8th November 2016

Dear Year 7 Parents/Carers

Bullers Wood School has been involved in the Youth Travel Ambassador (YTA) Scheme for the past four years. The YTA Scheme is a youth-led education project developed by Transport for London and delivered by the London Borough of Bromley. The scheme has given us the opportunity to make a real difference to the travel and transport issues which affect our local community. One of our key aims is to promote safe, independent travel for all students to and from school. In some areas the number of car crashes during the school run has increased by a third, and the government is looking to decrease the number of cars on the roads during this time. This year, our YTAs are promoting the benefits of walking, such as:

**Walking is known to improve academic performance.** Walking boosts learning, enhances focus, heightens concentration, improves memory, reduces stress and increases creativity, all of which will help a child’s performance at school. Children arrive brighter and more alert for their first morning class. In addition, punctuality is improved as students walking to school will not be late due to heavy traffic.

**Walking gives children good life experience.** It is an opportunity for them to be independent, think responsibly, and make decisions for themselves. Some children feel less anxious about being at school when they know how to get home; it is much harder to learn that route from the perspective of a car. New research on walking and cycling supports recommendations that active travel can help boost mental wellbeing. Data from a series of long-running studies showed that active travel improved mental wellbeing in a number of areas such as concentration, the ability to make decisions and enjoy normal daily activities, and that it reduced the feeling of being constantly under strain. In addition, many friendships have developed on the walk to school.

**Walking provides daily exercise for children.** In addition to wellbeing, there are the known physical health benefits associated with walking. Incorporating physical activity into a child’s daily routine is a good way to reduce health risks such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease. As physical fitness improves, so does academic performance.

**Walking gets children outdoors** – Those few minutes of walking can provide inspiration. Children pay attention to and revel in their surroundings in a way that adults do not. A half hour walk to school and a half hour walk home from school provides the recommended amount of physical activity that a child should be doing each day.

**Walking is better for the environment** – Returning to 1969 levels of walking and bicycling to school would save 3.2 billion vehicle miles, 1.5 million tons of carbon dioxide and 89,000 tons of other pollutants—equal to keeping more than 250,000 cars off the road for a year.

Many of our students currently walk to school, and a number of students use public transport. Those students who currently come by car are encouraged to incorporate some walking into their journeys to and from school. If travelling by car, for example, parents are asked not to park near the school gates for the safety of all our students, but instead to drop off/pick up at an agreed location a short distance from the school.

Throughout the year, we will be running a number of initiatives to encourage safe, independent and responsible travel. Thank you for your support.



Yours sincerely

Mrs W Lovell

School Travel Plan Officer and **Year 8 Youth Travel Ambassadors**