

NETWALKING CLUB RULES AND SAFETY

When launching an afterschool walking club or event, setting rules is the first order of business. Club members should help to suggest and agree upon “their” list of rules. The club leader can tape a large sheet of paper to a wall and select one student with good handwriting to write down the suggestions with a thick marker.

Modeling the process, the club leader introduces a rule as an example, such as: “LISTEN – listen to the leaders/adults in charge when they are speaking; they are responsible for your safety. Listen to others when it is their turn to speak; this is how you show respect to your friends and show that their feelings and ideas matter.”

Ask the students to raise their hand if they have a rule to suggest and ask them to explain the “why” for the rule. Inevitably, someone will mention the Golden Rule – treat others as you would want to be treated. The club leader might introduce older students to the Platinum Rule - Treat others as you think they would like to be treated – and ask how this is different from the Golden Rule.

Ask students to suggest safe rules for walking and the “why” for each rule. Hopefully students will come up with the following points. If not, the leader may ask the students to do 25 jumping jacks to “wake up their brains” and then prompt students with leading questions.

- Stay with the group.
- Walk on the sidewalk.
- Cross using the crosswalks.
- Stop and check traffic before crossing.
- Stay behind the leader.
- No pushing.
- Beware of strangers.

Try to let everyone have a turn in making a suggestion. If the club has more than 12 students, break down into smaller teams to write multiple rule lists. Then regroup to compare lists and blend into a more complete list.

End the list with the rule “Have FUN!”

The list can be amended as needed and should be posted and reviewed at the beginning of each meeting, particularly with younger students. A club leader might request that younger students each read one rule aloud to the group.

Club leaders and helpers should have their own set of rules, such as...

- Bring a first aid kit.
- Carry signed permission slips.
- Keep handy a master list of emergency phone numbers for all the students.
- Pack inhalers for children who have asthma.
- Bring a cell phone that is in working order.
- Pack a water bottle(s).
- Have a helper attend a child needing to use a park restroom.