

Crocodile and Alligator Trail Guidelines



Get Wild about Walking!

December 2012

Crocodile and Allig8or Trails in Buckinghamshire

What are Crocodile and Allig8or Trails?

Crocodile and Allig8or Trails are escorted walking schemes similar to a walking bus. A Crocodile Trail is for children of all ages, and an Allig8or is for children in year 3 and above only. It is a simple but effective way of encouraging walking to or from school.

Each route is risk assessed by the Sustainability Services Team and walks to a set timetable. Children can join at agreed 'bus stops' along the route.



Why get Wild about Walking?

Crocodile and Allig8or Trails can benefit children, parents, the school and the local community by:

- Promoting healthy exercise and helps keep children and adults fit
- Helping children develop personal and road safety skills
- Helping to reduce traffic outside the school
- Improving air quality
- Giving children the chance to learn more about their local environment



Getting started

- First establish a need for your Trail. Do you have the support of the head teacher and parents? – an information letter is available from the Sustainability Services Team for you to send out to parents
- The route will need to operate a minimum of 3 days per week and have a minimum of 6 children walking to be supported by Buckinghamshire County Council
- Decide what route(s) you would like to use. This should allow as many people as possible to take part. It may need to start from a central parking area so that those travelling some distance can park and walk with you
- Contact the Sustainability Services Team to move to the next stage

What happens next?

- Proposed routes will be risk assessed by the Sustainability Services Team
- A printed route and approved risk assessment will be provided to the school
- The Trail must follow this route at all times.
- The Sustainability Services Team will advise on safe places to cross and how this should be done. Where possible chosen routes will make use of controlled crossing points, e.g. school crossing patrollers, zebra, pelican crossings etc.
- All children must be trained to Stage 1 of the Footsteps Pedestrian Scheme
- All escorts will require a satisfactory enhanced CRB disclosure which will need to be obtained by the school.
- Should a risk assessment result in a route not being approved it will not be permitted to operate.

Timetable

Once established each route will operate on the agreed days, regardless of weather conditions. The coordinator should agree with the school a procedure to deal with unforeseen circumstances e.g. severe weather or not enough escorts to meet the required ratio.

All Trails will operate to a strict timetable and will not wait for latecomers in the morning even when children are expected to travel. Parents are responsible for making sure that their children who miss the Trail arrive at school safely.

Parents must ensure that children are at the appropriate “Stop” at the appointed time in the morning and must be collected from the appropriate “Stop” on time in the afternoon unless they have been given written permission to continue home from the stop unsupervised. The Coordinator must see this permission prior to the journey.

Parents are responsible for their child’s safety both on the way to and from the designated “Stops” and on the journey to and from school. Therefore it is essential that parents stress the importance of good behaviour, and take care when children join and leave the Trail.



Ratios

There must always be **AT LEAST** two escorts present – one as the ‘head’ and the other the ‘tail’. Please refer to the ratio matrix for the minimum number of escorts required according to the number of infant/junior children walking with the Trail.

Pre-school children are welcome to travel with the Trail if accompanied by their parent/guardian. They will be counted as infants.

Babies in pushchairs also count as infants.

NO ANIMALS, BICYCLES or SCOOTERS are permitted on the Trail.



Allig8or Trails

These operate on a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 8 children as **NO INFANT CHILDREN** including children in pushchairs are permitted on an Allig8or Trail. There must always be **AT LEAST** two trained adult escorts accompanying children on each route.



Crocodile Ratio Matrix

		Number of Infant Children								
Number of Junior Children		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
	4	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
	5	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
	6	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
	7	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	8	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	9	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
	10	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
	11	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
	12	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
	13	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
	14	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
	16	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	5

This ratio matrix must be used when calculating the minimum number of adult escorts required for a Crocodile Trail, according to the number of children using it.

To make the calculation, identify the number of Infant children and Junior children on the route and trace along and down to find the bold number indicating the number of escorts needed.

For example, 5 infants and 12 juniors require at least 4 adult escorts to accompany the Trail.



Escorts

The success of a Crocodile or Allig8or Trail depends on the volunteers and the support of the school. It is essential that the scheme has as many volunteers as possible so the routes are always covered and responsibility does not always fall to a few committed people.

The Coordinator will provide escorts' details, phone number, rota and availability to all escorts.

Escorts will be responsible for supervising an agreed group of children on the Trail. If an escort discovers they are unavailable for their duty (according to the rota) **they** are responsible for finding a substitute escort and informing the Coordinator of the change (if appropriate). Escorts are encouraged to 'buddy' up with other escorts who walk on different days so that they can swap days if needed. If for any reason the minimum number of escorts cannot be provided, the journey must be cancelled. All escorts must be able to contact each other in an emergency.

Depending on the circumstance, some adults with medical or special needs can be escorts. Each case will have to be assessed on its own merits to determine what measures need to be in place to ensure safe operating of the Trail. Contact the Sustainability Services Team for more advice.

Each Trail will have a 'head' and a 'tail'. The 'head' will lead the Trail and the 'tail' will walk at the back, so the children can be seen and kept under close supervision. Any additional escorts will be positioned throughout the Trail to supervise the children. Two escorts must remain with the Trail at all times whilst on the agreed route.

All escorts must wear high visibility tabards at all times when walking on the Trail. These remain the property of Buckinghamshire County Council and must be returned when leaving the scheme.

All volunteers who wish to act as escorts must have received guidance from Buckinghamshire County Council and must have received a satisfactory enhanced CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) disclosure. All CRB checks will be processed by the school via the Local Authority. Escorts who leave and then re-join the Trail will have to undergo a new check if they have had a break in service of three months or more.

ID Badges for Escorts

All escorts will be issued with an identification badge that must be worn when walking with the Trail. These badges are prepared by the Sustainability Services Team. The school should forward a passport style photograph for each escort, with their name printed clearly on the reverse using the ID badge form provided by the Sustainability Services Team. There is no charge for making up these badges.



Parental Permission

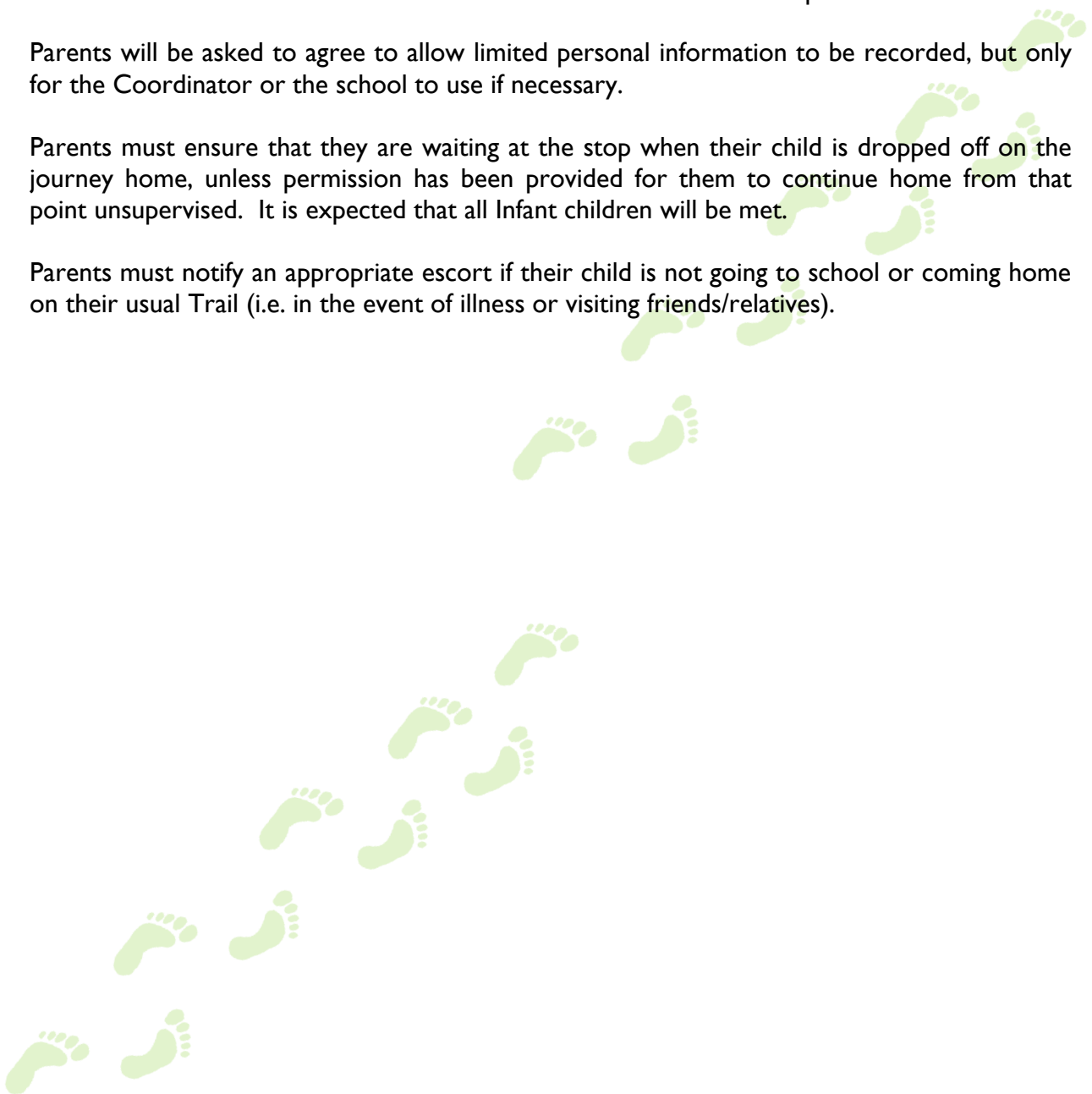
Parents must complete a consent form before their child is allowed to travel on the Trail. This will provide:

- Emergency contact details
- A medical statement
- The days when the child will travel
- The stop they wish to use
- Whether or not the child will be met from the afternoon stop

Parents will be asked to agree to allow limited personal information to be recorded, but only for the Coordinator or the school to use if necessary.

Parents must ensure that they are waiting at the stop when their child is dropped off on the journey home, unless permission has been provided for them to continue home from that point unsupervised. It is expected that all Infant children will be met.

Parents must notify an appropriate escort if their child is not going to school or coming home on their usual Trail (i.e. in the event of illness or visiting friends/relatives).



Trail ‘passengers’

All school children under 8 must have completed Stage 1 of the Footsteps Practical Pedestrian training scheme. Details of this scheme are available from the Sustainability Services Team.

All children participating in the Trail must wear a high-visibility safety tabard. At the discretion of the Coordinator children over 8 can wear reflective armbands in place of the tabard. Children who participate in an Allig8or Trail can wear a high-visibility cap. All safety equipment must be worn at all times when walking on the Trail.

Each Trail will require an attendance register of all children which will be taken for each journey.

All children participating in the Trail will sign a pupil’s promise to wear their safety equipment properly and behave sensibly and considerately at all times on the Trail. A sample form is available from the Sustainability Services Team. Parents must stress the importance of good behaviour on the journey to and from school. Any child who endangers themselves or others, or behaves in a manner deemed unacceptable by the escorts, will not be entitled to use the Trail and may be withdrawn from the Trail at the end of the journey. The Coordinator and the school have the final decision on who should or should not use the Trail.

The children must walk in pairs and carry their own bags, lunchboxes etc. If a route has to use a narrow footpath, children must walk in single file. They must walk sensibly on the pavement, away from the kerb. Where possible escorts should walk next to children and always nearest to the road. Escorts and children will be expected to have due consideration to other pedestrians and allow sufficient room for them to pass.

Those children with special needs of any grade are invited to participate in a Trail but each case will have to be assessed on its own merits. It may be appropriate to change the ratio of adults to child depending on each case. The Sustainability Services Team should also be made aware of any child with special needs as they will need to note this in risk assessments for the route to ensure that the route is safe for the individual to use. Contact the Sustainability Services Team for more advice.



Emergency Procedures

In the event of a minor injury (e.g. grazed knee), the school's Accident Book will be completed to that effect. It is recommended that escorts do not attempt to administer any medical treatment unless they have prior written parental consent and have received appropriate training.

In the event of a more serious incident or medical emergency it may be necessary for one of the escorts to telephone for assistance and notify the school so that parents can be informed. The school's Accident Book must be completed by one of the escorts, in as much detail as possible and where appropriate witness details will need to be recorded.

Insurance

Schools who do not purchase their insurance services from Buckinghamshire County Council should seek clarification from their insurers about cover for their Crocodile or Allig8or Trails.

Volunteers will benefit from Buckinghamshire County Council's general third party insurance. This insurance, subject to its terms, exceptions and conditions, indemnifies honorary and voluntary staff acting on behalf of the Council as long as they adhere to the Guidelines set out above. They must also:

- Receive road safety guidance
- Wear a high-visibility tabard
- Have received a satisfactory Enhanced CRB disclosure.
- Ensure there are sufficient escorts on the Trail (see ratio matrix)

Cover

The indemnity covers all sums that staff becomes legally liable to pay as compensation arising out of:

- Accidental bodily injury or illness (fatal or otherwise) to any person, and/or
- Accidental loss or accidental damage caused to property while they are acting as a volunteer.



Monitoring

Buckinghamshire County Council will monitor a minimum of five Crocodile/Allig8or Trails per year to ensure the relevant requirements are being met. The Sustainability Services Team will decide which Trails will be monitored and when this will take place.

Should the Trail stop operating, or alter it's operating times, please advise the Sustainability Services Team.

Incentives

Each time the children walk they should receive a stamp in their Go for Gold Passport. Once completed children can redeem these passports for a number of free activities negotiated under the Go for Gold Scheme. The latest 'free activities' letter can be obtained from the Sustainability Services Team.

The Sustainability Services Team also have a number of inexpensive incentives including enamel badges, pencils etc that the school can purchase. Details can be obtained from the Sustainability Services Team.

Schools can also reward children who walk regularly with extra merit points, uniform free days, additional playtime (for example).

Publicity

It is important to promote your Trail to the local and wider school community. Termly or Half-Termly Award assemblies are a good way to encourage more children to take part. Articles in the local newspapers and Parish newsletters help to show residents what you are doing to encourage sustainable travel for the school journey.



Additional Advice

- For larger schools with multiple Trails it is advisable to have a coordinator for each Trail
- A Register File should be created to contain all parental consent and pupil promise records
- If a Trail becomes unwieldy due to numbers it may be safer to split it into two Trails
- Once a Trail has been set up, any new escorts will need to be trained by the Coordinator
- Children should walk in pairs, with the lead pair being rotated to enhance road skills and increase their sense of ownership
- Be extra vigilant when crossing driveways and garage entrances, especially in the morning
- Remember that wearing a high visibility tabard **does not** authorise escorts to stop traffic

Contact us:

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