

# South East Sustrans Active School Travel Programme Summer Term 2019 Newsletter

## I'd love to hear from you...

I'm Dave Wiggins, Sustrans' schools officer for South 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, the 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](#) where you can learn more about the programme and download newsletters from other areas.



Gold School Mark Recipients

## First Gold School Mark Award

As the end of the school year approached, it was a privilege for me to present Bocombra Primary School in Portadown with their Gold School Mark Award for excellence in active and sustainable travel, the first school to receive it in the South East area!

Bocombra have been working with Sustrans since September 2014 and were one of the first batch of schools that I worked with when the programme started in 2014, so it was an honour to be invited back in to present this award.

Under the guidance of Mrs Craig, Bocombra fully embraced the Active School Travel Programme from the start and always showed a lot of energy and enthusiasm in trying to reduce the volume of cars coming into their car park while also helping their pupils to be more active on their journeys.

The pupils and teachers in Bocombra came up with many of their own ideas and activities to increase active travel and I have even incorporated some of these into my delivery in other schools over the last number of years.

May I congratulate everyone at Bocombra on their excellent achievement, a real team effort and I know that they will not rest on their laurels but will do their best to maintain the large volume of pupils and parents leaving their cars at home and opting to walk, cycle or scoot to school for the benefit of their health and the world around them!

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](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

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## Scoot Scoot Scooting

An excellent way to get children travelling actively is to make it as fun and simple as possible and one way to do that is on a scooter.

Here are some benefits to scooting:

- \* Scooters can be used by children and adults of all ages.
- \* They fit easily in the boot of a car or carried.
- \* Small children scoot at an adult's walking pace.
- \* It teaches children better balance for cycling.
- \* A child can scoot further than they can walk.
- \* They are cheaper than bicycles.
- \* You can park them anywhere.
- \* Scooting is so much fun!

As always, look out for other people using the footpath such as pedestrians and dog walkers.



## Around The World Trips

During the Big Pedal this year pupils in the south east area made over 30,000 active journeys to and from school.

This is a staggering SEVEN trips around the world on foot, bike or scooter!



## 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.

# Ten New Schools

In September we welcome sixty new primary schools onto the programme of which ten will be in the South East area of Northern Ireland.

I am delighted to be working with: Poyntzpass PS, Markethill PS, Donaloney PS, St.Colman's Bann, Bleary PS, Bessbrook PS, St.Francis of Assisi Keady, St.John's Gilford, St.Mary's Maghery and St.Patrick's in Drumgreenagh Rathfriland over the next few years to help increase the volume of pupils walking, cycling and scooting to school.

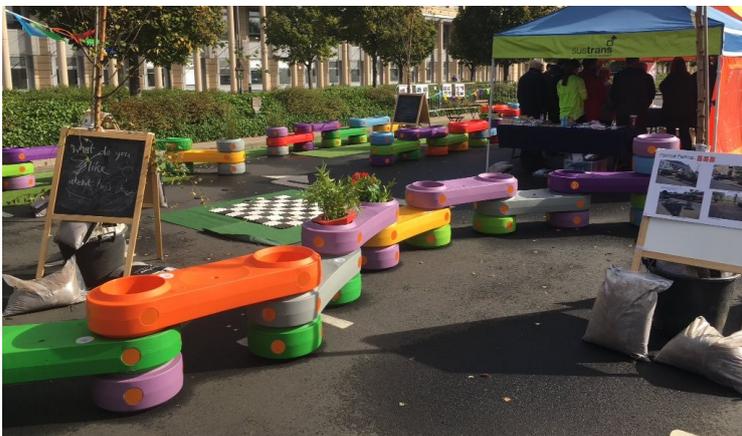
I always look forward to September, meeting new schools, teachers and pupils and as I move into my sixth school year with Sustrans the excitement is building again.



Markethill Primary School

# Why Not Close Your Street?

During the upcoming school year I would love one school in the south east area to have a go at closing a street or area around their school to traffic. I will provide the Sustrans 'Street Kit', as shown, and work closely with the pupils to design an area more suitable for people than cars.



The Street Kit helps people re-imagine an area around their school or where they live and this will encourage pupils to be creative and think outside the box.

Get in touch if you are interested!

# Cycle Training

Below are some photographs from National Standards on road cycle training at St Malachy's Primary School in Armagh City.



# The Daily Mile

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

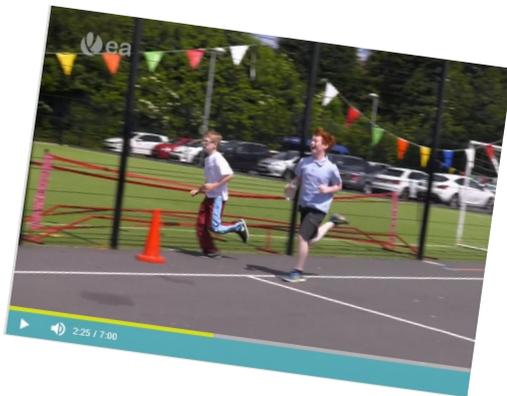


An active journey such as walking, scooting or cycling to and from school is a great way to contribute toward this daily target.

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 15minutes 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](http://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.



# 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:

