



Putting walking buses on the map

THERE'S NOTHING like putting yourself on the map for easing traffic congestion near schools, keeping children safe and saving the planet.

That's the rationale behind a new green initiative driving the 'walking bus' travel to school scheme to the next level.

Last week Greater Wellington Regional Council-sponsored school travel planner Sherie Wright took the concept to Wilford School in Petone.

Home

In the school hall, class by class each of Wilford's 260-odd pupils used a Monopoly house on the large scale laminated map to show where their home is located.

Then, using adhesive coloured dots - red for driving, green for walking, yellow for using a bike, scooter or skateboard, and orange for a train or bus - they placed a sticker there to indicate how they get to school.

The children also indicated hazards, such as an aggressive dog, bullying and intimidation from older children or other factors likely to deter a child from walking to school.

Once the map is complete, the Monopoly

houses are removed, leaving the stickers in place. These make it easy for Mrs Wright to see where neighbours living close to each other could car pool or establish a walking bus.

Walking buses have been established at a number of local schools, offering children exercise and social interaction while walking to school with others.

Walking buses are already in place at Boulcott, Eastern Hutt and Sacred Heart Primary schools, with Hutt Central planning on starting one soon.

At one school in Upper Hutt, four families discovered they lived next door to each other, yet each took a separate car to school. Now they carpool, saving petrol and lessening congestion at the school gate.

Mrs Wright hopes parents and children at other schools will want to help reduce their school's carbon footprint, while allowing their children a healthy walk on their way to school.



► Wilford School pupils Zach Sutherland-Korewha (left), Ryzzah Trinidad, Fabian Elliott and Aleena Price do their bit to reduce the school's carbon footprint and help save the planet.