

North East Sustrans Active School Travel Programme Spring Term 2019 Newsletter

I'd love to hear from you...

I'm Johnny McCrystal Sustrans' schools officer for North East. Please get in touch if you have any great school stories or would like to find out more about our schools work.

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Message from Sustrans ...

The Active School Travel Programme is an exciting initiative for schools who wish to see more of their pupils choosing an **active and healthy** journey to school. The aim of the programme is to increase the number of pupils walking, cycling and scooting to school.

Sustrans is being funded by the **Public Health Agency** and the **Department for Infrastructure** to continue delivering the Active School Travel Programme across Northern Ireland until 2021.

Sustrans has been delivering this successful programme for the past three years. In 2017-18 within participating schools, there number of pupils travelling actively increased from 34% to 44%.

We are currently working with over 340 schools across Northern Ireland. Please visit our [website](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) where you can learn more about the programme and download newsletters from other areas.



P6 pupils from Broughshane PS had lots of pedal-powered fun this term.

Visitor from Sustrans Welsh Team

In June I was delighted to welcome a special visitor to join me for the day at Broughshane PS. Roger Dutton from our Sustrans schools team in Wales took a trip over to Northern Ireland to spend a few days seeing how the Active School Travel programme was delivered to schools locally.

Roger and I pedalled our way out to the village of Broughshane where we helped groups of pupils through some introductory cycling safety sessions as well as to award certificates to pupils who had recently taken part in our on-road cycle training course.

The pupils really enjoyed a new visitor to the school and even learned a few words of Welsh along the way!

The following day our guest joined the team for a special 'School Street Closure' in Belfast which you can read about later in this issue!



Sustrans is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. It's time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today. www.sustrans.org.uk

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JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Webinar Support

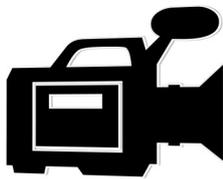
Lights, camera, action!

We're always looking for new ways to help support schools as best we can.

This year we began to introduce our new webinars over a variety of active school travel related themes, direct to screens in schools all over Northern Ireland.

So far our team have presented on the themes of the 'Sustrans School Mark Awards'; our family-focussed active travel event 'Feet First Families'; 'The Big Pedal' and the latest edition on guidance for 'Extended Support' schools which is post Year-3 when an Officer is no longer in school.

If you missed any but would like to view them, feel free to send me an email and I'll gladly pass on the links!



Our Sustrans team discuss active travel advice via webinar

10 New Schools to the North East

Each year we welcome 60 new schools onto the programme across the country, that means 10 new schools for each of our 6 Schools Officers.

In the North East region I'm delighted to begin to work with **Ballylifford PS, Coagh PS, Crossroads PS** (Kilrea), **Duneane PS, Eden PS** (Ballymoney), **Gorran PS** (Garvagh), **Irish Society's PS** (Coleraine), **Kilrea PS, Monynick PS & Randalstown Central PS**.



School Street Closure

Sustrans School Streets is a test programme that aims to ease congestion, poor air quality and road safety concerns that many schools experience during drop-off and pick-up times, by facilitating timed traffic restrictions on the road outside the school gates.

This approach was developed in Italy, and then brought to the UK by Edinburgh, Hackney, Camden and Solihull. It has now been picked up by a number of London boroughs, with School Streets also being known as Healthy School Streets and School Car-Free Zones.

Streets around schools are often dominated by idling cars, speeding traffic and bad parking during school run time, resulting in air pollution and an environment that is generally unpleasant for walking and cycling.

By demonstrating that closing roads outside schools at drop-off and pick-up times is achievable, measuring the impact and sharing our findings, we aim to encourage more regular street closures and inspire more schools to try this approach. Ultimately, we want to affect a permanent change in the way children travel to school.

Across the UK Sustrans has been piloting School Streets, where the street outside a school is closed for the day to show what it could be like without traffic. This year, starting during the Big Pedal, over 40 schools across the UK have taken part.

Here in Northern Ireland, our first street closure was outside Donegall Road Primary in Belfast. Pupils could enjoy safely walking, cycling and scooting to school, with no worries over crossing the road to get to school. We also used the extra space for lots of activities during the day, and at the end of the day had games and activities for families on the street as they left school



A YouGov poll, carried out for Sustrans, surveyed 840 teachers across the UK about their attitudes towards air pollution and the actions they think should be to improve air quality outside the school gates. This revealed that 63% of teachers would support a ban on motor vehicles outside the school gates during drop off and pick up time.

St Mary's had a SUPER(hero) term!

St Mary's PS in Portlengone decided to take on our superhero themed travel challenge this term with pupils aiming to complete their stamp sheets by walking, cycling and scooting to school. There was a brilliant uptake and school were delighted to receive a new banner for the school as a gift from ourselves in Sustrans. To finish the term P3 & P4 pupils enjoyed cycling skills sessions on a lovely sunny day in the school playground where they learnt on-bike observation skills and practiced fun balance games.



Hands up who enjoyed cycling skills!

Teacher Feedback survey

Thank you to everyone who completed our end of term Teacher survey! We are so pleased to hear you're all enjoying the programme and think of it as valuable to your school.

"It has definitely been one of the highlights of our school year."

"GETTING CHILDREN AND PARENTS ACTIVELY TRAVELLING TO SCHOOL IS A JOY."

(Webinar support) ... "These were a great way of being kept up to date with what is happening in Sustrans. I hope that there will continue to be more of these."

"The support could not be any better."

(National Standard Cycle Training) ... "Just fabulous!"

"A brilliant programme! Would highly recommend!"

The Daily Mile

Did you know that just 43.4% of children in NI get the recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity per day. This is the lowest in the UK!

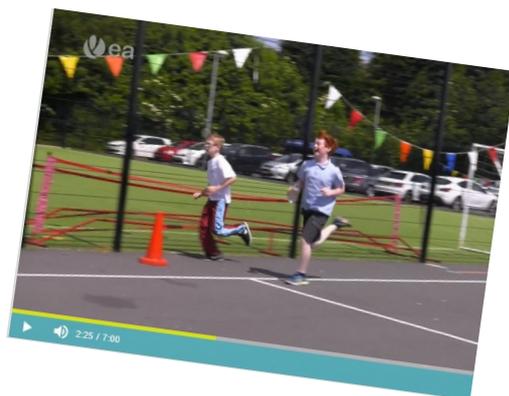


An active journey such as walking, scooting or cycling to and from school is a great way to contribute toward this daily target.

As part of our work in the Active School Travel programme we encourage schools to help pupils to be active not just on the journey to/from school but also during school time, such as through initiatives like 'The Daily Mile'.

If you'd like help to introduce The Daily Mile at your school please get in touch as I can help host introductory assemblies and class sessions. It takes just 15 minutes per session with a recommendation of classes doing 3 sessions per week, whilst some schools do it once or twice a week, others every day!

If you'd like to hear feedback directly from other schools check out EA TV for their Daily Mile promotional video to hear from teachers and Principals who have given it a go in their schools. Link — bit.ly/2NPKvYv posted on EA TV September 2018



There are 237 schools in NI registered with TheDailyMile.co.uk Check out their interactive map to see which schools are already taking part in your area.



Why Not Close Your Street?

Have you ever thought about how much space around your school grounds is dedicated to vehicles, rather than to children? Have you ever considered getting your pupils involved in re-designing the space around your school, to make it safer and more enjoyable for everyone to walk, scoot, cycle and play?



Sustrans have a fantastic resource called “Street Kit”. It’s a bit like Lego for street designers - it can be used in all kinds of innovative ways to change the shape of our streets, car parks and playgrounds. It’s fun and colourful, and a great way for children to learn about how to use and shape the spaces around us.

Over the next year, we will be delivering a number of projects in schools across Northern Ireland, working with teachers and pupils to re-imagine the school grounds. We’ll work with pupils to set up Street Kit, and it can remain in situ at the school for a few weeks - long enough to enable people to change habits and perceptions.

Does your school have problems with congestion around the school gates? Do people park where they shouldn’t? Do they clog up the turning circle, and make it difficult for children to cross roads safely? Are you concerned about air pollution with all those idling cars? Street Kit could be a really innovative way to address some of these challenges. Get in touch if you are interested in using Street Kit at your school.



Thinking of starting up a Walking Bus at your school?

Involving your pupils and parents is a great way to get good support from the get-go. Eco-Council, School Council or JRSO pupils can lend a hand in the creation, running and promotion of the scheme to ensure you keep it fun, engaging and unique to your school.

Top tips:

- ⇒ Choose a day and give it a cool name like ‘Walk on Wednesdays’ or ‘Fit Fridays’
- ⇒ Reward your walkers by recording participation on a wall-chart and awarding a trophy to the class with the highest % of walkers every month. Even some light touch incentives like Sustrans slapbands, stickers or a ‘No Homework’ pass work well!
- ⇒ Publicise it! Get the news out on your website, social media, local press.
- ⇒ Keep safe—always encourage the use of hi-vis vests when travelling actively to school. Risk assess the route, and plan how to safely navigate awkward junctions.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- World Car Free Day; Sun 22 Sept 2019
- Walk to School Month; Oct 2019
- Road Safety Week; Mon 18 - Sun 24 Nov 2019
- Sustrans Big Pedal; Wed 22 April - Tue 5 May 2020
- Sustrans Feet First Families; Friday 13 March 2020

Sustrans is grateful for the continued support of our schools work in Northern Ireland from the following:

