Cycling Scotland

CYCLE FRIENDLY SCHOOL AWARD

Champion's Handbook
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Kate Campbell
Manager
Eco Schools Scotland

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“Cycle Friendly Schools will support the whole school approach to physical activity and health promotion. It can contribute to a holistic and supportive environment for health promotion within the school and community setting”.

Benny Lawrie
National Development Officer
Scottish Health Promoting Schools Unit

Cycling Scotland would like to thank all the organisations and individuals who have contributed to the development of the Cycle Friendly School Award including:

Eco Schools Scotland
The Scottish Health Promoting Schools Unit
Learning Teaching Scotland
Road Safety Scotland
Scottish Cycling
sportscotland
Sustrans and the School Travel Co-ordinator network

Thanks also to:

Lasswade Primary School, Bonnyrigg
Lochside Primary School, Dumfries
Shawlands Primary School, Glasgow
Kim Drummond, Midlothian Council
Travel Plans Development Team, Oxfordshire County Council
Why Cycling?

Both central and local government recognise the health, educational and environmental benefits of cycling which means support for schools is better than ever. Everyone could benefit if more children cycled to school. Cycling is fun, healthy, practical, inexpensive and good for the environment.

This pack aims to help primary schools assess how cycle friendly they are and provide practical advice and information on how to make improvements that will ultimately provide the opportunity for more children to make an active school journey.

The Cycle Friendly Schools Award scheme highlights cycling initiatives from a range of partner organisations. The aim is to maximise the benefits and achieve a holistic approach to cycle promotion which results in a school environment conducive to daily active commuting.

The implementation of cycle friendly measures can be part of School Travel Plan development and contribute to the achievement of health promoting school status and Eco Schools accreditation.

The Cycle Friendly Schools Award encourages cycling as part of the whole school culture and contributes to increasing the number of children cycling to and at school. The resource is also intended to encourage children and parents to feel more confident about cycling to school by addressing frequently asked questions.

Cycling Facts and Figures

Car journeys to school have doubled in the past 20 years with 27% of primary children now travelling by car, contributing to problems of congestion and pollution. This increase in sedentary travel is mirrored by the rise in physical inactivity with 27% of boys and 40% of girls failing to meet the recommendation of at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.

Cycling can present the perfect opportunity for children to meet these physical activity targets.

Currently, only 1% of children cycle to school however over 30% would like to. Schools can meet this demand by implementing the right package of measures to address barriers, allowing more children to get on their bikes.

References

1. Cycling and Health: What’s the Evidence, Nick Cavill and Dr Adrian Davis, Cycling England 2007
2. Bike It, Happy, healthy and safe. Resources and support for bike-friendly schools. Department for Transport 2004
5. www.chooseanotherway.com

Benefits Of Cycling To School

Health

Cycling can contribute to the improvement of both physical and mental well-being and is one of the few physical activities that can be integrated into everyday school life, as a sport, an enjoyable activity and a form of active travel.

Regular physical activity is of particular importance for young people in order to optimise physical fitness, general health and wellbeing and growth and development (1).

A health promoting school can benefit in many ways from incorporating cycling into its ethos. By supporting cycling, your school would be taking an active role in promoting healthy lifestyles (2).

Cycling helps both children and adults to:

- Work towards the recommended period of daily physical activity (one hour for children; half an hour for adults)
- Reduce the risk in later life of cardiovascular disorders, obesity, diabetes and some types of cancer (3).
- Improve mental health and wellbeing
- Enjoy fresh air and sunlight.

Performance and Independence

Children who travel actively to school arrive more alert, refreshed and concentrate better in class (4). Additionally, the physical effort of cycling has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety (2).

Parents who drive their children to school can create a reliance on motorised transport that can be detrimental to a child’s cognitive development and their perceived as well as actual independence.

Cycling is a positive experience that gives children the opportunity to learn essential life skills and embark on what they may see as an ‘adventure’. Cycling means the child is in control, he or she can decide which route to take and when and where to travel. This form of independence, which also gives children the ability to travel further than they would be able to on foot, develops road awareness and improves self reliance.

Environment

Congestion around schools is a growing problem, with increasingly busy roads and restricted space for cars at the school gates. At the peak school travel time nearly 1 in 5 cars on urban roads are taking children to school, often in heavy traffic jams (5).

Increased levels of cycling can contribute to lower levels of traffic emissions locally. Additionally, research has shown that car passengers in slow moving traffic face pollution levels 2-3 times higher than those experienced by pedestrians (6).
Achieving Success

The Cycle Friendly School Award scheme aims to change children’s journeys to school by helping create the conditions in which more children and their parents will want to reduce their reliance on the car and walk and cycle to school more.

Why Your Involvement is Important

A supportive partnership between pupils, parents and the school ensures that all different parties have a key role to play in ensuring safe and sensible travel to school by bike. Encouraging cycling to school should be carried out through a number of measures in relation to infrastructure, incentives and promotion.

Lesson Plans

Lesson plans have been developed to support the award scheme and provide teachers with a practical resource for use within curricular time which builds on existing active travel work in the school. As cycling cuts across a number of topics it fits well with the aims of the Curriculum for Excellence, particularly Health and Well-Being.

The Cycle Friendly Schools Award also links in well with the health promoting schools ethos and contributes directly to the attainment of the Eco Schools Award topics on Transport and Health & Well-Being.

Be Part of the Solution

You may find your school is already providing many of the things that make cycling to school possible.

If you feel the award is within your reach and would like help to achieve it, contact either Cycling Scotland or Sustrans using the details on the back cover and we will provide the advice you need. In order to achieve the award it is important to determine what stage you are at by completing the self-assessment form included in this pack. To offer support for pupils to cycle to school, the following should be considered:

The route to school

The Award process can help schools identify issues around the journey to school and find solutions. Although many children live within cycling distance of their school very few actually make the journey by bike. More attractive, accessible and safe routes will encourage children to cycle and their parents to allow them to travel actively.

School travel plans are an integral part of promoting cycle use to and from school and can form a basis for securing funding. They can highlight the areas for improvement such as better cycle routes, pedestrian crossings, speed limits and also improvements to the school site that will encourage more sustainable travel.

It can be useful to contact your Local Authority regarding improvements to areas surrounding the school. Sustrans can also provide information on ‘Safe Routes to Schools’ projects on their website.
Cycle Training

In order to ensure children can cycle confidently, competently and safely it is important that they receive cycle training. The Scottish Cycle Training Scheme (SCTS), is offered to all P6/7 pupils throughout Scotland, in most cases, by their local Road Safety Unit.

Cycling Scotland has developed two new additional resources to augment the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme (SCTS). The two resources are Ready, Steady, Bike and Go by Cycle which provide a level below and above the SCTS respectively.

Ready, Steady, Bike has been developed by Cycling Scotland to teach essential cycle control skills. The skills are matched to level 1 of the National Standard for Cycle Training. It is aimed at primary school children, potentially in primary 5 and can be seen as preparation for children participating in the SCTS in primary 6.

The Go by Cycle award has been designed to follow on from the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme and could be delivered as part of a primary 7 programme. The skills are matched to level 3 of the National Standard for Cycle Training. The intention is for Go by Cycle to provide a platform for the use of a bicycle as a practical and healthy means of transport and recreation throughout life.

Cycling Scotland have also coordinated an instructor training programme aimed at School Travel Coordinators, Active School Coordinators and Volunteer Development Groups. This course is mapped to the National Standard for Cycle Training Instructors and enables those trained to cascade training to volunteer trainers. For more information on training available for schools in you area please contact the Road Safety Unit or one of the above groups.

Support for Cycle Training

Cycling Scotland has provided free equipment which supports the development of cycle training in schools. Each local authority has been offered through their networks of School Travel Coordinators, Active School Managers and Road Safety Officers up to 6 foldable & portable road signs per primary school, 1 cycling activity skills kit per school, 1 reflective vest for each child in a primary 6 class and 2 reflective arm/ankle bands per child in a primary 6 class.

Communication and Promotion

The Cycle Friendly Schools Award can provide a focus for promoting all types of cycling activities within the school and the opportunity to involve the whole school community.

Bike Week, which usually runs in June each year, can also provide a focal point for schools to promote cycling as a fun and practical activity that has the potential to involve the whole school community. The Bike Week website has a variety of ideas and free resources available for schools.

Sustrans ‘Pedal Pack’ is a downloadable resource aimed at those organising a cycling event with practical ideas to get children excited about cycling to school. It may be possible to enlist the help of your School Travel co-ordinator, Active School Co-ordinator or whoever has responsibility for promoting active travel. They can provide support for any events relating to cycling and increasing levels of physical activity at school.

Scottish Cycling, the National Governing Body for the sport, offer advice to those interested in starting a cycling club at school. Parents and leaders may be interested in their coaching courses. Scottish Cycling also have various activity cards for mini-cycle sport ideas and other fun activities in the download section of their website. British Cycling’s Go-Ride programme also has youth specific information and resources on their website.
How Cycling Scotland Can Help

Our goal is to encourage more children to cycle to school, and participate in school based and after school activities so we will be happy to offer you advice and support. We can advise on what needs to be done to attain Cycle Friendly School status and the relevant partners you can contact for further information and resources. (See ‘Further Information’ at the back of this handbook)

What to Do Next

In order to promote and encourage cycling effectively in school it is essential that there is a main point of contact who is enthusiastic about cycling at school and can encourage and co-ordinate others. This can be an individual cycling champion such as a teacher, parent, Active School Co-ordinator, School Travel co-ordinator or similar. The role can also be part of an existing relevant working group such as the eco-committee, travel plan group or school council depending on the individual school.

The next step is to complete the self-assessment form which is used to gauge how Cycle Friendly your school currently is. The assessment process identifies areas for improvement and can be used to create an action plan for future activities. The criteria are grouped under three headings, Infrastructure, Incentives and Promotion and divided into essential and desirable items.

Guidance notes accompany the self-assessment form which fully explain the criteria requirements and signposts sources of information.

Contact Cycling Scotland or Sustrans using the details provided to find an award assessor in your area. When considering your application for the award the assessor will review your completed self-assessment form, may make recommendations which will feed into an action plan and will schedule an assessment visit. If all essential criteria are met or exceeded, the school will be eligible to receive the award.

On gaining Cycle Friendly status the school will receive a certificate and a supply of reflective, high visibility ‘I go to a Cycle Friendly School’ stickers and keyrings for the pupils. These can be placed on bags, clothing and bikes as a reward for children and as a way to communicate the achievement to parents. ‘I go to a Cycle Friendly School’ pens will also be given to successful schools.

Encouraging Cycling

Q: How can young people be encouraged to cycle?
A: Many children already want to cycle to school but face a number of barriers which prevent them from cycling. It often needs a change of culture and attitude towards cycling to get enough pupils started to encourage more.

Action:
- Make cycling high profile in the school and surrounding community and ensure that there is a positive attitude towards it.
- Remind parents of the benefits of cycling and highlight the need to encourage it.
- Provide adult role models such as teachers who cycle to school and help ensure that the needs of cyclists are listened to.
- Organise bike to school days and bike breakfasts.
- If children are given the incentive to cycle to school on the same day it can help to overcome a number of perceived barriers such as image issues.
- Some schools implement a cycling permit scheme to ensure pupils and parents are aware of and agree to the schools rules on issues such as cycle parking helmet wear policy etc. The permit can be adapted to meet the needs of the individual school. Sustrans have a template permit which can be downloaded from their website.

Q: Some schools ban cycling, are they legally allowed to do this?
A: Schools cannot legally prohibit cycling for the school journey. A more positive approach to dealing with any concerns would be along the following lines:

Action:
- Decide on a strategy to tackle the main concerns, and consider encouraging cycling within limits to begin with. For example, consider whether older children, pupils that have completed cycle training or pupils living within a set distance of school should be encouraged to cycle.
- Parents, are responsible for their child’s safety on the journey to school unless the journey has been organised by the school e.g. for a class trip.
Infrastructure

The following resources can be found by searching the school travel section of the Sustrans website.
www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk

Sustrans ‘Safe Routes to School’ section of the website includes case studies and a range of newsletters. Fact sheets available include ‘School Cycle Parking’ and ‘Staying safe on the school journey’. The ‘Template Cycle Permit’ can be adapted to be used as a Code of Conduct for schools.

NHS Scotland and Sustrans document ‘Active travel - How to produce active travel directions for your visitors and staff’ can be found on the Best Practice section of the main Sustrans website.
www.sustrans.org.uk

Incentives

The Road Safety Scotland website includes information on the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme and Junior Road Safety Officers as well as general safety advice for all road users.
www.road-safety.org.uk

The National Standards for Cycle Training sets out the training and skills essential for making cycling trips in today’s road conditions. The Cycle Training Standards Board (CTSB) website details the requirements for Levels 1, 2 and 3 of the National Standard for cycle training which Ready, Steady, Bike, Scottish Cycle Training Scheme and Go by Cycle are mapped to.
www.ctsb.org.uk/ctsb/national_standards.php

A number of studies on the effectiveness of child cycle training including a guidance document outlining Best Practice for cycle training ‘Guidelines for the Management and Operation of Practical Cyclist Training Schemes’ (Rospa, June 2000)
www.rospa.com/roadsafety/advice/cycling/cyclist_training_effectiveness.htm

The sportscotland website has information on progression from school cycling clubs
www.sportscotland.org.uk
www.helpforclubs.org.uk

Information on Scottish Cycling’s school clubs
www.scuonline.org

British Cycling’s Go-Ride programme for young people
www.go-ride.org.uk

Health Promoting Schools website has information and resources to help schools take positive steps towards better health and well-being. Also has a specific section on cycling
www.healthpromotingschools.co.uk

Security

Q: How can children cycle with everything they have to carry to school?
A: Schools can carry out certain measures to reduce the amount pupils carry, this also requires pupils to be organised each day.

Q: How can I persuade pupils and parents that they don’t live too far away to consider cycling?
A: Work with pupils to find out how far they live from school and use this as a basis for changing attitudes. Also remind them of the health benefits of cycling.

Q: Can schools be held liable for theft of bikes?
A: Schools are not liable for property brought onto their premises, and are therefore not liable for pupils’ bicycles being stolen or damaged by a third party.

Q: How can schools reduce cycle theft?
A: Concern about the theft of bikes discourages many young people from cycling to school. Many schools provide secure cycle parking which is a strong deterrent to potential thieves.

Action:
- Pupils can carry items in rucksacks and panniers
- Provide lockers for books and safety equipment for pupils.

Action:
- The average primary school pupil lives 1.5 miles from school – a 12-15 minute bike ride. Often the route that children travel in by car is longer than that which they could cycle on.
- Children could be encouraged to measure the distance that they live from school and plan their route. The school travel co-ordinator can help with this exercise as part of creating a travel plan.

Action:
- Take reasonable action to minimise the risk of theft
- Inform parents that the school cannot be held liable and encourage them to check the conditions of their own insurance policy. Bikes will usually be covered under house contents insurance.
- Organise bicycle security marking – the police should be able to help.

Action:
- It is important that schools encourage cycling through the provision of safe, secure areas for storing bikes during the day. The CFS guidance notes outline the considerations to be made for cycle parking and Sustrans provide a specific Cycle Parking for schools fact sheet, available from their website.

Q: How can I persuade pupils and parents that they don’t live too far away to consider cycling?
A: Work with pupils to find out how far they live from school and use this as a basis for changing attitudes. Also remind them of the health benefits of cycling.

Further Information
Visit the main Eco Schools website and click on the link for Scotland
www.eco-schools.org.uk

Promotion

National Bike Week and support available for schools
www.bikeweek.org

Sustrans ‘Pedal Pack’ guide to school cycling events
www.sustrans.org.uk/pedalpack

Details of ‘Pedal for Scotland’, Cycling Scotland’s mass participation bike ride between Glasgow and Edinburgh
www.pedalforscotland.org

For more information on Cycle Friendly Schools and more about cycling to school in general visit:
www.cyclingscotland.org/cyclingtoschool.aspx

“Cycle Friendly Schools is a useful tool as the resource can help with the development and implementation of a school travel plan”
Philippa Cochrane
Manager, School Travel
Sustrans Scotland
“The Cycle Friendly Schools Award will allow us to recognise the good work already on-going across the country and encourage others to get involved. The award will help increase physical activity in and around primary schools, improving the health of pupils and teachers and encourage more environmentally friendly travel to and from school.”

Iain Stanger
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