



Pedal Pack

How to... set those wheels in motion!

New research shows that just 15 minutes exercise a day can halve a child's risk of becoming obese - cycling to school can be a great way of building exercise into children's daily routine. And with 20% of traffic at 8.50am on a school day morning generated by the school run, it will also help to ease congestion at the school gate. Plus we know that children who cycle to school arrive more alert and ready to learn – it really is better by bike.

Q. So, how do you encourage children to cycle to school?

A. Organise a bike to school event!

Leading sustainable transport charity, Sustrans, has drawn on ten years' of experience working with schools to create this free 'how to' pedalling pack, full of tips and advice on how to get in gear and organise a bike to school day or week.



The recipe for success

Try the following ingredients to get young people in gear:

- A bike breakfast – these create a big buzz with pupils and their families. Bacon butties, veggie sausages, fresh fruit and juice makes up a breakfast of champions. Local supermarkets could be persuaded to contribute.
- A raffle with bike-related prizes – local bike shops are great places to go for raffle prizes like bike bells and reflective bands, they may even give you a bike to give away as a grand prize. A raffle ticket system works as an incentive and helps record the number of cyclists, whilst parents cycling can earn an extra ticket for their child... the more they cycle, the better their chance of winning!
- Promote the event – make sure you let everybody know the event is happening through information stands or posters. This could include details on local cycle routes, training, the benefits of cycling, or progress charts. If you have managed to get a prize bike make sure it's on display leading up to the event to encourage more people to join in.
- Special guests and VIPs – mayors, councillors and local MPs regularly appear at cycle to school events - some have even been seen on their own bikes! Alternatively, is there a local cycling "hero" you can invite? Mountain bike champions, Olympic medallists, or cycling police and paramedics all help to create a lot of excitement.
- Cycle shop owners – it's good to invite staff from your local bike shop to the event. They could provide useful advice on all manner of things and are often able to run 'Dr. Bike' sessions to help teach pupils how to look after their wheels.
- Framed certificates of achievement – to award pupils for all their hard work. Have a short speech to congratulate them and do a hands-up count of those who want to keep cycling now they have tried it. Reward success and effort!
- Bike counts – nominate pupils to check how many bikes are parked in the school each day. They can report this to reception, or to the teacher leading the event.

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

www.sustrans.org.uk Tel: 0117 926 8893 Registered Charity No. 326550

Going the extra mile



You could try the following things to make your big bike bash even bigger:

- Family bike rides – getting parents or guardians involved with a ride on the weekend can help get them on board and have proved surprisingly popular.
- Poster competitions – let the pupils publicise the event, they will feel more involved and be more aware.
- ‘Go slow’ races – children test their cycle skills in the playground by cycling as slowly as they can.
- ‘Bling your bike’ – pupils show how much they love their wheels by decorating them for the day.
- Tot up the mileage – set a target of how many cycle miles the school can notch up in the week. Added together the mileage could get pupils to Paris, or even further (well virtually!)

Working in tandem

You are not alone! Sustrans' School Travel project offers free advice and resources, including information sheets, newsletters and a monthly e-bulletin with the latest news, stories, research and funding opportunities. Any questions we'll try and answer for you and if we can't we'll try and put you in touch with someone who can... including your local authority's School Travel Advisor.

Sustrans' School Travel Information Service

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Some wheely good ideas!

Every school and every event will be unique. But here are a few pearls of wisdom from Sustrans' experienced School Travel Team to help you along your way:

- Make it fun and include a budget to cover prizes, freebies and entertainment.
- Use the event to celebrate something special – a new route, crossing, entrance, bike shed, School Travel Plan... or perhaps just to celebrate the school's efforts to encourage more children to cycle.
- Publicise the event to parents and work closely with the school – letters home with consent slips greatly assist with planning and catering.
- Serve food and have something to watch or do whilst people are arriving and queuing.
- Invite local dignitaries, VIPs and celebrities.
- Think about the timing – will it conflict with any other events? Are other key people going to be available? Is the weather likely to be good? We have found just after Easter is popular.
- Think about making one element of it a regular, weekly or monthly event – this will help maintain all the excitement.
- Tell the local papers about all those bikes and smiling faces - it will make a great photo opportunity. And don't forget local radio, they might want to come down and interview some of the children.

Making tracks

Lots of people organise bike events in the annual Bike to School Week in April – but you can do it whenever suits you best. You can organise as many or as few aspects to the week as you like, but plan accordingly and gather as much help as you can from staff, pupils and parents. A sample timetable might look something like:

5

weeks before the event

- Get the OK from school management and confirm dates
- Decide on the budget
- Recruit volunteers to help organise/help at the event and have planning meeting 2 weeks before the event

2

weeks before the event

- Publicise the event in school newsletters, put posters up around school and send letters home with permission slips for photographs
- Give volunteers specific tasks for the event
- Confirm who is attending

4

weeks before the event

- Ask the local authority if they can help with information stand/resources
- Ask local cycle shop if they can help out
- Write to local businesses for prizes/donations

1

week before the event

- Tell your local press about the event
- Remind pupils in assembly
- Do risk assessment if needed
- Buy prizes/other kit needed
- Do a count of bikes before to show increase at event

3

weeks before the event

- Organise 'overflow' bike storage
- Decide on wet weather contingency plan
- If providing food, organise catering
- Pupils to design posters or banners



The day/week of the event

- Take lots of photos
- Count the number of cyclists
- Review the event and lessons learnt
- Keep momentum going!



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