

Going back to school



Managing a safe return presents a number of challenges for schools and head teachers, and one of these is how pupils get to school. Congested roads and busy buses make social distancing difficult. Supporting active travel will be key to creating a safe space at arrival and departure times, and it will also reduce the burden on public transport, leaving it safer for the people who have no other alternative.

For pick-up and drop-off, schools will need to effectively manage timings (perhaps staggering arrival and departure) and space (at the school and in the roads around the school).

Many families have been enjoying walking, running, scooting and cycling as part of their daily exercise. It's a great opportunity to keep this going when schools go back. Many of us have experienced how we can maintain distance from others while travelling actively, including making use of the quieter roads even if that is to briefly step into them to move around people.

Parked cars and traffic around the school makes it difficult to safely maintain distance. Instead space can be used to create active travel corridors. The UK government has produced emergency statutory guidance for local authorities to do just this.



Over one-third of pupils would like to cycle to school if they could.



Active journeys to school contribute on average 17 minutes of MVPA (Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity) for primary school children.



Active travel to school

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

www.sustrans.org.uk


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What the school can do

- Encourage parents to choose active travel modes for their children, sending a letter explaining the importance of avoiding public transport where possible, and the safety issues created by congestion around schools. We've created a leaflet for parents and pupils which you are welcome to distribute around your school.
- Allow bike and scooter parking on school walls/fences to increase capacity and grouping at pods/shelters.
- Identify an off-road park-and-stride location 5-10 minutes' walk away from the school. This could be a supermarket or a council car park. If there is a charge, discuss with the landowner an amnesty during drop-off and pick-up times given the circumstances. Let parents know about it.
- Parked cars and traffic make it difficult to safely maintain distance; instead the physical space around the school site can be changed to create wider footpaths or scoot/cycle lanes. Talk to The Hub or Stockton Borough Council about the possibility of suspending parking bays, removing traffic lanes, discouraging through-traffic or temporarily closing streets to traffic to allow for the widening of footways, pop-up cycle lanes and the development of a safe active travel network to the school.
- Remind children about slowing, stopping and giving space, especially those scooting and cycling. Explain why they should do this and they will be more likely to listen.
- Encourage parents to give older children (Y4 and above) responsibility for getting themselves to and from school. This helps their road confidence and reduces the amount of people around the school.

How We can help

We can help you establish a plan for managing the space around the school to ensure families can get to and home from school safely. We can liaise with your local authority to see how they can support your ambitions.

We can provide educational resources that help you maximise indoor and outdoor space for education. This includes activities that reinforce current social distancing guidelines, build confidence and meet curriculum objectives.

Stay in touch with us, and share your ideas and concerns. We were the UK's first active travel centre and we've been helping keep Stockton moving for 10 years.

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