

Travelling to School: a good practice guide



Copies of the DfES companion document
Travelling to School: an action plan can be obtained from:

Prolog
Unit 8
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottinghamshire
NG15 0DJ
Tel: 0845 6022260
email: dfes@prolog.uk.com

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Foreword

Travelling to School: a good practice guide

Each day during the school term millions of pupils and their parents travel from home to school in the morning, and make the return trip in the afternoon. Many pupils living close to school walk, with those living further away travelling mainly by bus or by car. The school journey affects public transport patterns, causes localised congestion around schools and contributes to the sharp road traffic peak around nine o'clock each morning.

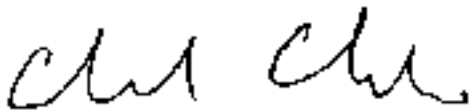
Over the past 20 years the proportion of children travelling to school by car has almost doubled, yet many live close enough to school to walk. Many older children would like to cycle, but are worried about safety, or their school may lack secure cycle storage facilities. Other pupils would like to travel by bus, but there may not be a service available at the right time. If one is available it may be too expensive, particularly for families with two or more children, or else children may feel intimidated by bullying or other anti-social behaviour.

This good practice guide for local transport and education authorities is one of two documents we are publishing. Its companion document *Travelling to School: an action plan* describes what we think needs to be done to change the way children travel to school.

We want to bring about a step change in home to school travel patterns to cut congestion and pollution, but also to allow many more pupils to take regular exercise. This document describes what schools, local authorities and bus operators around the country have been doing to promote walking, cycling and public transport and combat increasing car use. There are already 2,000 schools that have adopted this agenda and many have found that it is surprisingly easy to engage their local transport authority in setting up walking buses and changing road layouts.

We want all schools to follow this example. So we will fund more school travel advisers to help schools put together travel plans, and work in partnership with road safety, highways engineering and local education authorities. We will also make funding available for schools – to provide secure cycle parking, lockers and bus bays – to support sustainable travel. We are also considering whether to invite a small number of local authorities to pilot innovative school transport arrangements which would focus on better school bus provision for more pupils.

Above all, we want every school, local authority and bus operator to work together to make it safe and cost effective for many more children to walk, cycle or take the bus to school.



Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP

Secretary of State
for Education and Skills



Rt Hon Alistair Darling MP

Secretary of State
for Transport

1. Introduction

1. In England about 8.3 million children make their way to school every day, half of them on foot, over a quarter by car, a fifth by bus and the rest by other means.¹ The proportion travelling by car has increased significantly since the mid-1980s, when it was only 16 per cent, and the proportion walking and cycling has decreased correspondingly. Nationally, just over 1 in 10 cars on urban roads between 08.00 and 09.00 in term time is on the 'school run'. This may not seem very many. But the national figure conceals major localised problems of traffic congestion, especially at the peak school travel time of 08.50 in the morning.
2. Promoting walking, cycling, and, for longer distances, greater use of buses for the school journey could relieve congested roads, improve child health, and offer greater access to a range of educational opportunities. Walking and cycling to school offers children an opportunity for regular exercise at a time when we are becoming increasingly aware of the health consequences of sedentary lifestyles. Travel by public transport offers greater independence and flexibility – which is especially important at a time of change in the nature of the school day, with greater numbers of pupils attending more than one institution or staying for extra study, for extra-curricular activities and sport.
3. Changing the patterns of travel to and from schools is an enormous undertaking but in this document we have brought together some excellent examples of what has been done – what *can* be done, where there is a will. They show how individual local authorities and schools have succeeded in motivating key stakeholders and have, as a result, achieved dramatic reductions in the proportion of children coming to school by car – by more than 50 per cent in some cases.



¹ Statistics throughout this document that relate to the mode of travel used by children to travel to and from school are taken from the Department for Transport's National Travel Survey over the 1999/2001 period.

2. More walking and cycling

Aims and objectives

We want as many children as possible to walk or cycle to school. Walking and cycling boosts their health and well-being. It also allows children to travel independently and to access the range of flexible opportunities schools will increasingly offer outside the standard school day. We also want children to travel safely and to feel secure on the school journey.

We are particularly aiming to increase levels of walking where journeys are less than a mile for younger children and less than two miles for older children. We also want to encourage local authorities to develop infrastructure and training courses that will allow older children to cycle distances of up to three to five miles to school along safe routes.

Issues

1. 83 per cent² of 5 to 10 year olds who live within one mile of school walk there, as do 74 per cent² of 11 to 16 year olds who live within two miles. Only 1 per cent of pupils overall (and 2 per cent of secondary children) cycle to school. The national figures mask wide regional and local variations where the proportions are very different. In June 2003, the Department for Transport (DfT) published *On the move: by foot*, a consultation document on improving conditions for, and increasing levels of walking. The document stressed the need to encourage children to walk to school to improve health and ease congestion.
2. There is a range of issues to be tackled. **One of the key underlying concerns is road safety.** Road traffic accidents are the leading cause of accidental injury amongst children and young people. In 2002, 85 children died and 2,834 were seriously injured while walking and cycling in England, many of them close to their homes. Our child pedestrian safety record is improving – fatalities in 2002 were 27 per cent lower than in 2001 – but we still need to improve to compare well with our European counterparts. The health benefits of cycling and walking far outweigh the risks. But neither activity is risk-free, so sensible safety measures need to be taken.

² This is the proportion of all trips these children make to and from school where walking is the main mode of transport.

3. For walking and cycling to become safer and more attractive, local transport and education authorities, together with schools, need to develop strategies that combine 'hard' and 'soft' measures.



4. By **hard measures** we mean engineering works on and off the highway such as **traffic calming** and the creation of **safer routes**, as well as **school infrastructure** such as secure cycle parking, lockers, showers and changing facilities. By **soft measures** we mean organising **crossing patrols, walking buses and cycle trains, on- and off-road training** to improve road skills and confidence, and **classroom activities**.
5. Another concern is **personal security**. A number of pupils and parents cite bullying on the journey to and from school as a major issue and, even though attacks on children by strangers are rare, they feature high on the list of parents' concerns, particularly for girls.
6. Above all we want to see an **ethos** that fosters and encourages walking and cycling as the preferred options.

What works

7. There is a lot of work already being done by schools, local transport and education authorities, parents, and other agencies including the police. In some places small and inexpensive measures can have a dramatic effect. In others, substantial investment is needed in traffic calming measures and engineering works to separate child pedestrians and cyclists from fast moving traffic. The local transport planning (LTP) system provides local authorities with the resources to implement both large and small-scale schemes. Initiatives work best when they are tailored to a school's needs and are 'owned' by all members of the school community: pupils, parents, local residents, teachers, and the local authority.

Traffic calming

8. Traffic calming measures can reduce casualties. Local authorities should consider what measures might be appropriate to make the area around a school a safe place for children to enter and leave.
9. We would like all local transport authorities to consider the case for 20 mph zones around schools, although we recognise that whether or not to introduce such zones must remain a local decision. In particular, a different approach may be needed for schools on major roads. We would like to see close working between schools and local education and transport authorities in developing packages of safety measures. These should cover roads around schools, the routes children take to school and other routes they use.
10. Where local transport authorities decide to introduce a 20 mph zone, legislation requires there to be engineering measures to ensure that the zone is self-enforcing. Local transport authorities should only introduce 20 mph speed limits without traffic calming where vehicle speeds are already relatively low.

Lancashire County Council has now introduced well over 100 20 mph zones. Other local authorities that have also implemented a significant number of zones include Kent County Council, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and the London Borough of Ealing.

Safer routes

11. We recognise that, quite understandably, parents will not allow their children to walk or cycle on routes that they believe are unsafe. Local transport authorities should regularly review the cycle and pedestrian routes that children use to travel to school and improve them as needed, consistent with the child safety audit guidelines published in April 2003 (see Annex A). We also believe that child pedestrian and cycling training should be a part of such programmes.

Nottingham Emmanuel School, a voluntary aided secondary school with a wide catchment area, opened in September 2002 with 180 year 7 students. The school is in a green setting next to the River Trent in the centre of the Nottingham conurbation. The senior management team, governing body and school council are committed to sustainable travel.

Working in partnership, the school and local authorities improved routes for pedestrians and cyclists before the school opened. A roundabout on one of the main routes to the school was remodelled so that cyclists have two lanes while cars have one, and prominent signs were installed warning motorists of the cycle routes. A double-lane dual carriageway leading off the roundabout has been reduced to a single lane to provide a safe drop-off point for buses and cars around half a mile from the school.

The school reduced the number of spaces in its car park to install secure storage with space for 50 cycles. The cycle storage was built at the front of the school to symbolise the importance of sustainable travel. As the school roll rises, there are plans to install further storage, so that all children who wish to can cycle to school.

The school's work with local authorities, parents and children has achieved a non-car travel rate of 81 per cent – 17 per cent cycling, 32 per cent walking and 32 per cent using public transport. Parents who bring their children by car are not allowed on to the school site at the start or end of the school day. Instead, they must drop them off at one of three 'drop and go' sites around half a mile from the school, from which the children walk.

School infrastructure and policies

- 12.** Safer routes on their own are not always enough to encourage significantly more children to walk or cycle to school. Children who cycle need somewhere safe to leave their cycles, and pedestrians as well as cyclists may need lockers, changing facilities and possibly showers if they are travelling any distance. Schools may use their devolved formula capital to provide lockers, showers or cycle parking. Local education authorities (LEAs) may also choose to prioritise investment in sustainable transport policies through their asset management plans.

- 13.** The Department for Education and Skills' (DfES) most recent guidance to LEAs prioritised improving facilities for sustainable transport, such as lockers and secure cycle parking. We will incorporate similar advice in revised guidance on capital funding that is allocated directly to schools. Examples of school designs will be available later this year and will include facilities for encouraging sustainable travel.

London Borough of Enfield installed 30 BikeAway lockers in Southgate School

The Safe Routes to School co-ordinator said, "After only two to three weeks, so many pupils wanted to use the lockers we had to order more...we originally aimed to increase the number of pupils cycling to school from 15 to 60. Now we have a waiting list of pupils who will cycle as soon as we can supply them with a locker." (The lockers cost about £400 each, including installation.)

- 14.** Schools should consider carefully how any of their policies affect walking and cycling. For instance, DfES will revise the guidance on school uniform, so that it asks schools to consider the practicality of any uniform policy for those children who may wish to walk or cycle. Schools should recognise that items such as backpacks, trainers or fashionable cycling wear can support a healthy lifestyle and are sound additions to a good uniform policy.
- 15.** Some schools have altered timetables, as well as providing lockers, so that pupils carry the minimum amount of equipment each day. This can also help alleviate back problems in children. Where it is not practical to install lockers in corridors, schools may need to consider other options, including using devolved formula capital to build small extensions to use as locker rooms.

School crossing patrols

- 16.** School crossing patrols can encourage walking to school, reassuring parents and complementing engineering measures. While there can be difficulties in recruiting school crossing patrols, we would encourage local authorities to consider recruitment policies in light of the Local Authority Road Safety Officers' Association (LARSOA)'s revised *Guidelines for the Management and Operation of the School Crossing Patrol*

Service, published in March 2003. We know that in some areas, people who could be relied on in the past simply do not want this type of work any more. Where local authorities have actively pursued recruitment and failed, they can look at alternatives such as more controlled crossings.

Walking buses

17. Children who walk and cycle regularly are less at risk from heart disease, stroke, diabetes and osteoporosis when they are older. But 4 out of 10 boys and 6 out of 10 girls are active for less than an hour per day. The decline in walking to school has coincided with a rise in childhood obesity, with the proportion of overweight children increasing by 7 per cent between 1996 and 2001. Making moderate exercise an integral part of a child's day, through a walk to and from school, is an excellent way to guard against excess weight and improve general health.
18. Until children reach the age where their parents are happy for them to travel independently, there is often time pressure on parents associated with the school run. Although the car may not always be the quickest option for the journey to school, some parents may have to get to work, or have children at more than one school. This may make it impractical for them to walk with their child every day. To help address this, some schools have introduced 'walking buses'. Children are collected from along a pre-arranged route at an agreed time and escorted to school by volunteers who have been vetted as suitable to work with children. If children live too far from the school to walk all the way, their parents can drop them off at a convenient meeting point, and they are then escorted to school as part of a group.

Bristol City Council has worked with parents to set up a walking bus scheme at Westbury on Trym Church of England Primary School. Parents drop their children at a meeting point in a local car park, which is safely away from both the road and the school (which has poor vehicular access). Many parents then drive into central Bristol before the rush hour. Some accumulate sufficient flexitime to take their turn escorting the walking bus. The children walk to school on a route that is largely away from traffic and enter the grounds by a back entrance. The escorts stay with the children in the playground until 08.50 when the school opens.

Cycle trains

- 19.** A similar idea to the walking bus concept, the cycle train involves a group of parents and pupils cycling to school together.

Woodford Halse Church of England Primary School, Northamptonshire – Pupils and parents have developed a bike train. The train runs to a pupil-devised timetable. About 14 children use the service on a regular basis. Three or four adults accompany the train through the village. Lunchboxes and backpacks are carried in trailers. The county council has provided all riders with tabards. A team of parent volunteers co-ordinates the cycle train and it has received some sponsorship from local businesses.

Training

- 20.** Pedestrian casualty rates are particularly high among 11 to 12 year old boys. This may be partly because they do not walk regularly to primary school and learn 'street skills' before going to secondary school independently. It is essential that children not only receive the right training, but that they are encouraged to walk from an early age and so develop the skills they need to be safe pedestrians.
- 21.** Schools are well placed to encourage the development of road safety skills. Road safety is included in the framework for personal, social and health education (PSHE) at Key Stages 1 and 2, and at Key Stage 3 children should be taught 'to recognise and manage risk and make safer choices about healthy lifestyles, different environments and travel'. DfT's web site and Teachernet include lesson plans for teachers of PSHE and other subjects at all key stages. DfT's web site also contains guidance for teachers and LEAs about teaching road safety across the curriculum. The relevant web site addresses are www.databases.dft.gov.uk/lessonplans,



www.teachernet.gov.uk and www.dft.gov.uk/local-transport/schooltravel.

Making Choices is a resource developed and evaluated by the Department for Transport. It comprises lesson plans for teachers of children who are in their last year of primary school and first year of secondary school – just ahead of the age at which child pedestrian and cycle casualties peak. Separate magazines for children and parents accompany the pack.

- 22.** Research has shown that the best way for younger children to develop safe pedestrian skills is through practical roadside learning. These skills can be developed and built on within the curriculum.

Kerbcraft: child pedestrian training project

The Department for Transport is funding a pilot project which employs co-ordinators in around 100 three-year schemes, mostly in deprived areas. The co-ordinators train and support parent volunteers who will take five to seven year olds out on the streets to teach them road safety skills.

- 23.** Child cycle training levels are too low. A survey carried out for the National Cycling Strategy Board's regional cycling development team suggests that only 29 per cent of children currently receive any form of cycle training before leaving primary school. But training is as vital as infrastructure if children are to be enthused about cycling, if they are to gain cycling skills and if parents are to have the confidence to let their children ride to school.
- 24.** We want to see children routinely trained under the RoSPA guidelines³ for child cycle training and, for older children, the teenage cycle training guide⁴ developed by the CTC and others. We will also expect schools to consider appropriate cycle/pedestrian training as part of the implementation strategy for all capital schemes for sustainable school travel infrastructure.

³ *Practical Cyclist Training Schemes*, June 2002, RoSPA, DETR, LARSOA, CTC and ALBRSO

⁴ *Adult Cycle Training: A Guide for Organisers and Instructors*, CTC and others May 2003

- 25.** For example, pedestrian and cycle training schemes are an essential part of developing a safer route for walking and cycling with a local authority. Similarly, if a school is investing in substantial new secure cycle parking or lockers, cycle training should be routinely available. If training is not already in place, then the school should develop it in parallel with, or perhaps as part of, the capital programme.

The City of York now provides advanced cycle training to a third of all its Year 7 pupils. Pupils are released from classes for a maximum of two hours and the volunteer trainers receive a payment. In 2002, 3.5 per cent of primary and 12.1 per cent of secondary pupils were cycling to school. Child cyclist road casualties have fallen by a quarter since cycle training first started in 1993.

Personal security

- 26.** Personal security is also an aspect of route safety. Many parents fear 'stranger danger', although the likelihood of being killed in a traffic accident is around 40 times greater than the risk of being abducted and killed by a stranger. Transport authorities, police community officers and schools may need jointly to review personal security issues on specific routes and resolve any problems together. Many areas have crime and disorder partnerships. These should link to local transport plans and school travel plans. The Suzy Lamplugh Trust has produced *Home Safe*, a video for children on practical ways of ensuring personal security when walking home alone. Find out more at www.suzylamplugh.org



Ethos

- 27.** Pupils and parents respond positively where schools and LEAs have shown a strong, sustained commitment to walking and cycling, as in Buckinghamshire's 'Go for Gold' scheme.

Buckinghamshire County Council's 'Go for Gold' park and stride incentive scheme

Children who walk to school are rewarded with green, bronze, silver and finally gold stickers, which they can exchange for small prizes. So far 74 schools are signed up to the scheme. They have evidence of an impressive shift away from car travel as a result. For example Chalfont St Giles Infants School cut car use from 57 per cent to 7 per cent between May and July 2002.

- 28.** And finally, here is an outstanding example of what can be achieved when the full range of hard and soft measures are brought together:

Kesgrave High School, Ipswich actively promotes cycling with careful timetable planning to minimise the number of books pupils have to carry, provision of lockers and secure cycle storage. Planning conditions require off-road cycle routes and subways at busy junctions. As a result, **over 700 pupils (around 57 per cent) cycle to school**. The school has an impressive record in school sports, quite probably reflecting fitness levels gained by many children who cycle up to a 12 mile round trip to school each day. Find out more at www.kesgrave.suffolk.sch.uk/cycling.html

3. Encouraging bus use

Aims and objectives

We want to see more children catching the bus to school instead of being driven there by their parents, if they live too far away to walk or cycle.

We want to give young people more options by fostering independence and encouraging them to use alternatives to the car as they grow up.

We want schools, and local transport and education authorities to develop strong working relationships with local bus companies, to make the best possible use of commercial and tendered networks.

We want local education and transport authorities to make more services available for pupils who are poorly served at present – including dedicated buses, where appropriate and affordable.

We also want to encourage more bus services that cater for the extended school day, school sport and pupils who will be educated in two or more places during Key Stage 4.

Issues

1. At the moment, travel to school by bus can be provided in a number of ways – through statutory school transport, the commercial bus network, or dedicated school buses. The challenge is for schools, local transport and education authorities, and bus operators of different kinds to work together to increase the availability and attractiveness of bus services to a wider range of pupils.



Statutory school transport

2. For many years local education authorities (LEAs) have provided free transport for pupils who live beyond the 'statutory walking distances' to ensure that pupils are able to attend school. The 'statutory walking distances' are 3 miles from the 'nearest suitable' school (2 miles for the under eights). LEAs also provide free transport for pupils where it is specified in their statement of special educational need. Most free home to school transport is by bus or taxi.
3. Free school transport is popular with pupils and parents who receive it: we understand that uptake is close to 100 per cent. However, many pupils and parents who live within the 2/3 mile limit think that the rules are out of date, as few pupils are prepared to walk almost 3 miles twice a day, even if the walking route is safe. Others think it is unfair that low income families living 2.9 miles from school have to pay for school travel whereas affluent families living 3 miles from school pay nothing. Some parents find that they cannot work, or can only work restricted hours, because they have to drive their children to school. Parents of pupils attending denominational schools may find that there is no bus service available, and there might not be any provision for children participating in after school sport, or other activities, or for pupils who want to attend breakfast clubs.
4. We are considering whether to change the law to allow LEAs to trial alternative packages of school transport. We would want local authorities to consult with schools, pupils, parents, bus operators and Further Education Colleges on an alternative scheme, along the lines of the new post-16 arrangements. Authorities might make small charges for school transport where parents can afford to pay; design and consult on a scheme that supersedes the statutory walking distances; and enter into innovative arrangements with schools or other agencies to provide school transport services fitted around an extended school day. The primary objective of any local scheme would be to reduce car use and increase bus patronage (or other forms of public transport). If we created flexibilities, we envisage that we would look carefully at the experience of the first few authorities pioneering new arrangements before proceeding further. Further details of our proposals are in the companion document *Travelling to School: an action plan*.

Non-statutory school transport

- 5.** Public transport for children who are not entitled to free school travel can be provided through:
- commercial operators, who may provide services at a full or discounted fare;
 - local authority supported bus services on routes they consider 'socially necessary' (many define non-statutory school journeys as a high priority for support);
 - dedicated school buses on the American 'yellow bus' model, which are currently being piloted at a range of different locations;
 - the use of local authority discretionary powers to provide area-wide concessionary fares on public transport (common in urban areas); and
 - local authorities allowing children who are not entitled to free transport to travel on buses operated for children who are entitled, where there is spare capacity.
- 6.** Under the existing legislation, local education and transport authorities have considerable discretion to offer free or subsidised transport to pupils not entitled to statutory free travel. However, finite resources and the increasing costs of statutory provision mean that discretionary provision has been decreasing steadily, and now accounts for very little of LEAs' spending on home to school transport. Parents whose children live beyond what they consider a reasonable walking distance are increasingly choosing to drive them to school. The same is true of pupils who do not attend their nearest suitable school.
- 7.** Some parents may have no realistic alternative to driving their children to school. However, we believe that if schools, local education and transport authorities, passenger transport executives (PTEs) and bus operators work together they can, in most cases, offer parents a real alternative.



What works

- 8.** If services are to be attractive they must:
 - a) be cost effective for parents, pupils and LEAs;
 - b) appeal to parents and pupils;
 - c) meet the needs of all pupils, including those who do not attend their 'nearest suitable' school;
 - d) meet the needs of children attending after school activities; and
 - e) discourage anti-social behaviour.

Cost effectiveness

- 9.** Schools, local authorities and bus operators need to work together to make public transport more attractive to young people. Children who are driven around in cars are less likely to use other means of transport when they grow up, so bus operators have a vested interest in making their services attractive to these young people, turning them into long-term customers.
- 10.** LEAs who have dedicated home to school buses which they use for statutory school transport services can sell spare seats to non-entitled pupils, recouping some of their costs and reducing the number of cars on the school run. We know that many have not done this due to concerns over the current requirement that the bus operator (or the LEA where in-house vehicles are used) register the school service as a local service before selling any seats. However, we plan to consult on a proposal that we should abolish the need to register these services, as long as the seats are sold to pupils, not the general public.
- 11.** Where there are no commercial alternatives, we expect LEAs, in consultation with their partners, to look at increasing the number of seats on a particular route. They could either contract for more than one bus, or use a bus with more seats and then market the extra places to non-entitled pupils. The economies of scale should make the pricing competitive.

Hertfordshire County Council charges for spare seats according to the distance travelled. They cost £84 per term for those living under 3 miles from school, £120 for those living 3 to 4.99 miles away, and £158 for those living 5 miles and over from school.

Worcestershire County Council sells spare seats on all contracted services. The council charges £71 per term, compared to £68 on services operated by First (formerly Midland Red). Parents in receipt of certain social security benefits pay just £13.

East Sussex County Council has a 'conditional permit scheme' and sells spare seats at half-termly intervals if children entitled to free travel do not need them. The half-termly cost is £60, falling to £45 for each additional sibling.

- 12.** One of the most cost-effective ways of providing home to school transport is to use the same bus and driver for more than one trip – a practice known as 'double tripping'. This system makes additional journeys much cheaper. Double tripping is common practice in the United States. There, school start and finish times are determined at district level, and transport cost and availability is a key factor in setting school hours. Some English local authorities are exploring whether double tripping could reduce transport costs, put more money into schools and give more children the chance to travel by bus.

West Sussex County Council has had a long history of 'non-standard' start times. For example, one denominational school started lessons at 08.00 as long ago as 1976. The council has maintained staggered start times in rural areas, so that bus services can serve two or three schools, dropping off at the first school with an 08.15 start, a second school with an 08.30 start and a third with a 09.00 start. The council has achieved double tripping in Horsham, with one school starting 15 minutes earlier and a second 5 minutes later.

On the Isle of Wight, staggering of school hours has been an integral part of both the education and public transport systems for over twenty years. With virtually all school transport run by island-based operator Southern Vectis and the local authority's in-house fleet, the whole system can be efficiently planned at the start of each academic year.

This approach has produced a number of benefits: costs are around £400 per entitled student per annum (well below the average for rural areas); sensible integration of the school and local bus networks allows the majority of pupils to use the whole local bus system following after-school activities. This integration has also allowed a more intensive network of local bus services than would otherwise be afforded so the level of service/tender support ratio is one of the best for a rural area.

Source: TAS Bus Services for Rural Communities: An Audit of Villages in England.

- 13.** Small adjustments to school opening hours can cut travel costs significantly. Some LEAs are exploring how much they could save, so that schools and members can understand how changes to hours can result in more money for education delivery and more children able to travel by bus.

Essex County Council is re-thinking transport planning in 2 of its 12 districts. The council has identified potential savings of £350,000 on home to school transport in these 2 districts alone if the start and finish times of some schools were moved by just 15 minutes.

Attractive service features

- 14.** Some LEAs, schools and colleges already run dedicated services for pupils who are not entitled to free statutory school transport. Parents are often more willing to let their children travel independently at an earlier age on a dedicated school vehicle than on a public bus. This may make these services especially attractive to parents of primary school children. Dedicated bus services could give parents more time to get to work and significantly reduce congestion around schools, but they can be very expensive to provide.

- 15.** The Department for Transport (DfT) has evaluated a range of dedicated bus schemes being run at a range of different locations, including the projects described in the boxes below. The results suggest that dedicated bus services can attract pupils away from car travel and can offer a range of features – such as designated drivers, local pick-ups, and CCTV – that are popular with parents and pupils. Earlier research⁵ has shown that parents are willing to pay at least part of the cost of dedicated school buses for the quality and reassurance that these provide.

Greater Manchester PTE project to encourage travel to school by bus in Wigan

The project aims to encourage more pupils to travel to school by bus in an area of Wigan where many are driven to school by their parents and local bus coverage is relatively poor. Three buses serve one school.

The project started in February 2003, following completion of infrastructure improvements to give additional buses access to the school. It caters for non-entitled secondary school pupils.

Operators are required by their contracts to train all drivers in customer care and conflict resolution. Drivers who normally drive the same pupils on the same vehicle consult the pupils and then assign them numbered seats.

Seatbelts are provided and pupils are encouraged to use them. There is also a range of measures designed to improve pupil behaviour (see the Greater Manchester PTE Stockport example later in this chapter).

The project uses Iveco Scholabus 24 vehicles, fully compliant with Disability Discrimination Act regulations. Seats can be removed and stowed under the floor to allow wheelchair access.

Reaction to the service has been very positive. 31 per cent of the 135 pupils using the service previously travelled by car, representing a reduction in car trips of approximately 14,000 per year.

⁵ *Assessment of attitudes to and potential take-up of additional home to school transport*, DfT October 2001 at www.local-transport.dft.gov.uk/schooltravel/attitudes/index.htm

First is operating American-style yellow school bus schemes. First operates yellow buses with local authorities in Runnymede, Hebden Bridge (West Yorkshire), Wokingham and Windsor and Maidenhead.

Schemes feature regular drivers trained to work with young people, vehicles fitted with seatbelts, a guaranteed seat for each pupil, pick-up points close to home and a phone link to the control centre for parents.

Local authorities introduced the services to reduce congestion, improve road safety near schools, improve the quality of school buses and increase bus use.

Surveys and focus group discussions have found that pupils and their parents have been generally positive about the schemes. They particularly like the fact that services are not open to the public, and that they have guaranteed seats and regular drivers, several of whom are parents (three out of four in Runnymede).

Parents also like the way the scheme gives children the opportunity to travel independently, allows them to leave for work earlier, and makes the school run simpler because they only need to take their children to the bus stop.

16. Other authorities are also operating innovative school bus schemes with many of the features of the First schemes. DfT has included these in its evaluation.
17. Some groups of parents have got together to run their own services – especially popular with those parents whose children go to a school other than the nearest suitable one.



St John Rigby Catholic College, West Wickham

Parents of children at St John Rigby Catholic College in West Wickham, south east London, set up their own school bus scheme after a contracted service was withdrawn.

Four parents manage the scheme. One deals with the day-to-day running of the buses, which can be time consuming. Another acts as membership secretary and maintains the list of users and the waiting list. The third is treasurer and the fourth writes quarterly newsletters and looks after communications with the school.

Pupils who use the scheme carry photo cards to identify them and which bus they should travel on. There are three vehicles. Two of these take the same route but stop at different points to cut down journey times. Typically, the journey takes 15 to 25 minutes, less than half the time it would take on scheduled public transport. The fares are higher than on local buses.

Parents say that they are happy to pay the extra fares for the service as it gives them peace of mind that their children will arrive safely at school. Nearly 200 pupils use the scheme. The school is looking to expand the scheme to cover other routes.

Meeting travel needs, including for pupils who do not attend their 'nearest suitable' school

- 18.** Although dedicated bus services offer a range of attractive features, especially for younger pupils, they may not be cost-effective for older children living further from schools. The fact that they are only used by small numbers and for short periods may make them difficult to justify on economic grounds. One way of improving value for money is to use vehicles for a range of educational purposes in addition to the journey to school. Local authorities may also be concerned that widespread use of dedicated bus services could undermine some commercially operated routes, on which a broader range of people depend.

- 19.** Another approach – especially for older pupils – may be a package of measures to promote use of the existing bus network. The travel planning process (see Chapter 7) provides a framework for negotiation between schools, local authorities and bus operators to improve services for pupils on both commercial and tendered bus services.

Sackville and Imberhorne Schools, East Grinstead

In a survey of 11 to 16 year olds at Sackville and Imberhorne Schools in East Grinstead, students said bus fares were too expensive, bus stops too far from home and timetables hard to understand.

The county council financed additional bus services. All students received an easy-to-read map and a bus card entitling them to quarter fares. Leaflets used images designed to appeal to the age group, and stressed the benefits to the planet.

Bus trips rose by 100 a day. On the basis of the findings Steve Pennington, head of Imberhorne Lower School, said the scheme was good value. “Kids see the sense of it and parents are more willing to give them 20p to go on the bus than to get the car out.”

Source: A Safer Journey to School (1999)

Transport for children attending more than one school and after school activities

- 20.** As schools develop their education programmes and other activities beyond the traditional school day, children increasingly need to be able to access the school independently. Schools need to consider transport provision for out-of-hours activities as part of their school travel plans, and in partnership with stakeholders. Schools offering extended services to the community, such as childcare, adult education or community sports programmes, should also include these in their travel plans.

- 21.** Schools need to consider similar issues when pupils access facilities off the main school site, either as part of the 14 to 19 agenda or for educational visits. As the changes to the curriculum for 14 to 16 year olds are implemented from September 2004, more and more pupils are likely to need to travel during the day for lessons held away from the main school site.



- 22.** Some institutions may arrange transport for school visits. Schools may have their own minibuses to transport children. Schools with large numbers of children who cycle to school (such as Kesgrave High School) will be able let children travel independently. Some LEAs may also organise sweeper buses.

In Merseyside, Sefton LEA has entered into a joint arrangement with Maghull High School and Merseytravel. Sefton contributes towards Merseytravel's costs and in return Merseytravel provides extra buses to the school and re-patterns existing bus services to meet pupils' needs.

At the same time, Merseytravel provides a late morning sweeper bus to ensure the safety of children who might have missed their intended service. Sweeper buses also run at 16.10 and 16.45 for pupils taking part in extra-curricular activities. This has been achieved without any extra charge to Merseytravel or Sefton LEA.

The school has surveyed its pupils, who rate the service pattern to be extremely good (over 90 per cent are satisfied). Pupils are looking at environmental and safety initiatives, as well as being involved in a continuous refinement of the routes.

Discouraging anti-social behaviour

- 23.** One of the reasons why parents are sometimes reluctant to let their children travel independently on buses is the poor behaviour of some pupils. This is also an issue on some LEA contracted services, and is often cited as the reason for rising tender costs, as it becomes difficult to retain drivers, and because of the cost of repairing vandalised vehicles.

Greater Manchester PTE: project to improve safety and security in Stockport

The project aims to improve the security of pupils travelling on school buses between an estate in Stockport and two schools where students, parents, schools and operators were concerned about high levels of anti-social behaviour and vandalism. It is aimed at secondary school pupils who are not entitled to free home to school transport.

The project began in January 2003 and involves three buses fitted with wheelchair lifts.

Each service has the same bus driven by the same driver each day – which is seen as a key factor in ensuring good behaviour. The driver consults the pupils and then assigns them numbered seats. Escorts are not provided, but seatbelts are, and pupils are encouraged to use them. Operators are contractually obliged to train all drivers in customer care and conflict resolution.

Parents and pupils sign up to a code of conduct in exchange for a photo ID travel pass, which can be withdrawn if they breach the code. The code makes parents responsible for paying for any damage to the vehicle. Drivers inspect their vehicles at the end of every journey and make a full report. CCTV evidence backs up driver reports. The alternative is for pupils to use normal service buses, which involve a change in Stockport and which cost more.

The reaction of parents and pupils to the service has been very positive. Pupil behaviour has improved considerably and the incidence of fighting, vandalism and smoking on the bus is now very low.

- 24.** A number of authorities have developed excellent partnerships that have substantially improved poor behaviour.

Essex County Council felt that no one was taking responsibility for the issue of behaviour on contracted services to and from school. Although the majority of pupils were well behaved, a small minority were causing problems for everyone else. The council agreed a fund of £200,000 and part of this paid for a behaviour liaison officer, who worked with schools, parents, operators and drivers to deliver a package of measures. As part of the package, escorts were provided on all services, and both they and the drivers received support and guidance in dealing with young people and defusing situations. They now run a driver of the year competition and behaviour and vandalism are significantly improved.

Safer School Partnerships is a joint initiative between DfES, the Home Office, the Youth Justice Board and the Association of Chief Police Officers which is being operated in selected LEAs across the country. A dedicated police officer is assigned to a local secondary school and the role of the officer is agreed between the police and the school. At Croxteth Community Comprehensive School in Liverpool, one of the Safer School Partnership (SSP) objectives is to ensure that all members of the partnership follow restorative and problem-solving principles and operate within a multi-agency approach in order to reduce incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour.

The key role of an SSP officer is to tackle incidents around poor behaviour and discipline. At Croxteth Community Comprehensive School where the SSP officer holds regular 'honesty groups', two pupils admitted breaking bus windows on a local estate. The SSP officer arranged for the pupils to pay part of the replacement window costs and to work at the bus depot to make up the rest of the money. At the depot they met bus drivers and had the opportunity to learn how vandalism and aggression affects them. Drivers have subsequently agreed to visit the school to speak to pupils about their work and experiences.

Some officers on SSP duties are present at the school gates before school and at the end of the school day. In some areas the SSP officer has joined pupils on routes to and from school to resolve tensions between children attending different schools in neighbouring areas.

- 25.** Similar initiatives have been tried on local services. They have increased the number of adults using the services, who had previously been put off by the poor behaviour of pupils.

South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive runs SAFEMark for schools, a public transport initiative for school students in South Yorkshire. The scheme has developed training and support for road staff. It has fostered partnerships with schools/students and improved the quality of services on home-school routes. The partners include:

- LEAs;
- local authorities;
- TravelWise,
- South Yorkshire Police;
- British Transport Police;
- Crime Concern;
- Department for Transport;
- transport operators; and
- schools and their pupils.

The programme is delivered through curriculum work, material for parents, teachers, pupils and drivers, and quality checks on the buses. Schools who sign up to the SAFEMark scheme can use the award and logo to advertise their commitment and they gain formal recognition for their work. The SAFEMark scheme is now being used successfully outside South Yorkshire.

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In June 2002 **Cambridgeshire County Council** launched an inter-school car sharing scheme for parents with children at 8 independent schools in Cambridge. 4 more schools have now joined.

The scheme is run through www.shareajourney.com. Parents register directly with the site using a password issued by the Cambridge schools car sharing scheme validator, regardless of which school their child attends. The council devised a set of guidelines for both schools and parents specifically to allay parents' safety worries and obtained legal advice to ensure the scheme was sound. Schools began sending promotional literature to parents at the end of the 2002 summer holidays and about 30 families have now registered.

There is no cost to the council or the schools because the scheme is being treated as a pilot by shareajourney.com in return for the work that the county's school travel plan co-ordinator has put into developing the scheme. However, other schools wishing to log their details on the 'shareajourney' web site will pay £75. There will then be an annual fee of £56 per school.

Buckinghamshire County Council launched Bucks Carshare in autumn 2002. It is open to parents or guardians of children at all schools in the county.

Parents or guardians complete a registration form and their details are placed on a central database, which searches for other registered users from the same school. It is then up to parents or guardians to make the arrangements, complete any checks and decide whether or not to proceed with the car share.

One independent school has adopted the registration form, information and guidelines and incorporated them into a car share initiative they are administering themselves.

Devon County Council runs a similar scheme. Details are at www.carsharedevon.com.

5. Transport provision for children with special educational needs

Aims and objectives

We want children with special educational needs (SEN) to receive appropriate levels of support on their journeys to and from school. Where children can travel independently, they should do so.

Issues

1. There is a range of issues associated with transport for children with SEN:
 - getting best value for money by providing transport while maximising benefits for the children for whom transport has to be provided;
 - reviewing transport needs, updating provision when appropriate;
 - planning routes;
 - making best use of vehicles;
 - considering innovative solutions; and
 - considering the long-term needs of children with SEN by encouraging and promoting independent travel, including providing training where this is needed.

What works

2. Organising transport for children with SEN can be a complex and technical task. Children may travel on school buses, service buses and minibuses, and in taxis. Their transport requirements will vary depending on individual need and the route that they must travel.
3. Transport for some children with SEN, especially those with severe or complex needs, can be very expensive. In 2001-02 around £254 million was spent on transport to special schools – almost half the total spent on home to school transport.

When transport for children with SEN to mainstream schools is included we estimate that around 65 per cent of the total school transport budget is used to support children with SEN.

4. Costs have risen sharply in recent years. This is mainly due to increased staff and transport hire costs, but also because more children with SEN are being educated in mainstream schools spread throughout LEAs rather than attending special schools. In addition, some children who may previously have been educated in local generic special schools are now being educated in out-of-area specialist schools that offer provision tailored to meet one particular type of special need. The high cost of transport for children with SEN reflects the complex transport requirements of these pupils, but we believe that there is scope to make savings and target existing budgets in a way that benefits more children.
5. Many LEAs are being creative and innovative in providing transport for children with SEN and we recognise that a high quality service takes significant time and effort to set up and maintain. However, the examples we highlight below show that some initial investment can reap substantial service improvements and cost savings.

Getting best value for money

Providing transport according to need

6. Children with SEN are increasingly likely to be educated in mainstream schools, and we believe that school transport should be inclusive as well. The presumption should be that children with SEN should travel with their mainstream peers, unless their needs have to be met with specialised transport.
7. The SEN Code states that transport provision should not be written into statements unless there are compelling reasons for doing so. LEAs' home to school transport policies should take account of the needs of children with SEN so that wherever possible they can travel with their mainstream peers. LEAs should make their home to school transport policies known to parents of children with SEN, particularly when their children are being assessed, and policies should set out the circumstances in which transport provision would be written into statements. They should also set out the circumstances in which the LEA will name a school preferred by parents even when it is further away from their home than another suitable school, as long as parents pay all or part of the transport costs.

Reviewing transport needs effectively

8. All authorities should regularly review the requirements of children who receive transport because of their special educational needs. Where transport is included in a student's statement, it should be updated regularly – at least as part of the annual review. Transport should match changing needs to ensure it is safe, suitable, and secures effective use of the LEA's resources.

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council gives clear guidance to schools, asking them to consider the following when reviewing a statement of special educational needs:

"As pupils become older a move to more independent methods of travel is an important contribution to developing a key skill – independence. Many pupils with marked needs will require some form of assisted transport throughout their school career. For some other pupils it will always be necessary, for example, if they have a complex journey. Towards top junior or lower secondary age, however, many pupils should be working towards more independent travel, for example, initially without an escort on a school bus or with an escort on public transport, followed by using a bus pass or walking"

Source: Home to School Transport for Children with Special Educational Needs.

9. Where a LEA is considering different placements, the educational needs of the child should take priority. But if there are equally suitable alternative placements, transport costs should be part of the evaluation of options. The Audit Commission's *Improving Home-to-school Transport for Children with SEN* favours the SEN manager holding the transport budget for children with SEN. This would leave the SEN manager to apply the general transport policy to the consideration of each child's transport needs and only draw in transport staff for advice in particular cases.

Planning routes effectively

10. Route planning for children with SEN should take into account public transport and mainstream school transport. The length of the daily journey must be considered, but there is no statutory limit. Good practice suggests that, where possible, the journey should not exceed one hour and fifteen minutes in each direction – although this will

vary according to local circumstances and children's needs. Case law (R v Hereford and Worcester) states that the journey should not be so long that the child cannot benefit from the education received.

11. Many children with severe needs will require specialist vehicles and equipment, and regular, well-trained drivers and escorts. Tendering services in a way that gives contractors the opportunity to be innovative can reduce costs. For example, allowing two wheelchair accessible taxis, or a wheelchair accessible minibus on a route may allow more operators to bid for the work than if only taxis are specified. Allowing flexibility over the order in which children are picked up, and the size and type of vehicles, for example, may reduce an operator's bid.

Birmingham LEA tendered its home to school transport contract for Wilson Stuart, a special school for children with severe mobility impairment, using post codes and details of the needs of each child in the tender documents. Operators were asked to identify the most efficient arrangements for home to school transport. The contract was let to West Midlands Special Needs Transport for five years enabling them to purchase new vehicles for the contract, which can be used during school hours for school trips and by social services. Each route has dedicated drivers and escorts provided by the local authority. Parents and pupils like the driver continuity, flexible and responsive service and vehicle quality. Schools like the new service because the contractor has taken over route planning, freeing up time for two teachers in the school.

12. Careful timing of re-tendering can give operators long enough to respond to bids, or to make sure they have vehicles available to bid. A widely drawn specification can allow a wide range of qualified operators to bid – in-house providers, taxi/private hire companies, local dial-a-ride/community transport operators as well as local bus/coach operators.
13. Where several children travel long distances to residential placements, joint arrangements with neighbouring authorities may be cost effective, with children sharing vehicles rather than travelling individually.
14. LEAs must keep accurate records of current contracts, transport needs and routes. Geographical information systems (GISs) can be useful in managing demand and

evaluating alternatives. GIS can also be extremely valuable to staff considering comparable placements, giving them indications of journey times and costs.

- 15.** LEAs must review provision regularly. The transport needs of around one in three children with special needs will change in the course of a school year. There is also the issue of children who receive a statement of special needs in the course of a year – a policy that adds one-off taxi provision, for example, can substantially increase overall costs.



Improving integration between local authorities and other partners

- 16.** In 1999, the then Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions commissioned research into the scale of transport for children with SEN. The research found a need for much better management information and highlighted the importance of partnership working. We believe that LEAs must work closely with schools, other parts of their local authority, neighbouring authorities, operators and drivers, parents, children and escorts, to get the most out of the joint resources of both education and social services.
- 17.** Co-ordinated planning can improve services and save money.

Oxfordshire County Council co-ordinates the use of five accessible vehicles between social services and education. Three are based in Oxford and two in Abingdon.

The LEA uses social service vehicles and drivers to provide home to school transport for children with SEN. The vehicles and drivers transport social services clients at other times of the day.

The LEA pays for the home to school journeys and employs the escorts used on the home to school run.

The children get a better service as they have a regular driver and escort.
The council saves money and gets maximum use from the vehicles.

Considering innovative solutions to providing transport to special schools

- 18.** Innovative solutions to providing transport for special schools can lead to significant savings and improved services.
- 19.** Faced with rising costs, some authorities have leased or purchased their own vehicles. Special schools control these vehicles, and organise some of their school runs. The schools employ drivers and escorts, overcoming the problems that arise where children with SEN are confronted with different drivers and escorts each day.

Hampshire County Council is running a series of pilots in special schools. The council gives each pilot school two additional mini-buses. In return the school is responsible for some of its home to school runs. Savings over previously contracted services are split 50:50 between the local authority and the schools.

The schools employ drivers (some also employ escorts) and also receive a boost to their general budgets. Capacity for transport to placements, after school activity and school trips has been increased. The arrangements offer schools greater flexibility in route planning. Punctuality has improved and children arrive in a fit state to learn. Schools report better behaviour, less truancy and improved contact with parents as a direct result of the pilots.

Savings passed to the schools have enabled them to employ dedicated drivers as well as boosting their general budgets. The council is working with schools to expand the scheme incrementally.

Encouraging and promoting independent travel

- 20.** Transport for children with SEN should be part of any strategy for developing independence as they approach adult life. The Disability Discrimination Act requires public transport to become increasingly accessible to people with disabilities. Pupils should be given opportunities to develop independent travelling skills wherever possible. For some, the home to school journey can be part of this transition.

Kingston upon Hull has developed 'Getting There!', an independence training resource as part of a DfES pathfinder project. The pack is linked to Key Stages 3 and 4 of the curriculum. The seven lessons look at the following essential skills:

- 1) realising the benefits/self evaluation;
- 2) social skills, time, money, telephone;
- 3) understanding timetables, routes, maps;
- 4) planning and personal safety;
- 5) road safety;
- 6) asking for help/directions; and
- 7) awareness of opportunities.

Ravenscliffe High School, Halifax, a special school for children aged 11 to 19, has for the past three years has been developing a supported training programme which now involves about half of the school. It promotes independent travel for workplace placements and also college links. Fifteen students now travel independently for some or all home to school journeys.

6. Sustainable travel and road safety – within and beyond the curriculum

Aims and objectives

We want to see sustainable travel and road safety promoted in the classroom, within the framework of the national curriculum.

Issues

1. Classroom time is always under pressure. We need to make sure that the existing material helps teachers, and find out what more they need to support work on sustainable travel and road safety learning. The examples below show how this can be done (as do some of the examples in Chapter 2 on walking and cycling).

The National Curriculum

2. Sustainable living is a theme running through the curriculum at all Key Stages. Four subjects – science, geography, citizenship and design and technology – have statutory requirements for pupils to be taught about sustainability.
3. In **science** at Key Stage 3, pupils are taught about a variety of energy resources and about the distinction between renewable and non-renewable resources. At Key Stage 4, they are taught about the efficient use of energy, the need for economical energy use and the environmental implications of generating energy.
4. Teachers should place these topics in a range of domestic, industrial and environmental contexts. Pupils should consider the benefits and drawbacks of scientific and technological developments including those related to the environment, personal health and quality of life and those raising ethical issues. All of these topics offer considerable scope for teaching about travel and transport.

5. **Geography** provides the main focus within the curriculum for understanding issues about the environment and sustainability, including transport. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils are able to investigate how changes to traffic volume can affect the environment. This can include travel to school. As pupils move on to Key Stage 3, they learn about geographical patterns and processes and how political, economic, social and environmental factors affect contemporary issues, including transport.
6. In **citizenship**, at Key Stage 4, pupils must be taught about the wider issues and challenges of global interdependence and responsibility, including sustainable development and Local Agenda 21. This provides a good opportunity for pupils to consider the effect of their travel choices on the environment. **Personal, social and health education (PSHE)** and citizenship also encourage young people to take responsibility for themselves and their environment and get involved in the decisions that affect them and the community; and to change things for the better. Local authorities can draw on and enhance pupils' work on citizenship in schools by actively engaging them in developing a transport policy that meets their needs and those of their community.
7. In **design and technology**, pupils learn to evaluate how things are made. This includes consideration of what materials are used, whether they come from renewable sources, or are themselves recycled or recyclable. For example, the wider considerations of designing and making a model of a car would include alternative power sources, both for the model and in full scale production, and what the implications of each option would be, including the environmental implications.



Resources

8. Sustainable travel can link right across the curriculum and there is plenty of support material available. The **Department for Transport** (DfT) has established a database of materials on sustainable travel suitable for use in the classroom. You can access it at www.databases.dft.gov.uk/schools. The database assesses materials for their suitability by subject and Key Stage in the national curriculum. Consultants for DfT review and update the database every six months.
9. There are also specific initiatives and resources that encourage learning about transport. For example, 'Young TransNet' has an interactive web site at www.youngtransnet.org.uk that encourages young people to research and develop transport policies. The RAC's 'Grass Routes' challenge encourages pupils in secondary schools to consider sustainable travel issues within the curriculum and to develop a travel plan for their school.

North Yorkshire County Council school travel plan co-ordinators have concentrated on developing links between the curriculum and school travel. They aim to connect with the National Curriculum every time when working with schools. Their work touches on:

- citizenship;
- English;
- maths;
- music;
- drama;
- science;
- design and technology; and
- IT.

The travel co-ordinators read guidance on the National Curriculum and make sure that they make the curriculum links clear to heads and teachers.

Cross-curricular activity

- 10.** The following case studies show how travel has been used as a cross-curricular scheme.

Mellis CEVC Primary School, Suffolk planned lessons for pupils at Key Stage 2 on improving the local environment and involving pupils in decision making. Pupils discussed how different environmental issues affected them, communicating their views about local plans for traffic, car parking and new housing using e-mail and letters. This built into work on 'safety to school', with pupils developing a questionnaire for parents to help identify options for improving school transport. Decision-making, debate and discussion were strong features of the work. The activities looked at recognising and resolving differences of opinion between different groups. Pupils looked at the future effects of changes in housing and traffic on pupils and local residents.

The work allowed pupils to participate in decisions about a local environmental issue, developing a sense of responsibility and the consideration of needs and views of different groups of people.

*Source: QCA Education for Sustainable Development web site
www.nc.uk.net/esd/teaching/index.htm*

Wallingford School, Oxfordshire has worked with geography pupils on a curriculum-based safe routes to school project. Their GCSE results were 30 per cent better than expected and 10 per cent of pupils cycle to school – five times the national average.

Beckwithshaw Community Primary School worked in partnership with the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) travel awareness team on a project called 'Beckwithshaw into the future'.

The school sent out NYCC questionnaires to parents and the travel awareness team in the council collated the results into a first draft travel plan. The whole of the year 5 and year 6 class got involved – their class teacher organised a debate and the children spoke with councillors, engineers and officials from the local bus company. Engineers incorporated the children's comments into plans for traffic calming in the village.

The school set up a 'park and stride' scheme; parents parked about a mile from the school and then walked there with their children. Previously all journeys were by car as most children live outside the catchment area. The school also encouraged parents to car share where possible.

The children used design and technology and IT skills to make badges and print T-shirts for their campaign. The project also addressed literacy and numeracy skills.

The school followed up the project with a leaflet giving background information about the project and listing headline results distributed to parents and the local community.

Ofsted commented favourably on the work carried out in this project in the school's 2002 inspection report.

Devon Healthy Travel Project involves working with children in three areas of social deprivation. There are links with Healthy Schools and PSHE work (including drugs education and building personal confidence). Groups of children take the lead in developing travel plans, for example, mapping danger areas in estates. Their parents also help. The children design posters and conduct assemblies. Feedback from schools has been excellent.

School ethos

- 11.** Sustainable travel is best served when schools bring a combination of measures together: curriculum work, school facilities which cater for sustainable travel, safe routes to school, restrictions on cars – in short, where sustainable travel is part of the ethos of the school.



Orchard Vale Community School in Devon is a newly built school that opened in 1999. The school has an ethos of safer and healthier journeys to school at its heart. It was built on a network of routes for cyclists and pedestrians so that sustainable transport was a priority from the start. Car parking spaces are purposely limited to 15 with 2 'disabled' spaces. A barrier prevents any access to the school by cars during the day and after school it is not opened to allow staff to leave until all children have left the site. The school has covered cycle parking for 50 cycles and storage for roller blades and mini-scooters.

The school has a well-publicised walking bus, which has been running for nearly four years. Sponsorship from a local business covers minor administrative costs, yellow jackets and a reward scheme for participants. Road safety education is part of the curriculum. Between autumn 2001 and 2002 car use dropped by 7 percentage points (now 20 per cent of journeys to school). Walking increased by 2 percentage points (to 45 per cent of journeys to school) and cycling, scooting and roller blading increased by 9 percentage points (to 30 per cent of journeys to school).

7. School travel plans and accessibility planning

Aims and objectives

We want local education and transport authorities to develop a joint strategic approach to school travel issues and to reduce car dependency for journeys to school in their area. School travel plans will be the key strategies for achieving this and we want authorities to work with schools or groups of schools to develop plans to meet local circumstances.

Our objective is that all schools should have active travel plans before the end of the decade.

Issues

1. According to local transport authority returns there are now at least 2,000 school travel plans in place, covering at least 10 per cent of all schools. Schools and local authorities have developed these in the four years since the Government issued guidance in 1999. With this body of experience behind us, we now want to see an accelerated rate of take-up leading to full coverage of all schools within the next seven years – sooner in some areas.



2. To make this possible we have agreed to fund a strengthened team of around 250 **school travel advisers**, who will be responsible for working with schools, and local education and transport authorities to produce strong and effective travel plans. Our new programme of funding for advisers will build on the strengths of our existing bursary scheme but will be much wider ranging, with expenditure rising from £2 million a year this year to around £7.5 million a year in 2004-05. We want to work with schools and local education and transport authorities and we will be putting in place a central project management board to monitor the performance of the individual advisers, and ensure that our objectives are met. Our detailed timetable for implementing the changes described in this chapter is at Annex B.

What works

3. Fortunately, there is already a lot of experience to draw on. Some good starting points are:
- Hertfordshire County Council – the local authority designated as the local transport plan centre of excellence on school travel plans. The council is willing to host site visits for individual authorities. For further details contact John Sykes on 01992 556117 or e-mail john.sykes@hertscc.gov.uk.
 - UK Local Authority School Travel Forum (UK LAST) provides regular training sessions and runs an e-group for local authority staff and others working on school travel plans. For further information see the web site www.lastuk.org or contact Catherine Rawas on 01296 383449 or e-mail crawas@buckscc.gov.uk.
 - The National TravelWise Association – an umbrella organisation for local authority staff engaged on a range of travel awareness activities including school travel plans. The NTWA has a well-developed regional structure. The web site www.travelwise.org.uk has a section on safe routes to school and a link to the Walk to School campaign web site. For further details contact the secretary, Patrick Allcorn, on 020 7941 4747, or e-mail patrickallcorn@tfl.gov.uk.
 - The Department for Transport (DfT) web site – this provides access to a range of research reports and guides at www.dft.gov.uk/local-transport/schooltravel. The key guides are listed at Annex C.
 - The Young TransNet web site – this has a range of child-friendly resources including a facility for schools to complete, analyse and collate the results of school travel questionnaires on-line. Visit www.youngtransnet.org.uk.

Travel plans and the planning system

4. The Government's Planning Policy Guidance on Transport (PPG13) states that:

"travel plans should be submitted alongside planning applications which are likely to have significant transport implications, including those for... new and expanded school facilities which should be accompanied by a travel plan which promotes safe cycling and walking routes, restricts parking and car access at and around schools, and includes on-site changing and cycle storage facilities."

Further guidance published in July 2002 on *Using the planning process to secure travel plans* www.dft.gov.uk/local-transport/schooltravel gives advice on when a planning condition or a s106 agreement would be the more appropriate legal mechanism for specific travel plan elements.

Oxfordshire County Council has helped a total of 80 schools to develop school travel plans in two and a half years (22 per cent of all schools in the county). The council obtained many of these plans by requiring schools to submit them as part of the planning process. The rest have been developed by schools participating in the authority's Better Ways to School programme and by schools supported by the school travel plan co-ordinator.

Admiral Lord Nelson School, Portsmouth was rebuilt on a new site distant from its existing catchment area. The school drew up a travel plan which meant it would work with parents to encourage walking and cycling to the new location. **Cycle routes were built with signal crossings that had instant response times for users.** As a result, 30 per cent of pupils cycle to school and car use is much lower than neighbouring schools despite its out of town location.

Future of travel plans

5. In the next stage of school travel plan activity we want, above all, a clear focus on results and we shall therefore be setting minimum standards for school travel plans which we shall publish later this year.

6. Individual school travel plans will need to be tailored to local circumstances. Where a school has strong links with other schools in the area (for example a secondary and its feeder primary schools) it should always consider developing a joint school travel plan. However, there are elements that we consider every school travel plan must contain. It must be a written document and include:
 - a brief description of the location, size and type of school;
 - a brief description of the travel/transport problems faced by the school/cluster of schools. This should include all pupils' travel needs: journeys to and from school at normal start/finish times, journeys to attend pre- and after-school events and journeys made during the school day to attend activities at other locations;
 - the results of a survey to identify a) how children currently travel to/from school and b) how they would like to travel to/from school;
 - clearly defined targets and objectives;
 - details of proposed measures;
 - a detailed timetable for implementation;
 - clearly defined responsibilities;
 - evidence that all interested parties have been consulted; and
 - proposals for monitoring and review.

7. Before it is recorded in the local transport plan (LTP) annual progress report as a "school travel plan ready for implementation" a school travel plan must have been signed off by:
 - the chair of the board of governors;
 - the local education authority (LEA) (Assistant Director);
 - the local transport authority (Assistant Director); and

- any other party who will play a key role in the implementation of the plan eg local bus operator, the police.
8. In recognition of the effort required on the part of schools in the development of travel plans, we shall be providing additional capital grant to schools whose plans have been signed off as meeting our minimum standards. Details of how this scheme will operate are set out in the parallel publication *Travelling to School: an action plan*. Resources to improve roads around schools and safe routes to schools will continue to be provided through the local transport plan process.
 9. With help from an expert panel we will provide more support and project management from the centre, including monitoring performance against the targets in school travel plans. We also aim over time to raise the profile of school travel activity within mainstream local authority performance regimes.

Accessibility planning

10. **Accessibility planning** is key to partnership working, the development of school travel plans and the delivery of other initiatives to improve accessibility. Accessibility planning provides a process for tackling barriers to accessing learning and other key services.



- 11.** Local authorities that produce LTPs will build accessibility planning into their next LTPs (due in 2005), as outlined in the 2003 Social Exclusion Unit's report, *Making the connections*. LEAs will be key partners in accessibility planning and should work closely with transport planners. Local authorities need to consider improvements to local transport, walking and cycling networks alongside improvements to safety and personal security. They should also look at how accessibility can be improved by reducing the need to travel through changes to the delivery or location of services. By working to improve access to schools for those without a car, alternatives to car use should be made more attractive. The following is an example of techniques for mapping accessibility – public transport accessibility to secondary schools and colleges.

Surrey County Council has models covering public transport, walking, cycling and roads. The council uses these in conjunction with socio-economic and demographic data to monitor changes in accessibility to secondary schools, colleges and other locations. This sort of technique should help authorities identify needs and monitor changes in accessibility. Further details on the use of such techniques in the context of accessibility planning will be given in the guidance mentioned above.

- 12.** DfT will issue guidance next year on how accessibility planning should work and how LEAs and education providers should be involved, following a series of pilot projects.



Annex A

Guidance on local authority child safety audits

(Department for Transport – March 2003)

The term Child Safety Audit was first coined in the Department for Transport's Road Safety Strategy, *Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone*. The strategy asks local authorities to carry out such audits. Some authorities have been unclear about exactly what is required of them. This is intended to provide guidance on the procedures to be followed by local authorities.

First, it is not to be confused with Road Safety Audit, which is an engineering audit carried out for most major highway newbuild and improvement schemes, to ensure at different stages that scheme implementation is consistent with specification requirements and does not build hazards into projects. Fundamentally, Child Safety Audit is about knowing the child road safety problems within an authority's area, implementing strategies to deal with those problems, and subsequently measuring success (scheme experience, where appropriate, can contribute to the MOLASSES (Monitoring Of Local Authority Safety Schemes) database). The data to be collected should include location, severity of the casualty (killed, seriously injured, slightly injured), road user type, age and sex. These are all factors which might influence the nature of the treatment to be adopted.

A comprehensive Child Road Safety Audit will not be limited to this basic information, which should be regarded as a minimum. Careful analysis of the data can identify key groups to be targeted – for example, child car passengers or teenage male cyclists. In some authorities, analysis at ward level, or another geographical area, can also point out links between casualties and social deprivation. Joint authority working may sometimes be helpful in analysis of these relatively small numbers.

Other relevant information includes:

- the total number of school crossing patrol sites, with the percentage staffed (permanent or relief) and the percentage vacant for more than six months;
- the total number of primary and secondary schools and the percentage of each that have Transport Plans or Policies, together with the total number of School Travel Plans and plans to increase their number;

- the total numbers of primary and secondary schools with 'Safer Routes to School' schemes implemented together with the absolute number of 'Safer Routes to School' and plans to increase their number;
- estimates of the percentage year on year increases in numbers of children walking to school and cycling to school; the percentage decrease in parents driving their children to school; the percentage increase in bus usage by pupils and students; the percentage increase in the number of school bus routes. These might be obtained in the context of the evaluation of the Safe Routes to School schemes and their impact on casualties;
- plans to increase the number of 20mph zones;
- plans to improve pedestrian and cycle networks for children; and
- a description of the policy, if any, that residential developments should have a 10 or 20 mph maximum speed limit.

Annex B

Timetable for implementation of changes described in Chapter 7

September 2003	Announcement
October 2003	Regional seminars for schools and local education and transport authorities begin
March 2004	3,000 school travel plans complete
April 2004	Travel advisers recruited
June 2004	Schools with existing travel plans receive capital grant typically £5,000 per primary school and £10,000 per secondary school
September 2004	Exemplar Local Education Authorities start working on proposals for alternative school transport arrangements
March 2005	6,000 school travel plans complete
June 2005	Schools completing travel plans during 2004-5 receive capital grant
September 2005	School transport pilots to move ahead
March 2006	10,000 school travel plans complete
March 2010	All schools have travel plans in place

Annex C

Useful contacts

UK Last (Local Authority School Travel Forum) provides training and runs an e-group for local authority staff and others working on schools travel plans www.lastuk.org. Contact Catherine Rawas on 01296 383449 or e-mail crawas@buckscc.gov.uk.

National TravelWise Association – an umbrella organisation for local authority staff engaged on a range of travel awareness activities including school travel plans www.travelwise.org.uk. Contact the secretary, Patrick Allcorn on 020 7941 4747 or e-mail patrickallcorn@tfl.gov.uk.

Sustrans information service on safe routes to school www.saferoutestoschool.org.uk
Contact 0117 915 0100 or e-mail schools@sustrans.org.uk.

Guidance on School Travel Plans and Related Issues

School travel plans

Travelling to School: an action plan – DfES (September 2003)
www.teachernet.gov.uk/sdtravel

**School Travel Strategies & Plans: A best practice guide for local authorities* – Oscar Faber Ltd and Sustrans for DETR (June 1999)
www.dft.gov.uk/local-transport/schooltravel

A safer journey to school: A guide to school travel plans for parents, teachers and governors – Transport 2000 Trust for DETR, DfEE and DH – DfEE, (June 1999)
www.dft.gov.uk/local-transport/schooltravel

**School travel resource pack* – includes posters, fact sheets, survey questionnaires, OHP slides and notes, and a resource list – DfT (revised January 2003)
www.dft.gov.uk/local-transport/schooltravel

Young TransNet website – has a range of child-friendly resources including a facility for schools to complete, analyse and collate the results of a school travel questionnaire www.youngtransnet.org.uk

Bus travel

**Increasing Bus Use for Journeys to School – a guide to best practice within existing legislation* – DETR (February 2001)

www.dft.gov.uk/local-transport/schooltravel

**The School Run: Training Programme for Bus Drivers* – Crime Concern and First Leeds Buses for DETR (February 2001)

School Transport – The Comprehensive Guide – Sian Thornthwaite (1994)

Improving Mainstream Home to School Transport – Audit Commission (December 2001)

Going Places – Taking People to and from Education, Social Services & Healthcare
Audit Commission (November 2001)

Behaviour on School Buses – ATCO (September 2001)

**Get on Board: an agenda for improving personal security in bus travel guidance and Get on board: good practice case studies* – Crime Concern and Oscar Faber, published by Department for Transport, April 2002

www.dft.gov.uk/local-transport/schooltravel

Local Authority Passenger Transport Operational Procedure – Code of Practice Guidelines for Education & Social Services – NACT (May 2002)

Minibus Safety – A Code of Practice – RoSPA (March 2002)

Special educational needs

Home to School Transport for Children with Special Educational Needs – good practice guidance – DfEE (February 2001)

Improving Mainstream Home to School Transport for Children with Special Educational Needs – Audit Commission (December 2001)

The Special School Run: Reviewing Special Educational Needs Transport in London – Audit Commission (March 2001)

Door to Door Transport for Disabled Londoners into the New Millennium – Transport Committee for London (April 1999)

Accessibility planning

Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion – Social Exclusion Unit (February 2003) www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/published.htm

*These publications are obtainable free of charge from:

Department for Transport
PO Box 236
Wetherby
West Yorkshire
LS23 7NB
Tel: 0870 1226 236
Fax: 0870 1226 237
Text phone: 0870 1207 405
E-mail: dft@twoten.press.net

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR

Telephone 020 7944 8300
Web site www.dft.gov.uk

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