

CHILD CYCLING SAFETY

Cycling needs to be encouraged – it's green, healthy and fun and it helps children to become more independent.

The basics of cycling safety

These are just some of the rules children who ride on roads should know.

- Young cyclists need to learn what road signs mean
- Children shouldn't cycle on the road without cycle training. Find out if cycle training is available at your child's school – this is the best way to learn the skills and knowledge needed to stay safe on the road.

Helping your child stay safe

- Check your child's bike to see if it's roadworthy: look at brakes, tires and lights/reflectors (when riding at dusk or at night you must have a white front light, and a red back light and reflector).
- Make sure the bike is the right size for

your child.

- When out driving, teach your child about roundabouts, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings.
- Find out where local cycle paths and lanes are.
- Make sure your child uses a helmet which is the right size and is properly fitted. If it is not done up properly it could come off if they have a fall.

They should also wear some high-visibility clothing.

- When out and about with your child look at cyclists and talk about how easy or hard they are to see.
- Ask your school or Local Authority about cycle training in your area. Your child shouldn't cycle on roads until they have been trained.

On the road

- Look behind before you turn, overtake or stop.

- Use arm signals before your turn right or left.
- Obey traffic lights and road signs.
- Do not ride on the pavement unless there is a sign saying that you can.
- On busy or narrow roads do not cycle next to another person.
- When overtaking parked cars, watch out for car doors opening suddenly and allow room to pass safely.
- Do not listen to a personal stereo while cycling.
- Never use a mobile phone while cycling. Remember that if you cycle yourself you should set a good example!

Cycle safety

Children aged around 9 –10 are probably at the age where they are ready to begin making independent journeys, though this will be different for each child.

11 year olds will also be heading to secondary school and may face a longer walk or bike ride, using different roads.

As a parent it is important for you to help your child plan for this important step by showing them how to stay safe.

What do children need to know?

- Where there are dangers or hazards in the locality, such as particularly busy stretches of road, complicated junctions or dangerous bends and hills.
- They need to know the safest route to where they are going: this may not always be the quickest.

- Many local authorities have introduced safe links to school. Where these exist encourage children to use them.
- These are usually off road links which are available for both pedestrians and cyclists.
- Children need to understand that using their eyes and ears all the time is essential to being safe near traffic.
- They should avoid distractions such as chatting to friends, using mobiles or listening to MP3s when crossing roads.

- They also need to understand that the more easily they can be seen by traffic, the more likely they are to avoid accidents.

You can practice pedestrian skills with younger children and show them how to cross the road safely and use the various types of crossing that are available.

Remember that children copy their parents so always set a good example in everything you do near traffic!