

Active travel

– a guide to getting more secondary school pupils walking and cycling



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Are you a secondary school looking for ideas on how to get more of your pupils active on their journey to or from school?

Learning how to travel actively and independently are important to personal development; freedom to move around the local area independently is an important part of growing up.

It is recommended that young people need at least an hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day to stay healthy, however when children become teenagers there is a general drop off in activity levels and this decline has implications for their

health and wellbeing. The journey to school can be an ideal opportunity for young people to get more active.

This guide looks at the challenges in encouraging high levels of active travel to or from school and by highlighting curricular links provides solutions and keys to success. We have also provided examples of how schools across the UK have linked walking and cycling to the curriculum.

Activities for encouraging active travel to school

These ideas not only develop pupils skills, knowledge and confidence, they can also be fun. Many of the suggested activities you can undertake in lesson time with little or no cash outlay however where funding is required we would suggest you take a look at our Finding funding factsheet on our website.

A successful active travel project requires;

- Strong links to the Curriculum for Excellence
- Support from the Head teacher and senior management team
- An enthusiastic school champion to oversee the project
- Input from parents and all pupils - this encourages a whole school approach

Challenges you may encounter for active travel projects

Distance – Many pupils live a considerable distance from their secondary school but cycling is often an option. The average distance pupils live from secondary school is now 3.3miles which can be cycled easily¹

Attitude – Young people's resistance to stand out from the crowd and be active on their journey to school

Access – Young people may not have access to a bike

Safety concerns – parents and schools may prevent pupils cycling to school

Facilities – schools may not have adequate storage facilities for cyclists

Skills – not all pupils have the skills to cycle safely on roads

Curriculum for Excellence links

This section highlights the links to curricular areas and subjects detailing some relevant experiences and outcomes.

| Curricular area | Examples Experiences and outcomes | How does it link? |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Health and Wellbeing | HWB 3-16a 4-16a HWB 3-18a 4-18a | Opportunity for regular physical activity |
| Technologies | TCH 4-03b TCH 3-04a 4-04a TCH 3-11a 4-11a TCH 3-12a 4-12a TCH 3-14a 4-14a TCH 4-14c TCH 4-14d | Making or maintaining bikes and instrumentation for bikes, using the web to investigate topic |
| Sciences | SCN 3-04b 4-04b SCN 3-05b SCN 3-07a 4-07a SCN 4-07b SCN 4-09c | Cycling and walking harness renewable sources of energy and they are also the conversion of one form of energy to another through work and the application of forces |
| Social studies | SOC 3-01a 4-01a SOC 3-05a 4-05a SOC 3-08a 4-08a SOC 4-09b SOC 4-10a SOC 3-14a 4-14a SOC 3-15a 4-15a | The use of bicycles has been important in some key social/political movements eg. The Suffragettes |
| Numeracy and Mathematics | MNU 3-03a 4-0 MNU 3-11a 4-10b MNU 3-11a 4-11a MTH 3-16a 4-16b MTH 3-17b MTH 3-18a 4-18a MTH 4-18b | Modal share at your school compared to national picture. Practical calculations |
| Languages | ENG 3-27a 4 LIT 3-20a 4-20 LIT 3-25a 4-25 LIT 3-26a 4-26 LIT 3-28a 4 LIT 3-29a 4-29 GAI 3-30a | Journey to school is a rich source of experiences and information. |
| Expressive Arts | EXA 3-03a 4-03a EXA 3-06a 4-06a EXA 4-05a | Various opportunities for design briefs from clothes to cycle panniers |

Links to the Curriculum for Excellence and climate change

Cycling and walking should be considered an integral part of the teaching of the Curriculum for Excellence. Active travel links to the Health and Wellbeing area under Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical organiser and is part of 'responsibility of all', making an ideal topic for a cross-curricular project. There are many opportunities for staff to use their own subject and Health and Wellbeing outcomes across all levels. Walking and cycling are activities that can provide opportunities for practical demonstration of theories which young people can easily relate to.

Climate change and environmental concerns are high on the agenda for many young people. Demonstrating to pupils that travelling actively to school is a way of taking direct action against climate change will make them aware of ways they can make a difference.

School Travel Plans

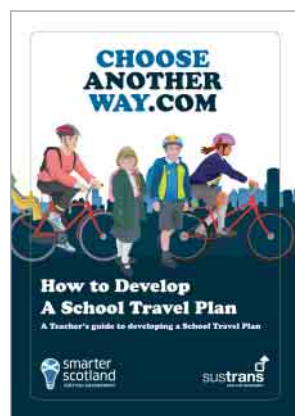
A School Travel Plan (STP) is an action plan for tackling the barriers which prevent your pupils travelling actively to school. In Scotland approximately 80% of schools have or are working on a travel plan, do you have one in your school?

A school travel plan can be a good starting point to identify and evaluate specific issues and barriers to active travel at your school. To get yours off the ground set up a working group with pupils and member/s of staff and produce an action plan. These actions can be timetabled or extra curricular involving other partners such as school travel co-ordinator, parents, police road safety, active schools etc.

Once you have a travel plan in place consider;

- Evaluating and reviewing and updating the action points in your travel plan on an annual basis
- Running a school-wide active travel promotional campaign
- Calculating the carbon footprint of the different modes of travel
- Looking at local businesses and developing a travel plan for a local area.

If your school chose to your STP could take cycling as a theme and look at it across all curriculum areas and subjects. For example; you could consider doing a school-wide marketing campaign around active travel. This could bring in elements from Art & Design, ICT and Marketing/Business Studies. You could get your pupils to try and sell the positives of walking and cycling; getting fit, losing weight, being able to socialise and travel independently. For more help and advice contact your School Travel Co-ordinator (or someone in a similar role) at your local authority see our [website](#) see Home » What we do » Safe Routes to Schools » What's in your area? » Scotland.



For further advice see our *Developing a School Travel Plan* information sheet;

Also see this Teachers's guide to developing a School Travel Plan - *Choose Another Way* guide; written with teachers in mind this infosheet lists six manageable steps to writing a School Travel Plan.

Developing a School Travel Plan is a key objective of the Eco-schools Transport topic and involving your pupils in promoting sustainable transport to school could help your school to achieve an *Eco-schools Green Flag Award*.

An important link to make is between active travel and road safety. The activities in this information sheet can complement road safety resources delivered in your school.

This section is full of activities that have been successfully run in secondary schools and ideas for you to develop in your school.

Schools across the UK have successfully complemented active travel-linked lessons with lunchtime and after-school initiatives that promote cycling and walking. Some of these provide the means and the encouragement to tackle the challenges described in this information sheet. The next section gives you examples from around the country of these activities with associated curriculum links, where appropriate.



Idea: *Give ownership to the pupils*

Ask students what they want to do and **why**- have they any evidence to support their suggested activity. Give them the opportunity to organise and evaluate the activities themselves.

Pupils at three secondary schools in Wales planned an activity week with a variety of different walking and cycling events, ideas were put forward and were voted on. The final programme looked a bit like this;

Monday – Dr Bike (see below)

Tuesday – Skills session/bike polo

Wednesday – Non-school uniform day for cyclists

Thursday – Pupil eco-warriors write to MP to improve cyclist provision

Friday – Bike breakfast for pupil and staff cyclists

Idea: *Overcoming the challenges*

Not all pupils have the skills for travelling safely and independently to school, however these can be developed with the following activities;

- **Introduce bicycle training**, for information about the 3 levels of Bikeability Scotland cycle training contact *Cycling Scotland*
- **Undertake walking audits of routes to school**, looking at routes to your school and identifying risks and hazards, for more information contact *Living Streets*





Idea: *Set up a School Bicycle Loan Scheme*

School example: Bannerman High School in Glasgow run a loan scheme where the pupils apply in writing for use of a loan bike.

How does it work? Your school buys and then loans out bicycles for pupils currently without access to a bike allowing them to cycle to travel to and from secondary school and in leisure time.

Things to think about; this scheme requires funding, grants may be available, in this instance, Bannerman High School worked with their local authority School Travel Co-ordinator

Requires a supply of desirable bikes, funding from Sustrans was used by some secondary schools in Glasgow to purchase a fleet of good quality mountain bikes. Also ensure there is staff commitment to the project and enough space in the school for bike storage and maintenance. It has been found that the loan scheme works best if linked to a regular bicycle club where pupils learn basic bicycle maintenance skills

If young people have access to a bicycle learning how to look after it is an important life skill which can help young people develop their independence.

For more information see the Sustrans information sheet and case study *Bike Loan Scheme* (Glasgow City Council).

Curriculum links: Health and Wellbeing, Sciences, Technologies



Idea: *Bike club*

School example: At St Mungo's Academy in Glasgow the school has a regular bike maintenance club run by the campus police officer. Funding for tools and training staff were secured from a special one-off grant from Sustrans. Two staff and a number of pupils were trained in Weldtech Gold standard. A regular after school bike club which organises rides, training and maintenance sessions

Things to think about/what do you need

Space and tools for maintenance, volunteer parents to help run/supervise sessions, training in bicycle mechanics, funding. See Bike club start up guide.

Curriculum links: Health and Wellbeing, Sciences, Technologies

For a step by step guide to setting up a bike club see http://www.continyou.org.uk/health_and_well_being/files/bikeclubscotland



Idea: *A Smoothie-bike*

School example: Elgin High School in Moray held smoothie day where they featured a home made smoothie bike. It proved a highly successful and tasty hook to draw the young people in and have a go on a bike

How does it work? A bike and dynamo connected to a smoothie-maker. Cycling the bike generates electricity which powers the smoothie-maker. This can be used as a demonstration of the energy and calories used up by cycling and can be home made or hired commercially

Things to think about

Health and safety – make sure everything has been checked before use Can tie in with the healthy eating theme, good for health weeks

Curriculum links: Health and Wellbeing, Sciences, Technologies

Idea: *Run a film competition*

School example: Two pupils from James Hamilton Academy in East Ayrshire produced a prize winning film about their journey to school for a national competition. They said making the film made them more aware of their travel choices and made them re-think how they travel to school and travel more actively

What is it? Put together a competition brief with a theme, judging criteria and panel, good prizes. This could be run within a school or between a number of schools

How does it work? Pupils make and edit their 3 mins film about their journey to school, highlighting the mode of transport, how could they make it more healthy and sustainable? Set a deadline for entries and appoint a judging panel. Identify the criteria for a winning film and panel judge all entries against this

Things to think about

Make sure you publicise it well through lots of channels, choose good active travel or film-making prizes (try to get sponsorship/prizes from local camera dealers) Show the winning film in assembly
See <http://www.movingimageeducation.org/> for tips and advice about making films with young people

Curriculum links: Technologies, Expressive Arts



Idea: *Make a radio commercial*

School example: Elgin High and Elgin Academy in Moray teamed up with local Moray Firth Radio in 2006 and the adverts were aired regularly for a month

How does it work? The theme could be about making the journey to school more sustainable, this could form part of a larger school or local authority-wide active travel marketing campaign. Team up with the local radio station and the local authority.

Things to think about?

To air the commercial requires funding approximately £2,000 the local authority may be able to assist or resource this project. Costs approximately £500 to make.

This project would make a good class project.

Curriculum links: Expressive Arts, Languages



Idea: *Set up an incentive scheme*

School example: Pedals not Petrol was set up by a pupil at James Gillespie High School, Edinburgh City Council.

How does it work? The scheme which was devised by a 16 year old pupil and won a £10k grant from the Scottish Government. Pupils who cycle to school earn points on their Young Scot card which could then be exchanged for a high street voucher.

Things to think about

Get lots of varied publicity within your school.

Difficult to maintain momentum when the key people move on. See *the Pedals not Petrol website*.

Curriculum links: Health and Wellbeing



Idea: *Set up a bicycle maintenance workshop*

School example: At St Mungo's Academy in Glasgow the campus police officer runs a regular bike maintenance club, a one-off grant from Sustrans funded training in WeldTech and tools. Two staff and numerous pupils were trained in Weldtech Gold standard.

How does it work? A pupil-run workshop repairing and maintaining bicycles within a secondary school.

Things to think about/what do you need

Make sure there is staff commitment to the project.

Space and tools for maintenance, volunteer parents to help run/supervise sessions, training in bicycle mechanics, funding.

Curriculum links: Technologies

Idea: *Run a bicycle recycling project*

School example: Alness Academy in Highland have set up a bike recycling group who recycle unclaimed bikes recovered by local police

How does it work? A pupil-run workshop repairing and recycling bicycles within a secondary school they sell the bikes at cost price to members of the school community

Things to think about: Make sure there is staff commitment to the project and enough space in the school to set up the workshop. Tools for maintenance, volunteer parents to help run/supervise sessions, training in bicycle mechanics, funding, insurance. See Sustrans guide to setting up a bicycle recycling scheme in a school

Curriculum links: Technologies

**Idea:** *Dr Bike sessions*

School example: Firrhill High School in Edinburgh City Council got mechanics from the Bike Station in Edinburgh to run a Dr Bike session

How does it work? Bicycle mechanic offers service for bikes at lunchtime

Things to think about: Make sure you publicise it well through lots of channels. You could train up pupils in a Weldtech standard and they could do the servicing themselves

For more information: Find local providers near you or contact local bike shops and see if they would be willing to be involved

Curriculum links: Technologies



Idea: *Cycle fashion show*

Pupils in London secondary's got girls to investigate and design their own cycle clothes for every day use, garments were made and fashion shows took place at the schools

How does it work? Mixed group could organise a cycle fashion session, design cycle clothing and novelty bikes

Curriculum links: Expressive Arts

Idea: *Walk 2 London*

School example: Alloa Academy in Clackmannanshire pupils were issued with pedometers to monitor and record steps taken before, during and after a trip to London

How does it work? Paths for All provide pedometers and pupils set a target of 10 miles per day

Things to think about: Pupils gathered statistical evidence along with pupils' perceptions of fitness levels

Pupils made and shared video diaries with the rest of the school

Curriculum links: Health and Wellbeing, Technologies



Idea: *Go for Gold Transition project*

School example: St Machar Academy in Aberdeen City helped their new intake develop healthy active travel habit by running an award scheme called Going for Gold

How does it work? S3 pupils visited the primaries and process the data collected on wall charts about how many walks to school or circuits of the playground were made. The students also organised and hosted a conference for P7's about transition that included the Going for Gold awards where those travelling actively won t-shirts and i-pods

Curriculum links: Health and Wellbeing

http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/Safe%20Routes/resources/toolkit/RS_Pedometer_Guide.pdf

Link to case studies <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-we-do/safe-routes-to-schools/resources/case-studies>



Other suggested classroom activities

When you are introducing and promoting active travel at secondary level you may have to start small and gradually pick up momentum to eventually make it part of your school's culture. Here are a number of engaging active travel activities that could be easily incorporated into lesson time with appropriate curriculum links. These "bite-sized" activities may spark off a more substantial modeshift at your school.

| Name | Description/Useful links/Things to include | Curriculum links |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Watt bikes | Which measures power output, and heart rate, you may be able to borrow one from a sports centre for a week's challenge at your school http://wattbike.com/uk/wattbike | Technologies Health and Wellbeing |
| Cycle culture | Pupils could explore cycling culture across the globe through websites | Social studies, Technologies |
| Cycle blog | Consider setting up a cycle blog for the school recording pupils journeys | Technologies |
| Cycling films | Look up inspirational cycling films to show at lunchtime or have a mini bicycle film festival | Social studies, Technologies Health and Wellbeing |
| Make a film | Produce an instructional film on bike maintenance | Languages, Technologies |
| Make a film | An introductory film for the new intake on cycling to secondary school. Show routes, hazards and parking | Technologies Health and Wellbeing |
| Bike mileage counter | Make an electronic bike mileage counter or device to keep records of how many are cycling to school | Technologies |
| Body workings | Study how the body works when it is cycling – which muscles do what? | Technologies, Sciences Health and Wellbeing |
| Forces | Explore what are the forces at play when riding a bike? | Mathematics, Sciences |
| Bike and body | Match how the body works to how the actual bike works at the same time as riding. Investigate why cycling is such a complete form of exercise http://www.bikeforall.net/content/cycling_good_for_you.php | Sciences Health and Wellbeing |
| Energy | Investigate how much energy is used up walking/cycling? Watt bike in Technologies, Sciences | Health and Wellbeing |
| Wheel design | Explore how the wheel developed and changed through the ages? | Technologies, Social studies |
| Bike design | Investigate what changes have there been to the basic design of bike (e.g chain) and what led to these changes? | Technologies, Social studies |
| Bikes for men and women | Find out what are the differences in how ladies and gents have approached cycling through the years and how have bikes adapted as women gained more freedom? | Social studies |
| Bikes and the War | The Germans nicked our bikes! Investigate how did World Wars affect production of bicycles – how did their use change in the war and what materials would have been available during war time with which to make them. For a history of the use of bicycles in warfare see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bicycle_infantry | Technologies, Social studies |
| Route planning | Try route planning on maps from home to school to friends houses etc by bike and then testing them out on a bike ride. | Duke of Edinburgh Award, Princes Trust and John Muir Award, Social studies |
| Weather | Explore weather patterns and frequency of rain in local area – how many days a year? Does it really rain as much as we think and should it put us off cycling? For local weather information see http://news.bbc.co.uk/weather/ | Social studies |
| Tour | Follow the routes and adventures on the Tour De France | Languages, Social studies |
| Statistics | Investigate statistics on how many people cycle and use other forms of transport and work out ratios of people cycling to people driving for example. Numerous sources of data. Could compare UK with other countries or compare 2 cities | Mathematics |
| Problem solving | Do problem solving including time, distance, speed, including graphs | Mathematics, route-planning in Social Studies |

| Name | Description/Useful links/Things to include | Curriculum links |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Distance | Use circumferences and radius of tyres to measure distance. Explore measuring distances walked and cycled etc | Mathematics, route-planning in social studies |
| Labelling exercises | The parts of a bike | Languages, bike maintenance in Technologies |
| Instructional writing | Write a guide on how to mend a puncture – booklet to hand out to all children in school | Languages, film making in Technologies |
| Recount text | Describe a bike ride or just the journey to school | Languages, Expressive Arts |
| Interviewing skills | Compare and contrast an adult you knows journey to school and your own Languages, history in Social Studies | |
| Team logos | Looking at team logos and how they are developed and marketed. British Cycling http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/ | Expressive Arts |
| Cycling kit | Design a school cycling kit | Expressive Arts |
| Photography and video | Pupils to produce marketing videos to promote cycling or record stories of them cycling | Expressive Arts, Technologies Health and Wellbeing |
| Bike design | Design your own bike or the perfect bike Technologies engineering | Expressive Arts |
| Lock designs | What makes the best lock, convenience versus effectiveness, weight etc. test them in class (supervised, with bolt cutters) | Expressive Arts, Technologies engineering |
| Designing bike shelters | Where they should be placed in your particular school for max efficiency. Discuss how they would be installed and materials, special designs, school logo or image to go on them | Expressive Arts |



Above is an example of an eco-shelter which incorporates pupil designs

