The project

Every year, thousands of children take part in a Brake’s Kids Walk and put their best feet forward to promote road safety and the health and planet-saving benefits of walking. In 2018, supervised walks took place at or around schools and nurseries, with children walking in a crocodile formation and holding hands to promote the importance of being able to walk without fear or threat from traffic.

Brake’s Kids Walk aims to inspire and engage children about the dangers they face and encourages the grown ups who care for them to campaign for safer streets – with footpaths, cycle paths, safe places to cross, slow traffic and clean traffic. These five measures are important to stop children being needlessly killed or hurt on our roads.

Every school that registered to take part received free resources to help them run activities and campaign for safer roads in their community. Many schools also fundraised for Brake by collecting sponsorship money, donating, or running a Wear Your Stripes Day.

Participation

In 2018, Brake’s Kids Walk took place on Wednesday 13 June. More than 102,000 children registered to take part, from 569 schools and nurseries. This is a 127% increase from 2016, when around 45,000 children registered.

Children were predominantly from the UK, but Kids Walks also took place in Denmark, The Gambia and Uganda. Of the UK regions, London had the highest number of registrations, with 21,854 children (16% of registrations) estimated to have taken part in a Kids Walk.

This year, Brake also helped schools to team up with their local fire and rescue services, police officers, road safety professionals and other organisations as they walked around their community or school grounds.

Registrations by region

- London: 16%
- SE: 13%
- Outside of the UK: 13%
- SW: 7%
- EM: 5%
- Y&H: 9%
- NW: 8%
- WM: 8%
- Scot: 9%
- NE: 4%
- NI: 1%
- Wales: 6%
- E: 11%
- NW: 9%
Case studies

More than 450 children from Penshurst Primary School walked around their community in Hessle, Hull. They held a school assembly the week before the walk, ensuring the kids were engaged with road safety. The pupils then made their own banners, including Kids Walk placards, to take on the walk along with the Brake posters from the action pack. Pupils from Hessle High School, Brake mascot Zak the Zebra and a safety officer from Humberside Fire and Rescue Service joined the walk and helped the children to campaign for safer roads. Their activities were captured by ITV Calendar and many local radio stations. The children also raised £1,000 for Brake through sponsorship.

Pupils at Arthur Bugler Primary School in Essex raised £1,200 for Brake by getting friends and family to sponsor them for their Kids Walk. The school used the template sponsorship form in their action pack to encourage parents to give generously and support Brake’s work supporting road crash victims and campaigning for safer roads. The children carried banners and posters from their action pack during the walk, to show residents the things they need to keep them safe near roads. Brake mascot Zak the Zebra visited the school after the event to thank the children.

Children at St Helen’s Catholic Primary School in Barry, Wales, made full use of the bilingual resources provided in the Kids Walk action pack. They proudly held up banners and posters in Welsh and English to make sure the whole community was aware of what they want to keep them safe. The children also made their own banners, calling on adults to keep them safe when using roads. Posters about the benefits of walking to school were displayed around the school. While on the walk, children talked to residents about why they were taking part and the importance of road safety.

In Serrekunda, The Gambia, Save Life Gambia partnered with Maarif Turkish International School, the police and the WHO Country Office to run Brake’s Kids Walk. Parents joined the schoolchildren on their walk around the community, engaging them with road safety messages and calling for better safety measures to keep them safe from traffic. They printed out posters and banners from the online action pack and delivered an assembly, inspiring the children to talk more to adults about how they can keep them safe.
Resources
Every school, nursery or organisation that registered for Brake’s Kids Walk received access to a free online action pack hosted on Brake’s website. Brake also sent hard-copy resources out to every UK registration.

The action pack included: guidance on getting involved; an assembly presentation and lesson plans; posters, banners, activity sheets and colouring sheets based on the five key road safety messages (footpaths, cycle paths, safe places to cross, slow traffic and clean traffic); and certificates and stickers for every child registered to take part. Packs also contained material to help the schools to fundraise for Brake and images to share on social media to promote the event.

For the first time in the project’s history, Brake produced some of the resources in Welsh. These resources were sent to all schools and nurseries based in Wales so that they could display bilingual messages to children and their parents.

A series of ‘countdown’ bulletins were sent to everyone who registered, giving details about the action pack and how other schools were getting involved. They were also contacted by a member of the Brake team, to offer assistance in planning and running their walk.

Marketing
Brake uses cost-effective measures to promote events to schools, relying on the continuing support of local education and road safety teams to achieve this through emails, articles, newsletters and website entries. The Brake team works hard to get support from external publications, as well as calling schools directly and sending out bulletins to more than 6,000 supporters and road safety professionals.

The National Fire Chiefs Council and National Police Chiefs’ Council promoted Brake’s Kids Walk to their regional stations and schools. Many organisations’ publications used social media to share details about the event and encourage participation.
Brake paid for magazine advertisements and flyer distribution. A half-page advert was included in Teach Primary, which was circulated to 18,000 deputy headteachers and senior leaders and 850 NQTs, with an extra 3,000 copies on sale in shops. The Walk was promoted on the publication’s website, which received 162 unique page views. A half-page advert was published in Headteacher Update, which was distributed to 24,000 primary school headteachers.

Five thousand flyers were inserted in Teach Primary and Teach Early Years bags distributed at the Education Show in March. Scholastic sent out 1,000 flyers promoting the walk to primary schools and Brake distributed a further 1,500 flyers to contacts and supporters by post.

We issued a national press release and 10 regional press releases six weeks before the walk to gain media interest. This resulted in coverage from at least 22 national, regional and local press outlets as well as three radio stations. We achieved additional media coverage on the day of the event (see below).

Finally, Brake created a short video that was shared on our website and through social media. This was viewed 335 times in the build up to the event.
Media coverage

To promote Brake’s Kids Walk and highlight the dangers children face on or near roads, we issued a further national press release and 12 regional releases to the media. These were under embargo until the day of the Kids Walk (13 June 2018). Here, we focused on regional figures that showed the severity of child road casualties, plus the amount of children taking part in the walk. We offered photo and filming opportunities for local media.

On Wednesday 13 June 2018, we secured coverage from at least 45 radio stations, including Sky Radio, Heart Radio and regional BBC stations. The story was covered by at least eight television stations, including Sky News and ITV.

At least 36 national, regional and local press outlets also covered the event on, or around, the date of the Kids Walk. Organisations that gave media coverage included Road Safety GB, Contract Hire and Leasing and Education Business magazine.

Social media helped boost the reach of the campaign and we promoted the walk via Twitter and Facebook. Brake tweeted about schools’ activities on the day of the walk and schools shared their photos on Twitter, using the hashtag #BrakesKidsWalk.
Fundraising

Every year schools raise significant funds for Brake. This year, we encouraged schools to raise money through sponsorship or by running a ‘Wear Your Stripes Day’ – where children dress in their stripiest clothes (like mascot Zak the Zebra) in exchange for a £1 donation to Brake. Many schools who were unable to fundraise sent in donations to help cover the cost of their resources.

In 2018, schools managed to raise more than £15,000. This aids Brake’s work supporting road crash victims and campaigning for safer roads.

What they said

Brake staff collected feedback from 199 events through online and phone surveys. This feedback represented activities that 34,579 children took part in.

97% rated our posters good, very good or excellent

8.6 was the average rating (out of 10) given for taking part in Brake’s Kids Walk

of those surveyed, participants said the most useful resources were the posters

stickers and certificates received the most ratings of ‘excellent’

“We have really appreciated having the opportunity to join in with such a worthwhile campaign. Keeping our children safe is paramount and this includes road safety.”

Sue Palk, high-level teaching assistant, The Castle Primary School

“Brake’s Kids Walk provided a great way for us to discuss road safety from a different perspective and we helped make it relevant to the children’s local area.”

Suzanne Preston, rural pride officer, Corby Borough Council.
Co-op Insurance sponsorship

This year’s Brake’s Kids Walk was kindly sponsored by Co-op Insurance. Financial support from Co-op Insurance covered the production of resources for participating schools, marketing purposes and staffing costs.

This critical funding enables moneys raised by participating schools and kids to support Brake’s wider work supporting families affected by road crashes and campaigning for road safety.

Co-op Insurance also provided £50 vouchers and yo-yos for our star schools that did some great fundraising activities for Brake.