

Developing a School Travel Plan

Introduction

A School Travel Plan (STP) is a process whereby a school works out how it intends to make travel to and from the school by pupils, parents and teachers more sustainable and safe. This information is set out in a document that should be linked in with the school development / improvement plan. With 30% of all children and young people travelling to school by car the STP is an important tool for changing this trend.⁽¹⁾

STPs are created in consultation with the whole school community and take account of current trends and the local situation so one school's travel plan will be very different from that of another.

STPs are not just about travel but also about improving health, broadening education and combating social exclusion. They contribute towards making the local community greener and improving quality of life.

The benefits of School Travel Plans

Writing a STP isn't something that can be done overnight, it will take a while and require commitment from a number of people, but it will be time well spent. Start with small steps, you will be surprised how much can be achieved as part of classroom work or other existing initiatives. A STP will:

- Demonstrate the school's commitment to environmental and community concerns. School inspections, although focussed on standards within the school, also take note of projects supporting education for sustainable development and involving the wider community.
- help to secure funds for Safe Routes to Schools initiatives and projects such as bike parking or road safety improvements
- promote school travel issues with parents, pupils and staff
- improve chances of planning consent for further school development



Department for
Transport

The **Safe Routes to Schools** project is co-ordinated by Sustrans and provides support to local authorities, schools and parents. Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity and works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport to benefit health and the environment.

National Cycle Network Centre, 2 Cathedral Square, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5DD

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- provide a framework for curriculum links, particularly under citizenship, geography and personal, social and health education
- contribute towards initiatives such as Healthy Schools and Eco Schools.



Pupil participation in a School Travel Plan

Pupil participation is an important consideration in the development of a STP. Keep in mind that primarily it is the travel behaviour of the young people that you are hoping to change through the plan. It is important therefore that they are able to express their views and that those opinions are listened and taken into account.

As young people make the journey to and from school each day it is only natural that they are going to have some of the best ideas and suggestions for how more of them could be encouraged to walk or cycle and how routes could be made safer.

Pupils' participation can extend to delivering projects and monitoring progress through the curriculum, school council or out-of-hours clubs.



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A school travel plan working group should be set up to get the project off the ground and keep it going. This small group might consist of the headteacher, parents, pupils, governors / school board members and a local authority officer, yet the whole school community will need to be involved in some of the stages, especially the consultation. The most successful STPs are those that engage the whole school effectively.

The following is a suggested list of contents for a STP. Under each there are pointers and prompts to help you. STPs from schools across the UK can be found in the School Travel Plan section of our website.

1. Brief description of the school

This will include numbers, location, catchment, any plans for future expansions and other factors affecting travel to or from school. It is beneficial to demonstrate how the STP fits into the ethos of your school.

2. Evidence of consultation

Consultation should establish how staff and pupils currently travel to the school and how they would like to travel to school.

A quick hands-up survey will give you the results you need. However you might find it more useful to ask each pupil and parents to complete a travel audit exploring the reasons for travel choices. Questionnaires are available to download from the Routes 2 Action section of our website or you can use Young TransNet's on-line survey, www.youngtransnet.org.uk

Provide survey data in both raw figures and percentages, and include the number of pupils / staff that were surveyed and responded.

3. Summary of school's transport and road safety problems

This will identify the key issues for pupils, parents, staff and governors. It might include traffic problems outside the school gates, reasons for not walking or cycling to school, issues relating to start and finishing times and after school activities.

The majority of the information in this section will have come from the consultation carried out with pupils, parents and staff. Say how these problems were identified, for example, at a parent's evening, during Planning for Real workshops, through the travel audit.

4. Proposed initiatives with objectives and targets

Set objectives based on the results of your consultation. An objective describes how your school is going to make the changes you are trying to achieve with the STP. For example:

- to encourage sustainable transport modes
- to reduce car trips and car parking
- to improve road safety

For each of your objectives set a target i.e. what change you hope to see over a given period. Targets need to be measurable, realistic, set over a specific time period and linked to an objective. For example:

- to increase the number pupils cycling to school to 12% by July 2006
- to inform pupils, parents and teachers of the benefits of green transport each academic year
- to improve access to the school site for pedestrians by September 2006

Finally develop initiatives that will enable you to meet your targets and deliver your objectives. For example:

- set up a cycle club that will include cycle maintenance and cycle training
- provide secure storage space for books and equipment for people walking to school
- liase with public transport operators to amend service routes and timings to meet the potential demands from staff and pupils

5. Programme for implementation

It is imperative that having set out what you want to achieve you have an action plan in place for achieving it. For each of the initiatives consider and record the following:

- start and end date for key tasks
- lead person at the school
- action needed by other organisations including the local authority or police
- cost in time and money
- source of funding



6. Plans for monitoring and review

Having devoted valuable time to developing your STP you will want to ensure work towards your objectives is on track. It maybe that some of the things you planned are no longer relevant or things have happened sooner than you planned. For your STP consider:

- how and when changes will be monitored
- how any changes will be reported
- when and who will review the plan

Further information

Local authorities will have further resources to help you with your STP. They will also be able to advise you on any specific requirements that you may have to include in your STP in order to access government funding, for example, schools in England need to ensure their travel plan meets specific criteria in order to qualify for capital grant funding. Ask the school travel advisor / co-ordinator based within your local authority, we can provide you with their details.

Sustrans produces other information sheets that can support initiatives in your STP. Topics include walking, cycling, safety, health, cycle parking and Safe Routes to Schools. Download these from our website or contact us for hard copies.

References

1. Department for Transport (2004) National Travel Survey 2003, London: DfT



Further information

Visit the Safe Routes to Schools website www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk for:

- latest news and information on Safe Routes to Schools
- specific information on each of the UK regions
- downloadable resources including other information sheets
- case studies, curriculum materials and newsletters

For Safe Routes to Schools enquiries call 0117 915 0100 or email schools@sustrans.org.uk

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