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## Road safety education in secondary schools

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The BITER and TRL research involved postal questionnaire surveys of Road Safety Officers (RSOs), Police Forces, Health Promotion Officers, and schools and colleges within the UK. Face to face interviews were held with the officials in the Government Departments with policy responsibilities for road safety education. Additional face to face interviews were held with a sample of the respondents to the postal questionnaire, who were involved in an extensive programme, promoting road safety education and training.

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Oakfield School; Wolverhampton, Colton Hills Community School; Worcestershire, The Leys High School.

## 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 DfT Good Practice Guidelines give further suggestions for teaching road safety in secondary schools: [www.roads.dft.gov.uk/roadsafety/rs/secondary](http://www.roads.dft.gov.uk/roadsafety/rs/secondary)

**The DfT schools website contains secondary school lesson plans in a variety of curriculum subjects:**  
<http://www.databases.dft.gov.uk/secondary>

### 1.1 Who has road accidents?

- Accidents in general and road accidents in particular are a serious threat to the health of children and young adults. On average, out of a class of 30, two will be killed or injured in a road accident before their seventeenth birthday.
- Children over the age of 11 are more likely to be involved in a road accident on major roads.
- Child pedestrian casualties peak at age 12 the age at which most children move on to secondary school.
- Child cyclist casualties peak at age 14.
- Casualties to car drivers and passengers increase dramatically from age 14 through to the late teens.

Most road accidents are preventable and can be reduced through measures which include education, training and environmental improvements.

As a teacher, you can make a difference.

## **Road accident casualties (GB 2000)**

### Road accident casualties (GB 2000)

## **1.2 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 who 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.

## **1.3 Road safety units**

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

- school policy guidance;
- curriculum planning advice;
- local/national accident information;
- teaching materials and resources/catalogues;
- in-service training governors and teachers;
- cyclist training;
- school travel plan initiatives;
- talks to parents;
- organising safety events;
- theatre in education;
- pre-driver courses.

## **1.4 The police**

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

- assistance with pre-driver programmes;
- discussion of safety issues as part of the curriculum;
- support for publicity campaigns.

## **1.5 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;
- in-service training governors and teachers.

## Chapter 2 Developing a road safety policy

Just as the teaching methods and content in other curriculum areas are developed to suit the needs of pupils, so road safety issues must match the maturity of teenagers and young adults. By the time students are in secondary school, road safety education is not only about following rules but also about making safer decisions.

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.

Writing a policy helps schools to focus on road safety education and safer travel. Governors and staff usually work together to prepare a policy, often with help from the road safety officer. Schools that have a policy are generally more successful in teaching road safety education and monitoring safety practices.

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.

For example, a guide called *A Safer Journey to School* <sup>1</sup> is available to help parents, teachers and governors develop a school travel plan. A school travel plan is a series of practical steps for improving childrens safety on the school journey.

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 also provided.

### 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 pupils 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 ensure that safety is considered when encouraging students to walk or cycle.

## **2.2 Policy management**

Policy management is likely to involve the senior management team and/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 a consideration of the following:

### **PEOPLE AND PROGRESS**

- nominating a governor and a senior teacher(s) with a road safety responsibility;
- informing school staff;
- encouraging student participation in policy development and monitoring;
- telling the parents of new students about the school policy before their children join the school;
- keeping parents/carers and the parent/teacher association informed on road safety issues;
- reviewing and developing the policy.

### **SAFETY PRACTICES**

Identifying safe practices could include considering:

- school transport;
- school vehicles;
- school trips;
- the school gates;
- bicycles;
- school uniform/clothing;
- journey to and from school;
- dangerous behaviour.

## THE CURRICULUM

In secondary schools, road safety education is usually delivered as part of:

- PSHE programmes;
- curriculum subjects;
- practical training and activities;
- special events.

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

## 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 and 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 essential and integrated part of safety and health education taught in school as part of a planned and monitored curriculum;
- essential preparation for pupils to be lifelong road users.

### 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.

## **3.3 Broad road safety education guidelines**

Road safety education builds upon the work done in primary schools. It would be expected that new pupils would have been introduced to safe patterns of pedestrian, passenger and cyclist behaviour. It would be hoped that new pupils would have been encouraged to develop an awareness of the behaviour of other road users and sensitivity towards others in their road use.

### OBJECTIVES FOR PUPILS

- The development of self-esteem and valuing others.
- Decision-making combined with an understanding of the consequences of choices.
- Knowing how to use roads safely.

### OBJECTIVES FOR STAFF

- Monitoring and evaluating the programme continuously with a view to change and development.
- Ensuring continuity and progression.

### CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES FOR YEARS 7, 8, 9 (KEY STAGE 3)

Pupils should:

- be given the opportunity to investigate the local road environment, consider the safety aspects of traffic movement and identify hazards;
- develop an understanding of how accidents happen, of common accident situations, particularly those involving this age group;
- be encouraged to think clearly about their own and other peoples use of the roads as pedestrians, cyclists and passengers;
- consider the consequences of an accident and the effect of those involved, their families and friends;

- be given the opportunity to take cyclist training if they have not already done so.

## CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES FOR YEARS 10, 11, 12, 13 (KEY STAGE 4 AND SIXTH FORM)

Pupils should:

- be encouraged to explore and understand their own behaviour relating to road use both as an individual and also as a member of a group;
- understand the effect of alcohol and other drugs on the body's physical and mental performance particularly the detrimental effect on pedestrian and driving skills;
- be able to make informed decisions about drinking and road use;
- be encouraged to consider how best to reduce the probability and consequences of road accidents;
- be given the opportunity to explore the transport options open to them and decide which best meets their needs, wants and resources, taking into account training, safety factors, legal requirements and environmental consequences.

## Chapter 4 Road safety education and the curriculum

DfT recognises that road safety education is just one issue within the safety element of health education. But it is an important issue for students at secondary level, who are beginning to experience a wide range of opportunities for independent travel. The safety lessons learnt at school should help to establish a sound basis for safer behaviour as adult road users.

The inclusion of road safety education in the curriculum will vary depending on how each school organises the timetable. Road safety education is most likely to be part of a PSHE programme. The organisation, structure and extent of these programmes vary widely. They could be a specific timetabled subject or part of the general tutorial programme, or integrated within curriculum subjects.

Within a PSHE programme, road safety education could be:

- offered as a discrete topic;
- offered as part of a module on safety or personal safety;
- included within themes such as responsibility, citizenship, leisure, relationships etc;
- promoted as part of events for example, theatre in education performances.

Within curriculum subjects, road safety education could be offered:

- as a specific lifeskills option;
- within national curriculum subjects;
- as an examination or certificated course.

Practical activities might include:

- pedestrian awareness training;
- cyclist training;
- pre-driver training.

Events are often additions to the normal curriculum and could include:

- walk and cycle to school days;
- citizenship day;
- theatre in education;
- suspended timetable safety day.

All these practical examples are being used in secondary schools.

## **Chapter 5 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 the schools interviewed included:

### **5.1 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.

### **5.2 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.

## 5.3 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 6 Key Stage 3 teaching ideas

The teaching ideas, listed below and in the two following chapters, are examples that were mentioned by the secondary 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.

### 6.1 PSHE and CITIZENSHIP

Personal safety programmes, many of which emphasise issues relating to routes to and from school, provide many opportunities for the teaching of road safety education. Examples include:

- A half term module that includes a risk analysis of the outside of the school.
- Two modules **Being Safe on the Road and Home Safe** cover coping with a range of potential dangers.
- Road safety can be easily incorporated into the **Looking after Yourself** module.
- **Routes to school** a programme covering looking at the statistics for this age group; planning the route from home to school; and spotting hazards.
- **Looking after others** It includes developing ideas about road safety for younger children. Arranging for Year 8 children to visit primary schools and work with Year 6 extends the programme.
- **Risk assessment** a road safety course (3 4 lessons) which looks at minimising risk.
- **First aid** including dealing with the aftermath of a road accident.
- **Truth behind statistics** a unit that uses road accident statistics. Students use IT to draw graphs and see how statistics can be distorted. They also use accident reports to work back from the data to the actual accident.
- **Taking and driving away** the police give talks on twocking (taking without consent) and discuss with students the issues and the possible consequences.

### 6.2 Other curriculum subjects

#### ART

- Road safety advice is designed and produced (poster or leaflet) for pupils in feeder primary schools. There is a competition to find the best designs. Some students develop their designs using computers.

## DRAMA

- Theatre in Education visits are followed up by encouraging pupils to write and perform short plays on safety issues that are relevant to them.

## ENGLISH

- Students are asked to discuss and write about their experiences of pedestrian training and cyclist training. They have to think about the training programme, what they learned, the way it was taught and the relevance to their age group.

## GEOGRAPHY

- Planning safe routes to school and other places includes map making and map reading skills. Discussion of the routes includes safety concerns and the behaviour of road users.

## MATHEMATICS

- Students undertook a seat belt survey before and after a police seat belt wearing campaign. The results were presented at a parents evening.

## TECHNOLOGY

- The design of traffic lights taking account of speed, distance and stopping distances. Speed data was collected outside school using a radar gun. Average speeds and stopping distances were calculated from the obtained data. The students have to report the results and comment on the safety implications and consequences of inappropriate stopping distances.

## **6.3 Activities**

### BUSES

- The local bus company is invited into the school to provide training on the safe use of buses.

### CYCLISTS

- Cyclist training courses are organised for pupils who did not take cyclist training at primary school.
- An assembly on cycling is held every September. Students are asked if they want to ride to school. The local RSO runs a course at the school, giving priority to those who have not already passed a cyclist training course.
- Advanced cycling courses are organised to help children with their longer journeys on busier roads.
- Advanced cycling courses have been run with sixth formers being trained as instructors. Originally, the pupils who had to take the course were those caught cycling irresponsibly; now it is open to all pupils at Key Stage 3. The sixth form instructors add the experience to their CV.

### PEDESTRIANS

- Year 7 pupils are taken to nearby quiet roads by teachers (assisted by parent helpers) to undertake practical pedestrian training.
- At the start of the Autumn Term, Year 7 pupils are let out ten minutes early and escorted to buses and the school exits.

## 6.4 Events

### THEATRE IN EDUCATION (TIE)

- TIE productions that include a road safety theme involve the students because of the way in which the issues are presented and, more importantly, because of the discussion and workshops that follow.
- The local authority usually arranges TIE; themes covered include pedestrian behaviour, cyclist issues and environmental concerns.

### END OF BRITISH SUMMER TIME

- The clocks going back provides a focus for students to work on conspicuity this includes designing clothing as well as discussing behaviour and being seen.
- A whole unit of Health and Safety with road safety at its core is programmed to coincide with the end of BST.

### CYCLE TO SCHOOL DAY

- Occasionally a teacher organises a Cycle to School day where he or she joins pupils who live at a far point from school and, using a pre-planned route with timings, is joined by more and more cyclists as they near the school.

## Chapter 7 Key Stage 4 teaching ideas

### 7.1 PSHE and CITIZENSHIP

- **Citizenship** one module on driver and passenger education. It includes six freestanding lessons based on: driver behaviour, passenger behaviour, travel choices, risk perception, vision perception and traffic law.
- **Crime and Punishment** a module looking at joyriding and its effects.
- **Personal safety** the Suzy Lamplugh Trust pack on travelling is used to emphasise personal safety issues.
- **Road Awareness** an eight-hour programme in the Spring Term whose main strands are the Highway Code, the Driving Theory Test and car maintenance and practical driving.
- **Substance abuse** within this general issue the problems of alcohol and other drugs and driving are raised.
- **Young Drivers** a seven two-hour session module that focuses on young drivers and passengers, their relationships with cars and the images of cars.

## 7.2 Other curriculum subjects

Examples include:

### DRAMA

- Theatre in Education productions dealing with safety issues provide a focus for students GCSE course work in Drama. This could include presentations to other year groups.

### ENGLISH

- Road safety material and media copy about car advertisements provide a context for considering how information is presented and how methods of persuasion are used for different target groups.

### MATHEMATICS

- Accident data from the local road safety officer is used as a secondary source. Surveys based on local road safety issues have also been carried out. Students can relate their work to the real world.

### SCIENCE

- When considering health issues the effect of alcohol and drugs on the ability to drive is considered and discussed.
- Factors affecting vehicle stopping distances are investigated this topic is easy to link to what students see happening in real life.

## 7.3 GCSE Courses

- Automotive Studies is offered as a GCSE option using the OCR (MEG) Design and Technology 1458 syllabus. Safety aspects are included as part of this course.
- A GCSE in Road Traffic Studies is available in Northern Ireland.

## 7.4 Other certificated courses

- A road traffic studies course is made available within the options programme for Years 10 and 11. The course comes within the Technology curriculum and can lead to a special Certificate in Road Traffic Studies issued by the local authority.

## 7.5 Activities

- Moped and motorcyclist training is offered as an option in Years 10 and 11 using mopeds owned and maintained by the school.
- A local driving school offers free theory and practical driving opportunities after school.

## 7.6 Events

- A first aid day with the fire brigade and ambulance services staging a mock accident.
- Under the Magistrates in the Community initiative, local magistrates come and run mock court scenes in the school. One scenario involves a road accident.
- A citizenship day run by the police included issues such as the documentation required to drive a car and reconstructing an accident.
- Theatre in Education productions have been based on safety themes such as speed, drink driving and joyriding.

## Chapter 8 Post-16 teaching ideas

From age 16 through to the late teens, casualties to car users (drivers and passengers) increase dramatically.

### 8.1 PSHE

Pre-driver training courses are offered in many schools using outside trainers such as Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs), police officers or the local road safety officer.

Examples of classroom-based activities include:

- A pre-driver course has been organised as part of the Sixth Form complementary studies programme. Students are encouraged to take lessons with ADIs outside school hours.
- A local ADI delivers a half-day pre-driver training session once a week for eight weeks to a group of 15 students.
- The police come in to talk and discuss with small groups about road awareness and safe driving. They also give the students a written test.
- A pre-driver course is run by the RSO. It is only for one group of 30 pupils and it runs for 10 weeks, usually in the Spring/Summer terms. The course is intended to heighten awareness of the issues involved in driving and includes videos, talks, discussions and some in-car experience.
- The police give talks and discuss issues related to the safety of women drivers.

### 8.2 Certificated courses

- Within the GNVQ course on Health and Social Care, road accident casualties are considered in relation to the health and well being of different age groups from infants to the elderly.

### 8.3 Activities

- Sixth formers were trained as instructors to run advanced cyclist courses for Key Stage 3 students.
- In Years 10 and 11, on-road moped training is offered to pupils who have taken an offroad course.

## **Chapter 9 Further information**

### **9.1 Publications**

*A Safer Journey to School*

[A Safer Journey to School](#)

Copies of this guide are available free of charge from

DfES Publications  
PO Box 5050  
Annesley  
Nottingham NG15 0DJ

### **9.2 Websites**

Try some of the Government Departments for more information. The Internet might provide the most immediate access to more material. Many Local Authorities have their own web site.

Department for Transport,  
[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

Department of Health [www.doh.gov.uk](http://www.doh.gov.uk) Department for Education and Skills  
[www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

Home Office  
[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Scottish Executive  
[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

National Assembly for Wales  
[www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

Northern Ireland Office  
<http://www.nio.gov.uk/>

Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association  
[www.larsoa.org.uk](http://www.larsoa.org.uk)

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