SCHOOL TRAVEL

Information Pack
What is a school travel plan?
A School Travel Plan works by looking in detail at children’s needs on their school journey. Parents, governors, teachers and children work together to find the right solutions for their schools. By involving the Local Authority and other outside agencies it can be made safer and easier for children to walk, cycle or use public transport. A School Travel Plan (STP) can be geared to the needs of primary, secondary, special schools and colleges.

Why do we need a School Travel Plan?
It is estimated that the ‘school run’ is responsible for 1 in 5 cars on the roads during peak traffic times. Halton Borough Council is committed to promoting alternatives to the private car by building on current provision and working with schools and the community in general to develop new initiatives.

The aims of the School Travel Plan are to:
• Reduce traffic and pollution
• Increase levels of children walking, cycling and using public transport
• Reduce accident casualties
• Improve levels of health and fitness
• Reduce congestion at school gates
• Provide children with improved road awareness skills
• Involve children in the School Travel Plan Steering Group
• Provide an interesting focus for class work within the National Curriculum
• Build links within the while school community
• Make the area surrounding the school safer and more enjoyable for everyone

What are the Benefits of a School Travel Plan?

For the school
• Helps to improve accessibility to the school in a safer, healthier and more sustainable way
• Reduces traffic problems outside of the school gates
• Provides opportunities for learning
• Improves relationships with the school users and the local community
• Helps gain awards such as the Halton Healthy Schools Standard Award

For the pupils
• Improves road and personal safety skills and increases travel awareness
• Improves health and fitness through increased levels of walking and cycling
• Improves children’s behaviour
• Increases knowledge and awareness of the local environment and community

For the parents
• Reduces driving stress and improves journey quality
• Improves community awareness through working together
• Allows parents / carers to get involved with a school activity and feel they have contributed
• Allows parents / carers to make more informed choices about their child’s journey to school

For the local community
• Reduces the impact of the journey to school in the local community especially for those who reside directly outside of the school
• Enhances partnership working by involving local stakeholders in preparation of the plan

Key health facts
• Active travel to school can increase concentration by up to four hours
• The health benefits of cycling far outweigh the risks
• 15 minutes of exercise can improve a child’s mood
• The UK Chief Medical Officers recommend that 5- to 18-year-olds do 60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous exercise every day for health benefits
• Children who walk to primary school develop road safety awareness and are less vulnerable when they walk independently to secondary school
• Physical activity can encourage healthy growth and development, maintain a healthy weight and reduce anxiety and stress

Steps for creating a School Travel Plan

Step 1
Road Safety / Halton Health Improvement Team work with school to ascertain what travel plan arrangements are in place

Step 2
School identifies a ‘lead’ to work on STP

Step 3
School lead / Road Safety / Halton Health Improvement Team discuss possible recommendations for the School Travel Plan

Step 4
Assessing the risks – Road Safety and school lead to risk assess schools and surrounding areas to see what solutions are possible and which ones are not
Step 5
Consultation meeting at school to keep everyone informed – this will include school council. It is the working group’s responsibility to organise a consultation meeting at the school to inform parents, staff and residents of the schools intention for developing alternative transport initiatives. The aim of this meeting is to inform members of the community involved in the school of any proposals, receive feedback, recruit volunteers and deal with any objections. Please note feedback and objections should be documented and the working group must deal with these issues.

Action Plan ideas for the School Travel Action Plan

Cycle Permit Scheme
There are many ways a child can cycle to school safely, firstly a parent can escort their children to school by cycling alongside them or a child can attend a safer cycling course which will train them in road safety awareness and potential hazards and dangers whilst cycling.

Some schools operate a cycle permit scheme. This is a contract, drawn up between the school, the pupil and the parents, to out the conditions for cycling to school and obtain the parents’ consent. Permit forms can set out the schools cycling policy, while emphasising that the decision on whether the child is competent to cycle remains with the parent. Although we do advise that children cycling to school should be aged 10 or above. Booklets can also be provided for parents and pupils that contain advice on cycling safety. Schools need to decide what conditions they wish to attach to permits. These may, for example include:

- The bicycle is roadworthy and has passed a maintenance check
- The cyclist has completed an approved training course
- The bicycle will be securely locked in an approved area
- Cyclist follows a good cycling code
- Cycle helmets must be worn at all times

Park and Walk Scheme
A Park and Walk Scheme is organised for schools that are experiencing traffic related problems. Parents who are driving their children to school are encouraged to park away from the school grounds and park somewhere more appropriate like a local community centre car park.

The nominated car park that will be used to drop children off in the morning will be referred to as the Park and Walk Scheme ‘Drop Off Point’. At home time the nominated car park that will be used for parents to pick up their children after school will be referred to as the Park and Walk Scheme ‘Pick Up Point’, the car parks used do not necessarily have to be in the same location.

A small number of volunteers will then walk the children using a route that has been risk assessed by a Senior Traffic Engineer at Halton Borough Council. All volunteers will have full criminal disclosure checks, first aid and road safety training.

Walking Bus Scheme
Parents, volunteers or helpers, acting as ‘driver’ and ‘conductor’, escort a line of children on their journey to school. They walk along a set route collecting pupils at ‘bus stops’ on the way. It is powered by good old fashioned leg work, and promotes healthy exercise by encouraging walking, therefore reducing traffic and pollution near the school.

What are the benefits?
Walking is healthy, economical and fun. Not only will it give children the chance to develop their road skills but walking in numbers will add to everyone’s safety.

Setting up a ‘Walking Bus’ Scheme
Consultation with representatives from school, parents, road safety unit, police, highway engineers and health authority is essential when considering setting up the scheme.

To ensure that the bus runs smoothly a ‘Walking Bus Co-ordinator’ should be appointed. A parent or governor may be willing to take on their role even if they cannot act as a driver or conductor on the bus.

Getting support
Contact other parents to ask if they are interested in their children walking with the bus and which route they would walk. The success of the bus will depend on the level of support and on the completion of a satisfactory risk assessment.

Volunteers
All volunteer escorts must complete:

- A CRB enhanced disclosure
- Basic first aid training
- Road safety training
- A sight and hearing check (if required)
- All training is provided free

The volunteer will also be accompanied on the first official journey and regularly supervised. To be viable there must be sufficient adults to cover the journey to and from school for each route established. Once started, the bus will operate every day during term time, whatever the weather.

The maximum number of passengers on the bus should not exceed sixteen.

The suggested ratio is a minimum of:

- Adult to 8 junior age children
- Adult to every 4 infant age children
• Children under 7 years should hold hands

The number of adults should never fall below the recommended ratio but may depending upon circumstances be increased.

Preferred Routes to School Markings
As part of the school travel plan process, preferred walking routes to school are identified and can be highlighted in a range of footprints pavement markings that encourage children to walk and cross over the road in a more responsible way.

National Walk and Cycle to School Weeks
There are numerous regional and national walking and cycling campaigns that schools can take part in or include within their travel plan. Information concerning these campaigns will be distributed to all schools from the School Travel Plan Team or Halton Road Safety.

Walk to School Days
Schools are encouraged to have regular walk and/or cycle to school days, these can be organised as ‘Walk on Wednesday’ or ‘Fresh Aid Friday’ days. Schools can take part on a weekly, monthly or termly basis and can be used to promote the School Travel Plan and to raise awareness.
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<td>Don’t park on the Zig Zag Month</td>
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<td>Jun</td>
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