



Road safety education in primary schools

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Road traffic accidents are one of the main causes of death and injury to children of school age. As a major countermeasure to this threat, road safety education is an essential part of a child's education.

It can contribute to the general educational goals of the whole curriculum by promoting moral, cultural, mental, and physical development and preparing children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

A recent national survey of schools provided a wealth of ideas from teachers for helping children to find out about:

- how to keep themselves and others safe, now and in the future;
- the road environment and how it functions;
- how to influence changes in that environment.

Many of these teaching ideas are provided in this guide. They demonstrate how road safety education may be either taught within personal, social and health education ((PSHE) has slightly different titles in Scotland and Wales) or integrated within curriculum subjects.

The DTLR Good Practice Guidelines give further suggestions for teaching road safety in primary schools: www.roads.dft.gov.uk/roadsafety/rs/primary/

The DTLR schools website contains primary school lesson plans in a number of curriculum subjects: www.databases.dft.gov.uk/primary

1.1 Getting your facts straight

Before reading any further, try this quiz (answers here).

	True	False
Where children live affects the likelihood of being injured as a pedestrian.		
Cycle accident injuries to children decrease with age.		
Children from ethnic minority families have more pedestrian accidents.		
More boys have accidents as passengers than girls do.		
Children from low income families are more likely to be pedestrian casualties.		

1.2 Where does it hurt?

...As a pedestrian

The number of injuries to child pedestrians on quiet roads increases quite quickly up to the age of seven. These children need carefully supervised practical training to recognise traffic dangers and develop safe strategies for the times when they are in the street unsupervised.

Children are more likely to be injured as pedestrians if:

- they are boys;
- their family has a low income;
- they are from ethnic minorities;
- they live in old terraced housing on straight roads.

...As a passenger

Injury as a passenger is quite common for primary age children. They need to understand why they should always use a child restraint or wear a seat belt when they are travelling in cars and any other vehicle where these are fitted.

They also need to understand that driving requires concentration and that passengers should behave in a manner that does not distract or upset the driver.

More girls get injured as passengers because:

- they are probably transported by cars more often than boys

..As a cyclist

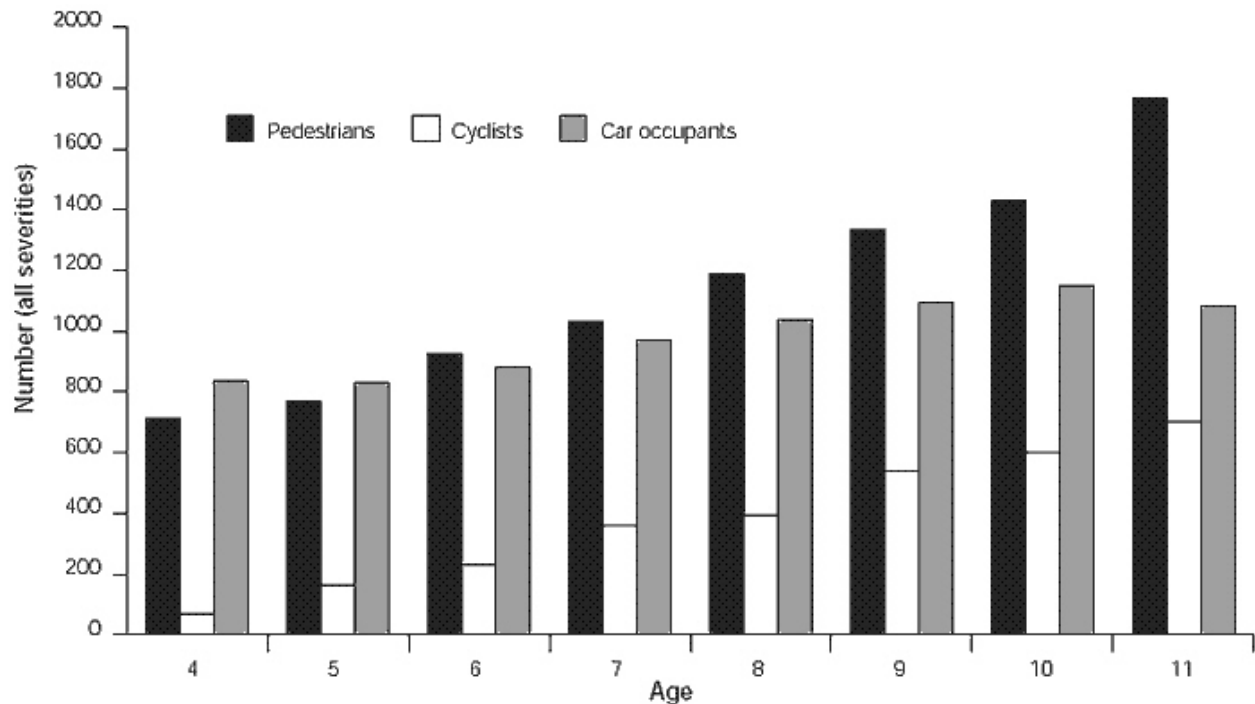
The number of child cyclist injuries increases steadily with age throughout the primary years. Many more child cyclists are injured in accidents than are reported to the police.

Children need to know how to control their bicycle and ride safely even if they only cycle away from roads. They should be encouraged to wear a cycle helmet when cycling and be trained before riding unaccompanied on the road. This will help them to be safer cyclists both on and off roads.

Cyclist casualties are more often boys because:

- they cycle more than girls and their play patterns are different.

Road accident casualties (GB 2000)



1.3 Who can help?

A safe road environment is not the responsibility of schools but they have an important role to play in helping to provide a safety education for all their pupils.

Many of the schools that took part in this project had developed very useful working partnerships with external agencies, such as road safety units, the police and health promotion units.

Road safety units

There may be local variations in the service, but the road safety officer is a valuable resource who may be able to provide:

- school policy guidance;
- curriculum planning advice;
- school travel plans;
- local/national accident information;
- teaching materials and resources/catalogue;
- in-service training for governors and teachers;
- practical training programmes both for pedestrians and cyclists;
- talking to parents and/or children;
- taking children and parents on a walk near the school;
- running/organising events such as *Crucial Crew* or *Safety in Action Week* in conjunction with other agencies such as health;
- Theatre in Education;
- safer routes to school initiatives;
- visiting schools with a mobile road safety exhibition.

The police

Often the local police and road safety unit work together on different elements of a road safety programme. Again there are likely to be local variations but support might include:

- assistance with external activities;
- discussion of safety issues as part of the curriculum;
- support for publicity campaigns.

Health promotion units

Health promotion officers, in partnership with road safety officers and the police, also provide support for road safety education initiatives. Support may be part of wider health and safety initiatives and could include:

- information and advice on safety issues;
- safer routes to school initiatives;
- catalogue of resources;
- *Healthy School Award* scheme.

Chapter 2 Developing a road safety policy

Writing a policy helps schools to focus on road safety education. Schools with a policy tend to deliver road safety education more successfully than other schools. Preparing a policy is a task that governors and staff can undertake as a team. Just as the teaching methods and content in other curriculum areas are developed to suit the needs of pupils, so road safety needs to match the needs of primary children. Road

safety education helps children to take responsibility for their own safety and to consider the needs of others.

All schools will be concerned with providing a safe environment and encouraging safety awareness in teachers and pupils. Many schools will have developed safe practices and may already include road safety education within the curriculum. Not all schools will have developed a formal policy. A road safety policy may be discrete or part of a more general policy on health and safety.

Schools do not have to work alone. External agencies may be willing to provide professional expertise on developing a policy and give curriculum support for road safety.

Any policy on road safety will be specific to the individual school. The road environment of the school and catchment area will influence the road safety policy. The specific needs of the students, relationships with parents and the support of the community are also important.

Extracts from several schools' policies are given here as examples. A sample road safety policy is included in this document.

2.1 Policy statements

The policy statement may outline specific responsibilities for road safety. It could indicate the level of responsibility and safe practices provided by the school and that of the pupils and parents/carers.

Implementation of the policy is likely to be through safe practices adopted:

- in and around the school and related journeys;
- as part of the safety education the children receive within the curriculum.

Examples include:

- to make it safer for pupils to come to and from school and to give them wider knowledge of safety issues;
- to make pupils aware of the importance of safety and the dangers associated with the traffic environment;
- to help pupils acquire the necessary skills, values and concepts in order to carry out safe practices in the environment;
- to assist and encourage parents to influence and develop the safety awareness skills of their children;
- to encourage pupils to walk or cycle where these are both appropriate and safe.

2.2 Policy management

Policy management is likely to involve the Head, a Deputy Head, or a teacher with special responsibility for PSHE. An important part of that responsibility is ensuring that road safety in the school is planned and monitored. Planning is necessary so that the road safety education curriculum is appropriate for the age, ability and environment of the children. A planned approach also makes it easier to prevent repetition and omissions as well as helping external agencies provide support.

Responsibility for implementation and monitoring might include consideration of the following:

2.3 People and progress

- nominating a governor and teachers with a road safety responsibility;
- informing school staff;
- encouraging pupil participation in policy development and monitoring;
- telling the parents of new pupils about the school policy before their children join the school;
- keeping parents/carers and Friends of the School groups informed on road safety issues;
- reviewing and developing the policy.

2.4 Safety practices

Identifying safe practices could include considering:

- school transport;
- school vehicles;
- school trips;
- the pupils journeys to and from school, especially arriving and leaving;
- bicycles;
- school uniform/clothing;
- dangerous behaviour.

2.5 The curriculum

In primary schools, road safety education can be delivered as part of:

- topics;
- personal and social education programmes;
- national curriculum subjects;
- practical training and activities;
- special events.

Chapter 3 Example road safety policy document

3.1 Policy statement

The responsibility for road safety for pupils is a joint role between the teachers, governors, parents/carers, and the pupils. That responsibility includes setting an appropriate example. The school will identify and implement safe practices during school activities.

A structured plan of road safety education is regarded as:

- an important and integrated part of safety and health education taught in school as part of a planned and monitored curriculum;
- preparation for pupils to be safer road users throughout their lives.

3.2 Safe practices

School transport

- the school buses have a designated drop-off and pick-up point;
- the waiting areas are clearly explained to all new pupils and safety issues discussed;
- senior staff will supervise the bus area at the end of the school day.

School vehicles

- the school minibus will be serviced at intervals recommended by the manufacturer;
- all staff driving the minibus will have completed a Minibus Driving Course;
- seat belts are fitted in all passenger carrying vehicles;
- seat belt use is mandatory.

School trips

- safety procedures are recognised as a factor when planning a school visit;
- specific practices are identified as appropriate for each trip;
- safe pupil behaviour is expected;
- parental consent for all trips is obtained.

The school gates

- clearly marked entrances and exits are provided all new pupils and parents are made aware of procedures;
- parents are informed of where to park when visiting the school both during the day and on parents evenings;
- pupils who assist with parking at school events will wear reflective/fluorescent clothing;
- parents are encouraged not to bring their children to school by car.

Bicycles

- all pupils who cycle to school will be expected to have completed cyclist training;
- pupils are encouraged to wear safety helmets;
- bicycles are stored in a cycle rack and have to be properly secured.

School uniform

- for safety, pupils are allowed to add reflective safety aids to the school uniform.

School premises

- the school should be kept secure to prevent children leaving the premises and to monitor visitors.

3.3 Planning

Planning is needed to give a developmental structure, so that all children receive road safety education appropriate to their age and ability. Two kinds of plan are required:

- a general plan of the curriculum showing where road safety education fits into subjects and/or topics;
- a detailed plan by the teacher of exactly what is to be contained in the lessons.

3.4 Broad road safety education guidelines

Road safety education builds upon the work done by parents, carers and pre-school groups. This will vary enormously and primary schools have an important role to play in providing a relevant and progressive road safety education for ALL their pupils.

Objectives for pupils

- to understand the traffic environment;
- to develop self-esteem and valuing others;
- to develop independence with responsibility;
- to know how to use roads safely.

Objectives for staff

- to ensure continuity and progression;
- to monitor and evaluate the programme continuously to ensure change and development.

Curriculum objectives for Key Stage 1

Children should always:

- be protected, supervised and accompanied on any school activities off the premises;
- walk on the pavement where appropriate;
- recognise that roads are for traffic, pavements are for people;
- recognise features of their local roads and the people who will help them to cross the road;
- distinguish between safe and unsafe places to walk and to cross roads;
- know that they must stop at the edge of the carriageway, look all around and listen before crossing;
- recognise and play in safe places;
- develop the ability to keep themselves safe.

Curriculum objectives for Key Stage 2

Pupils should:

- know the safest route to school;
- know how to travel safely to and from school;
- understand and use the principles of the Green Cross Code;
- know that there are rules governing the behaviour of pedestrians and traffic;
- understand the problems faced by all road users, particularly problems associated with conspicuity and with the effects of weather;
- understand that traffic accidents cause avoidable deaths and injuries;
- be given the opportunity to take cyclist training.

Chapter 4 Opportunities to implement road safety education

DTLR recognises that road safety education is just one issue within the safety element of health education. But it is an important issue for pupils at primary level, who are beginning to make independent journeys on foot, by bicycle and by public transport. The safety lessons learnt at primary school should help to establish a sound basis for safer behaviour as pedestrians and cyclists and prepare children for the transition to secondary school and associated freedoms.

4.1 Before children start school

A good time to raise road safety issues with parents is when their children are about to start school. The local road safety officer (RSO) may be willing to attend and/or provide information such as leaflets for the parents explaining ways to keep their children safe. Some schools have a letter or agreement for the parents to sign that outlines parental responsibilities for the safety of their children on the roads.

Points to discuss with the parents include:

The advantages of parents walking to school with their children;

- daily exercise;
- fresh air;
- a time to talk to the child;
- an opportunity for parents to practice road safety with their child;

Information for walking to school;

- guidance on how to teach road safety to their children;
- effects of different weather conditions on safety;
- planning the route to use protected crossing places;
- walking on roads where there are no footways or crossing places;
- being seen by other road users;

Information for parents who use a car to take their children to school;

- make sure children always wear a safety belt in the car;
- park away from the school entrance and take a short walk to the school;
- ensure that children get out of the car onto the footway and not the road.

In addition, this meeting gives the school an opportunity to explain to parents:

- the policy of the school when taking pupils on outings;
- the possible need for parents to act as volunteer helpers to accompany children on school outings or to help with activities such as pedestrian training and cycle training.

4.2 Developing responsibility

Road safety education should not be limited to the didactic presentation of a general set of safety rules. It should aim to develop pupils understanding of the dangers of traffic so that they develop safer strategies appropriate to their own circumstances. Such learning can contribute to the non-statutory citizenship education at key stages 1 and 2. Possible activities include:

- school parliaments;
- pupil road safety committees;
- junior road safety officers.

4.3 School outings and visits

There are opportunities for road safety education whenever pupils go off the school site for example, regular trips to the local swimming pool or special visits. A school policy can be agreed so that all members of staff and volunteer helpers know what is expected when pupils are out of school for example:

- pupils holding hands when walking, not running, and keeping in an orderly line;
- adults walking on the outside edge of the footway;
- adults supervising all road crossings;
- use of seat belts where available on coaches;
- staying in their seats;
- orderly queuing for buses and trains.

4.4 Safe routes to school

Every child is entitled to a safer journey to and from school. To help parents, teachers and governors, a guide called *A Safer Journey to School* ¹ was made available for schools. The guide sets out how schools can develop a school travel plan. A school travel plan is a series of practical steps for improving children's safety on the school journey.

Some schools have carried out surveys of the most frequently used routes and then recorded these with notes on the safest crossing places so that they are available for all parents and pupils to follow. This can also lead to the identification of possible improvements e.g. a request to the local council for a school

crossing patrol or pelican crossing.

4.5 Healthy schools programme

Road safety work can be part of these schemes with pupils studying the local area and identifying safe routes to school.

4.6 Walk to school week

The school may wish to use this national event as an occasion to encourage children to walk to school and highlight road safety. It is possible to have an individual school initiative more often, for example, once a term, and pupils could monitor its success by undertaking a survey of the number of pupils walking in different weeks.

4.7 Road safety week

In some schools, a *Road Safety* or general *Safety Week* is used as a focus for staff, pupils and parents with events covering all age groups, for example:

- the local RSO will provide many resources such as videos, fluorescent and reflective materials, local accident data, equipment to set up a road system in the playground or hall, pamphlets for parents;
- parents can be encouraged to assist with activities and attend special assemblies and meetings;
- the local police, fire and ambulance personnel may be willing to give talks and demonstrations;
- the local garage could be asked to bring along a crashed car. Also it may be possible for the pupils to inspect a large lorry to understand its size and problems of stopping and manoeuvring;
- parents who have had experience of accidents could talk with small groups;
- pupils can prepare displays, take part in poster design competitions and quizzes, make books for younger children and give presentations in assemblies.

4.8 Village schools

Children living in rural areas face very different problems from children living in urban areas. Examples of helping children from rural areas cope in an urban road environment (and vice versa) include:

- pairing with an urban school, in the same or nearby authority, to help children experience different environments;
- arranging class outings with the road safety officer to a nearby town, where the children can experience a planned traffic trail;
- investigating the specific problems of transport and travel in rural areas, the types of traffic using the roads and safety issues relating to walking, cycling and horse riding.

1 Transport 2000 (1999). A safer journey to school. London: Transport 2000 Trust. September 2001

Chapter 5 Key Stage 1 teaching ideas

The teaching ideas listed in this and the following chapter are examples that were mentioned by the primary school teachers who were interviewed about their good practice. Resources and more detailed descriptions of these items may be obtained by consulting the local road safety officer.

5.1 Topics

There are many topics at Key Stage 1 which can include aspects of road safety education:

- Colours
- Home/Where We Live
- Journeys
- Light and Sound
- Materials
- My Family
- My School
- Myself
- Our village/Neighbourhood
- Out and About
- People Who Help Us
- Seasons
- Shopping
- Toys
- Traffic
- Travelling to School
- Weather
- Wheels

5.2 The curriculum

Art

Making signs and symbols to use around the school.

English/literacy hour

Look at the way signs and symbols including road traffic signs give messages. Stories and poems related to roads, traffic and journeys.

Geography

Study of the local area and possible comparisons with another area visited.

History

Comparing life in the past with today. Consider means of transport and its implications for everyday life.

Mathematics/numeracy hour

Identification of colour, shapes, sets, e.g. simple traffic survey counts by colour of vehicles, then by type and size of vehicle. Comparing size of different vehicles, and comparing to child. Shapes of different road signs.

Physical Education

Stopping at a given signal (sound, display of a particular symbol), stopping in a given place.

PSHE

Keeping myself safe, things which can cause accidents especially in the traffic environment.

Science

Comparison of materials used in vehicles, comparing hardness of vehicle and softness of human body. Weather conditions related to road safety. Use of the five senses and their relevance to road safety. Identifying traffic sounds.

5.3 Pedestrian training

This can be undertaken in small groups with adult volunteers who will take out just two or three children at a time. Various resources are available to help with pedestrian training for example, *Kerbcraft*, *Footsteps*, *Lets Decide Walkwise*.

Ideally it should occur in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 with a gradual progression as the pupils mature and develop greater understanding of road safety. For example:

- Reception the pupils go out to look at the local environment, identify different types of vehicles, road signs, street furniture, protected crossing places. Discuss how they should behave near roads, always hold hands, only cross roads with an adult;
- Year 1 in small groups on quiet roads looking for suitable places to cross, always with an adult, developing the stop, look, listen, think routine;
- Year 2 identifying hazards such as parked cars, bends, vehicles approaching from different directions. Crossing practice, with adults, on quiet roads and at protected crossing places.

5.4 Activities and events

If the school has a Crossing Patrol Warden, she or he may be willing to come into school and talk to the pupils about their job and how the children should use the crossing patrol.

- Special events such as Walk to School Week and Safety Week.
- Theatre in Education and Roadshows which are usually co-ordinated by the local road safety officer and can be accompanied by follow-up work.

Chapter 6 Key Stage 2 teaching ideas

6.1 Topics

There are many topics at Key Stage 2 that can include aspects of road safety education:

- Comparative studies of different areas
- Environment study
- Life cycles
- Light
- Local area study
- Moving on (particularly for last year of primary school)
- Personal safety
- Safe Places to Play
- Social development
- The human body
- Transport/Wheels/Moving things
- Weather

6.2 The curriculum

Art

Design of road safety posters.

English/literacy hour

Looking at different types of writing and producing their own examples such as newspaper reports, road safety booklets, poetry, stories and dramas for younger pupils. Giving talks in assembly about road safety issues. Organising petitions and written evidence to the local council concerning local crossing places. Information to parents about not parking near the school.

Geography

Study of the local area, comparing with other areas, mapping safe routes to school, impact of local developments on the environment.

History

The importance of developments in transport systems.

Mathematics/numeracy hour

Surveys on methods of travelling to school, handling accident statistics data, stopping distances, speed, survey of traffic flows at different times of the day.

PSHE

Looking at the causes of accidents and their impact on everyone concerned, how to cope in an emergency situation, respect for yourself and others, self-esteem.

Science

Study of motion, forces and friction in relation to vehicles. Use of reflective and fluorescent materials to aid conspicuity in different light conditions.

Technology

Design of ramps for the disabled, making working models of traffic lights, testing different material.

6.3 Pedestrian training

This can be developed, building on the foundations from Key Stage 1. Some schools are involved in training schemes that lead to a pedestrian award or certificate.

Pupils can be taken out in groups to:

- study the local road environment, identify hazards and consider safer routes to use and safer places to cross;
- learn to use the *Green Cross Code*;
- learn to cross roads independently.

6.4 Cyclist training

This is usually provided in Year 6, although sometimes in Year 5. Schemes vary from one area to another but usually information and guidance can be obtained from your local road safety officer.

The cyclist training may be playground based, road based or a combination of the two and may be assessed. There may be theory work included as well as basic cycle maintenance and safety checks on cycles. Other safety work can be built around cyclist training.

6.5 Activities and events

Crucial crew/junior citizenship

Although the local name may vary, road safety is one activity along with other special scenarios that involve agencies such as the police, fire and ambulance services.

Police course

An accident is staged along with a court scene. This involves pupils in role play to evaluate their own behaviour and the way in which others were affected.

Visits

Visits by the fire service and first aid personnel can be arranged. It might be possible for the visit to include a simulation of a road traffic accident so that first aid can be demonstrated.

Traffic trails

Focus on safety and studying traffic conditions with the use of maps, surveys and orienteering.

Pupil councils and committees

Some of these focus only on road safety and others have a more general interest but include road safety. They can study safer routes to school, parental parking, and the general safety environment of the school and then communicate their findings via letters, leaflets, talks to other pupils, production of a video or photos, posters and displays.

Junior road safety officers

In some schools pupils from Year 6 are chosen to be Junior RSOs and act as an intermediary between the local RSO and the school, distributing leaflets and information and encouraging pupils to participate in various types of road safety competitions and events.

Fashion show

Based around the theme of Be Safe, Be Seen. Pupils dressed in different types of clothing and the audience, using torches, had to decide who could most easily be seen.

Theatre in education

Performances are usually organised by the local road safety officer and can be accompanied by follow-up work.

Chapter 7 A safe transfer from primary to secondary school

When children transfer from primary to secondary school, they are likely to be both excited and apprehensive. With all the changes, many children might not even think about how the move will affect their journey or their safety. Child pedestrian casualties peak at age 12 the age at which most children move on to secondary school. The higher risk of involvement in a road accident may be because:

- children are given more independence;
- the number of journeys made increases;
- longer distances are travelled;
- busier roads are used.

Opportunities exist for including road safety education within the transfer process from primary to secondary school. Examples provided by schools included

7.1 At primary school

- Before induction visits to their secondary school, pupils are asked to plan their journeys and consider potential hazards and the strategies to deal with them.
- Pupils make the journey on induction day as they will travel when they attend secondary school.
- Secondary liaison teachers visit the primary school; school safety and travel information are included in their talks to children.
- Secondary staff teach sessions in the primary schools and run a Saturday School for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Issues covered include travelling to school, racism and bullying.

7.2 At secondary school

- All new pupils are given a booklet that includes safe travel information.
- At induction days, safe practices in and around the school site are emphasised as well as safe travel to school.
- Road safety issues are included as part of the induction programme in the autumn term in PSHE lessons. The programme includes looking at statistics, planning routes and spotting hazards, and passenger behaviour.

7.3 Parents

- At the open evening for new parents in the summer term, safe school travel and on-site safety are discussed.
- The admission details sent to parents include information on the school road safety policy.
- Advice and suggestions for parents about personal safety (including road safety) and their children is

provided.

- Advice on the law relating to the use of seat belts in cars and on buses.

Chapter 8 Further information

8.1 Publications



Making Choices - Moving on to Secondary School

Copies of the ideas booklet for schools, and the booklets for children and for parents, are available free of charge from

DfT Free Literature
PO Box 236
Wetherby
LS23 7NB
Tel No: 0870 1226 236
Fax No: 0870 1226 237
Email: dft@woten.press.net

A Safer Journey to School

Copies of this guide are available free of charge from

DfES Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
Nottingham NG15 0DJ

8.2 Websites

Try some of the Government Departments for more information. The Internet may provide the easiest and quickest access to more material. Many Local Authorities also have their own web site.

Department for Transport
www.dft.gov.uk

Department for Transport schools website
<http://www.databases.dft.gov.uk/lessonplans/>

Department for Transport school travel website
www.local-transport.dft.gov.uk/schooltravel

Department for Transport Road Safety Education in Schools: Good Practice Guidelines Primary Schools
www.roads.dft.gov.uk/roadsafety/rs/primary/

Department of Health
www.doh.gov.uk

Department for Education and Skills
www.dfes.gov.uk

Home Office
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Scottish Executive
www.scotland.gov.uk

National Assembly for Wales
www.wales.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Office
www.nio.gov.uk/

Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association
www.larsoa.org.uk

Index to UK national and local government sites
www.direct.gov.uk/QuickFind/LocalCouncils/fs/en

Answers to quiz on page 1.
1 True; 2 False; 3 True; 4 False; 5 True.