Street address

Town, CA zip

Date

Dear (Manager's Name or Donation Coordinator):

The Safe Routes to School program at (name of school) will be hosting a Pollution Punch Card Program from (if the school's program duration). At the end of the program, students who have walked or biked to school will get to participate in a raffle for fun prizes. We are seeking donations from the community for our Pollution Punch Card to Program raffle. A contribution from (insert name of business here) would make a great difference in ensuring that our celebration of health, physical activity, and community is a success. We are seeking (insert number and description of donations or prizes). However, we appreciate any donation you can make!

The Sonoma County Safe Routes to School program supports communities in building and using safer routes to school by integrating health, fitness, traffic relief, environmental awareness and safety under one program. I appreciate your support in improving the health and safety of families in our community! Your donation is tax deductible. The tax ID number of our Safe Routes to School host organization, the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition is 12-3456789.

Thank you in advance for contributing to our Safe Routes to School program. I will call you next week to answer any questions you have about this request. You may also contact me at (insert your phone number) or (insert your email address).

Sincerely,

(insert your name)

## School Newsletter Sample Text

- **Introducing the Program Text for Newsletter:** Celebrate Spring by trying out a new habit. Choose freedom from vehicular drop-off line stress, share some healthy time with your child, and stamp out pollution at the same time. For the next     *number of*     weeks, students will have their Pollution Punch Cards punched or marked on our Walk/Roll (insert day of week)s. Make sure your child brings their card & walks or rolls to school on these days to be eligible for our end of program incentive (insert incentive)! Please read the letter of instructions that come with the cards so that your child understands how to participate in the program. For more information on volunteering for Safe Routes to School, or if you have any questions please call     *name and phone number and or email address*
- **Middle of the Program Text:** How many Punches have you gotten on your Pollution Punch Card? Don't forget, our next Walk/Roll Day is (insert day/date). Don't forget to bring your card to be eligible to win some great prizes including (insert example) \_If you have questions, please call     *name and phone number*    .
- **Final Week of Program Text:** This is the last week of the Pollution Punch Card program. REMEMBER TO TURN YOUR CARDS INTO YOUR TEACHER BY     *insert date*    . Thanks so much for participating. We hope that you have enjoyed your trips walking to and from school. Stay tuned for the winners of incentives.
- **Prize Winners Text for Newsletter:** We are pleased to announce the winners of Pollution Punch Card program. They are:     *list names of students and their prizes*    . Congratulations to everyone that participated and contributed to improving our health and reducing our carbon footprint!. For more information about volunteering for Safe Routes to School, please call     *name and phone number and email address*    .

## Loudspeaker Announcements

- **Beginning of the Program Announcement** (*for classroom or loudspeaker*): Join the fun of the Pollution Punch Card program, and walk or roll to school on (insert day of week). For the next *number of weeks*, your card will be punched on (insert day of week) if you walked or rolled to school. Make sure you keep your card handy and have it ready for punching in the mornings! Please give the letter that come with the cards to your parents and read it with them so that you and your parents understand how to participate in the program.
- **Middle of the Program Announcement:** Have you been biking or walking to school recently? Are you bringing your cards on (insert day of week)? Save your card to be eligible for (insert incentive)!
- **Last Day of Program Announcement :** Turn in your completed Pollution Punch Card cards at *location of drop off*. This is your last chance to be eligible to win (insert incentive). Thanks to everyone for reducing traffic at our school and reducing pollution in our neighborhoods.
- **Prize Winners Announcement (for optional assembly):** We are pleased to announce the winners of the Pollution Punch Card program. They are: (*list names of students and their prizes*). Congratulations to everyone that participated and contributed to improving our health and reducing our carbon footprint!



## Going the Extra Mile: Establish Walking School Buses

### Walking School Bus Power!

A Walking School Bus (WSB) is a group of children led by adult volunteers wearing reflective vests or other bright items walking to school together. An adult can pull a wagon carrying the students' backpacks & projects. Parents are glad that there are other responsible adults with the children & that there is a big group. What's more, after establishing trust & schedules, adults can take turns leading the group, meaning less morning stress for parents & guardians.

### More Help & Tools

Our program can help you make blown-up maps of your school area. We provide safety training & materials like safety vests & first aid kits to help make your "active school buses" more visible & safe! If you're interested, please contact:

[saferoutes@bikesonoma.org](mailto:saferoutes@bikesonoma.org)

- **Find neighborhood leaders:** This parent must know a safe route to school & be willing to show up at an assigned time on Walk & Roll to School Days to lead parents & kids on the route to school.
- **Form Groups:** You will need 1-2 parents per group, one at the front of the group & one at the rear. With a large number of children, more adults are needed for supervision.
- **Pick a Meeting Point:** Set up a meeting point to meet & walk together to school. Church parking lots or shopping centers that are approx ¼ mile from the school make great meeting points.
- **Pick a Route:** The route between the school & the meeting point should be along a safe area with the most sidewalks & crosswalks. There can be more than one meeting point per route.
- **Advertise Route:** Publicize the meeting point & time in the Walk & Roll promotional materials
- **Make signs:** Make signs & hold them while walking along the route.

## Regular Walk and Roll To School Days

- **Walk and Roll to School Day: The Pollution Punch Card program is a way to “boost” your Walk & Roll to School Day program.** For more information on establishing Walk & Roll to School Days, see our Walk & Roll to School Day guidebook.
- See Walk & Roll to School Days Guidebook
- Available on the Walk/Roll Days page of the SRTS Website



## Going the Extra Mile – About the Frequent Walk • Roll Program

- **Frequent Walk • Roll Program:** This program is a way to encourage frequent walking and bicycling over a period of one or more months.
- See Frequent Walk • Roll Program Guidebook
- Available on the SRTS Website



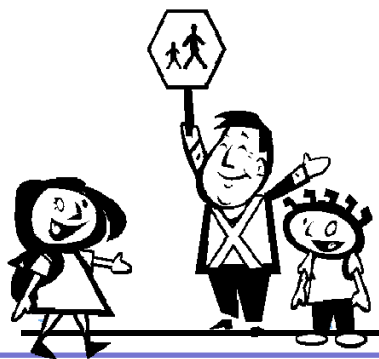
## Going the Extra Mile – Golden Sneaker Award

- **Golden Sneaker Award:** hold a competition between classes to see who got the most walkers & bikers. Use raffle tickets to do counts, or get counts through teachers.
- See Golden Sneaker Award Guidebook
- Available on the Golden Sneaker page of the SRTS Website



### Tips: Walking Safety

- STOP, LOOK, & LISTEN at every edge, or curb.
- Look LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT & only go when there are no cars.
- Cross at crosswalks or corners. Avoid crossing between parked cars and in the middle of blocks.
- Watch for cars pulling in & out of driveways.
- Make good decisions by taking walks with your parents outside of school & practice making decisions like when & where it is safe to cross.
- Remember: even with a light or a crossing guard you still need to make the decisions of when it is safe to cross.

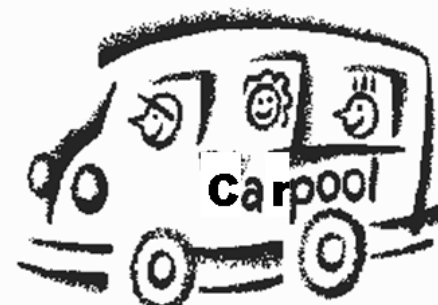


### Tips: Basic Bicycling Safety

- Always wear a helmet.
- Check your bike before you ride: ABC check = air, brakes & chain.
- Check for correct fit on your bike. A person's leg should nearly extend with a slight bend when pedal is at the bottom.
- Ride in a straight line & keep control of your bike.
- Avoid the "door zone" if riding on the street.
- Learn & use appropriate hand signals.
- Practice skills like stopping suddenly, scanning behind you on a blacktop or parking lot before riding on the road.
- Bikes are a vehicle, so ride like a vehicle! Ride on the right, pay attention to traffic signals & stay off sidewalks as much as possible.

### Tips: Driving in School Zones

- Drive slowly & carefully.
- Do not double park, wait to pull to the curb.
- Do not drop off in the red zone, its red for a reason.
- Drop off on the school-side of the street so your child doesn't have to cross the street.
- Avoid backing up. Young kids are small & hard to see.
- Consider the Park & Walk option, park a few blocks from the school & walk the rest of the way.
- Form a carpool! Figure out which families live in your neighborhood & contact them to form a carpool.



# Want Safe Routes to Your School?

Sonoma County Safe Routes to School provides trainings, resources, & customized support at no cost.  
We work together with schools, parents, & the local community to give kids  
an active, healthy start and end to the school day!



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For more information on what we can offer to your school & your community, contact us at:

Sonoma County Safe Routes to School  
P.O. Box 3088  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402  
(707) 545-0153 or [saferoutes@bikesonoma.org](mailto:saferoutes@bikesonoma.org)

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**Thank You Marin & Alameda County Safe Routes to School for providing guidance, resources and content for program development**