

Back to school

Advice for Parents and Carers wishing to make more journeys actively



Have you thought about how you will travel to school this year?

Did your family walk and cycle more often at Christmas and now you'd like to stay active on the school run too? Perhaps the way you work has changed and your own commute looks a little different.

Whatever your motivation for travelling actively, we have some tips to help you stay safe and relaxed on your journey to school...

YOU DECIDE

If you don't currently travel actively begin with just one or two days a week. Find a regular day that fits your schedule or nominate a special day of the week e.g. Walk on Wednesdays.

TAKE YOUR TIME

Give yourself a bit more time in the morning. People walking, running, scooting and cycling tend to arrive at school over a staggered time period so use this to your advantage and set off at a time that suits e.g. when the streets are quiet

TREAT YOURSELF

Upgrade your journey by adding an incentive; pass through your local park or stop at the swings at the end of the school day, treat yourself to a coffee on the way home from school in the morning. The brilliant thing about active travel is that you're not tied to one route and you're not worried about rush hour.

YOUR WAY

Try and find the route less travelled. It can be more interesting and pleasant to travel away from the busier roads.

MIX IT UP

Combine modes of transport depending on the age and ability of your family and the distance you need to travel to school. Cycling or walking the whole way might be too far at this stage, but a scooter is a great way for smaller children to cover greater distances with an adult walker.

TOO FAR?

If you have to travel to a different town for school, consider switching your mode of transport to Park and Stride. This means parking up at a safe place about 10 minutes walk from school and travelling the rest of the journey by an active mode. Scooters are great for this because they fold up easily to fit in the boot.

PRACTICE

Older pupils can walk and cycle with friends or siblings, developing important skills that will help them as they transition to secondary school. Cycling promotes independence and responsibility, and also helps pupils arrive to school feeling refreshed and ready to learn. To begin with you might prefer to meet them near the school or halfway home.

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 programme provides schools with the skills and knowledge to get more children walking, cycling and scooting as their main mode of transport to school.

Find out more at www.sustrans.org.uk/NIschools