



sustrans
**BIG
PEDAL**
2021

19–30 April

Increasing active travel to school

a four-week step-by-step guide

Photo: Paul Tanner



Make sure you follow local coronavirus guidance and maintain social distancing. This means staying two metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

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Introduction

This guide is designed for teachers, parents and governors to help get more people active on the journey to and from school. It contains a suggested programme and top tips for events, activities and lessons to inspire more journeys by **bike**, foot, wheelchair or scooter. You might choose to focus on one form of active travel or all four. The programme is designed to be delivered over **four weeks** (though you can take longer if you wish) culminating in a celebratory week of action.

The ultimate goal is that after this programme, your school community will have made the shift to healthier, more enjoyable school journeys

When?

The activities included in this guide can be delivered at any time of the year to give you the flexibility to fit your school's calendar. You might like to run the programme to target a particular year group, or a particular topic within the curriculum.

The programme also offers a perfect way to prepare for national or local events such as Bike or Walk to School Week, or to get geared up for Sustrans' annual **Big Pedal** cycling, walking, wheeling and scooting to school competition.

Sustrans Big Pedal is a massive annual cycling, walking and scooting to school competition taking place each spring. All schools across the UK are invited to take part in our unique event. Supported by some very kind prize sponsors, Sustrans Big Pedal is free to enter with brilliant prizes up for grabs. For more information, visit www.bigpedal.org.uk.

How?

This guide highlights the activities that are important to make your programme a success, from preparation and planning to raising awareness, then empowerment activities onto your week of action and celebration. It concludes with suggestions to develop your achievements and further embed them in the school culture.



About Sustrans

Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We're a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day.

We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.

It's time we all began making smarter travel choices www.sustrans.org.uk

Getting Started | week 1

To get your programme off to a good start, work through the list of essentials below. At this stage it's key to ensure everyone in the school knows about the programme, supports what you are trying to achieve and that all pupils are included.

ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES

- **Nominate a Champion.** This is someone in the school who will coordinate the activities and events. Many hands make light work, so the more people involved the better. Better still, establish a **working group** to help share tasks.
- **Make sure the Head Teacher is involved** early in the planning process. Having their blessing will help ensure the whole school is onboard and make delivery much easier.
- **Organise a staff meeting** to let everyone know what you've got planned and provide the opportunity to respond to any questions. Invite your school's Inclusion or Parent Liaison Officer.
- **Start to think about what activities you would like to deliver** over the coming weeks. Use our **planning table** at the end of this guide to keep track of what you are going to do and when.
- **Start promoting activities and events** in advance. Put up **posters or other publicity material** and get some information onto the **school website**. You could use TV screens in public areas if you have them.
- **Find out about walking, cycling and scooting training opportunities in your area.** Providing training is an important element in the programme and can take a little while to organise. Start thinking about who would most benefit from taking part and the arrangements for delivering this. Ask your local authority for details, or for cycle training visit www.bikeability.org.uk
- **Think about inclusivity.** Read the **Sustrans Big Pedal Inclusivity Guide** for tips on overcoming barriers to participation.

Tick here



Make a plan for remote learners. This year's Big Pedal is flexible, so that all pupils can take part. Children remote learning due to coronavirus can take part by taking an active journey from home or completing 30 minutes of physical activity at home.



Did you know?


Walking, cycling and scooting (or even roller-skating/blading) to school are great ways to build regular physical activity into young people's lives. Research shows that those who travel to school actively take these positive behaviours into adulthood.

Raising Awareness | week 2

It's now time to get people thinking about the benefits of being active on the school journey and to start publicising all the exciting activities you have planned.

ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES

- ▲ **Communication with parents** – having their support will be crucial to the success of the programme. You could use letters, texts, your website or social media. If you have a Parents Evening coming up, make a display and have someone available to talk to people. **Tick here**
- **Organise a school assembly.** This is a good opportunity to tell all the pupils and staff about the programme and get everyone excited about joining in.
- **Get hold of some copies of a local map** and make them available to pupils, staff and parents – people may be unaware of their route options in the locality. Display a copy of the map on a special Active Travel noticeboard.
- ❖ **A high profile** will help to make your efforts a great success. Get in touch with your local press to publicise your plans and what you are hoping to achieve. You might even get a local business interested in supporting your great work.
- * **Promote active travel to school in a curriculum-linked lesson.** Help pupils learn about the benefits of cycling, walking and scooting whilst achieving the learning objectives of your curriculum.



Do you need to develop your cycle and scooter parking to provide additional space?

Contact your local authority who may be able to provide funding for this. Your PTA may also be able to contribute to the costs.

Find more advice on promoting active travel and using your space effectively to maintain social distance on the Sustrans website.

Did you know?

A 2012 study in Denmark found that children who cycle or walk to school demonstrate a measurable increase in concentration that lasts for up to four hours.

Raising Awareness | week 2

Top tips

- ▲ Your **communications with parents** should promote all of the **fantastic opportunities** on offer. Talk about the benefits of active travel ([download our info sheet](#)) and try to answer some of the key questions that parents are likely to ask – for instance, **how to sign up** for activities and when events are taking place.
- A **whole-school or year-group assembly** is a perfect time to get everyone excited about all your plans. If you are running a **competition or incentive scheme**, this will be a good opportunity to mention them. You will know what will work most effectively in your school – is there a scheme of **work or programme** already running that you could hang these activities on?
- You should be able to get hold of **maps** from your local authority. Your **noticeboard** will be a good place to post information about events, sign-up sheets for activities and details of competitions. The noticeboard could become a permanent feature in your school.
- ❖ Your school probably already has a connection with the **local press** so use all your contacts to publicise your programme. Guidance on how to produce a **press release** is available from the Sustrans website. **Local businesses** might be interested in supporting your work by providing prizes or food for events. They might even want to help out with some of your activities, so your press release could include an appeal for support.



Photo: Paul Tanner

Empowerment | week 3

Your activities so far should have helped create a real buzz about your programme. The next week is about turning this excitement into action by providing the support people need to get cycling, walking, wheeling and scooting to school.

ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES

- ▲ Earlier on in the programme you started to think about **walking, cycling and scooter training** and identified those who would most benefit. Now is the perfect time to deliver it. You may be able to do this in **class time** or **after school**. Involving **parents** can really help to build their **support and enthusiasm**. Tick here
- It's important that your school provides **safe and secure** cycle and scooter storage. Where permanent facilities are not in place, **temporary arrangements** should be made. **Be creative, there are many solutions!**
- Most young people have access to a bike or scooter but many of these may be languishing in the shed with **simple mechanical faults**, meaning they cannot be used safely. Get in touch with your local **bike shop or cycling group** to see if a **qualified mechanic** can fix some of the problems, ideally free of charge.
- ❖ Another way of getting bikes and scooters fit and ready to be used is for young people and their parents to learn the skills to **fix problems themselves**. Run a **puncture repair workshop**, this will help develop **confidence** in learning those all-important **maintenance skills**.



With your week of action just around the corner, have you...

- ...got the **latest news** on the school website?
- ...kept the **governors informed**?
- ...made the most of **publicity opportunities**?
- ...**kept your colleagues up-to-date** on what is happening and when?

Empowerment | week 3

Top tips

▲ Provide **walking, cycle and scooter training** that is appropriate to the needs of your pupils. There will probably be quite a **diversity of existing skills depending on age, development and experience**. Be aware that some young people may be embarrassed to self-identify that they can't scoot or cycle. Include parents and staff if you have capacity – they often benefit from training and it gives them the confidence to let their children cycle. **Tips for how to ride a scooter and the scooter 'L' safety check can be found on the Sustrans website.**

● **Temporary cycle and scooter storage** can be as simple as opening up a **spare classroom**. Some schools have hired **crowd control barriers** or **security fencing**. Others have used old **storage containers** or attached a cable between two secure points to which people can lock their bikes. However, in the long-term something more permanent will be required. See the **Big Pedal Top Tips** for ideas for safe bike and scooter storage during coronavirus.

■ **Dr Bike (maintenance) sessions** are often very popular, so make sure you give everyone plenty of notice and have a system on the day for organising the queue of people, bikes and scooters.

❖ A member of **staff or parent** may have the knowledge to teach some **basic maintenance skills**. You could organise **workshops** before, during or after school depending on what fits best with the school timetable and the availability of pupils, staff and parents. If you can't find anyone to help, there are some great video resources available on the Sustrans website.

Encourage parents to download our free family guide to cycling, walking, wheeling and scooting the school run.

Share this Sustrans Family Guide leaflet with parents so they can download it themselves.

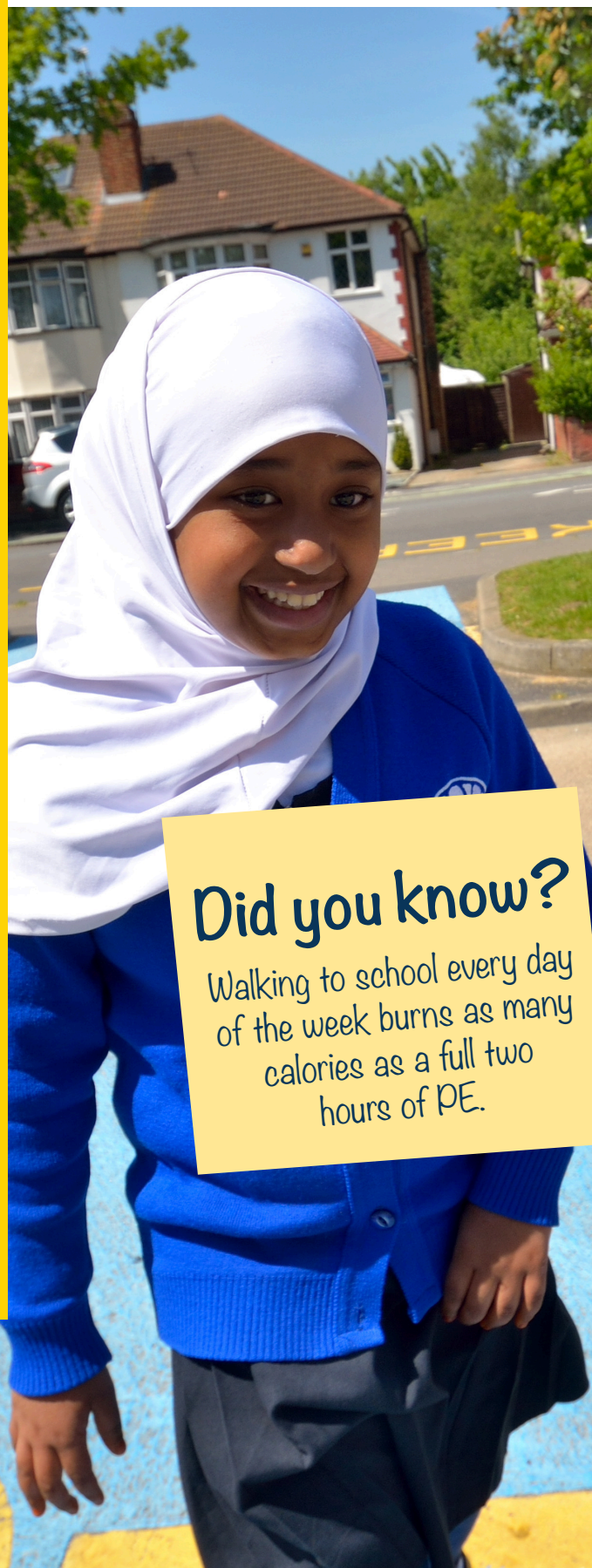


Photo: J Bewley

Action | week 4

Now that you've laid the foundations, it's time to inspire people to take action with a celebratory week. Include a range of activities which will encourage people to give active travel a try. You might also choose to repeat some of the most popular activities from the previous weeks.

TRY THE FOLLOWING

- **Incentive schemes** – see our **Top Tips** on the next page for some great ideas.
- **Active travel breakfast or afternoon tea** – a sure-fire way of encouraging people to get involved is to offer **free food**. Provide a hearty breakfast of croissants, yoghurt or fruit for those who pedal, walk, wheel or scoot to school, or squash and cakes at the end of the day. Local supermarkets and shops will often help out with supplies, at discount or even free, or in secondary schools you could arrange with the canteen to use food vouchers. **Include parents** as well, it's a great chance to chat with them about their daily journey to school.
- **Bling your bike/body** or **soup-up your scooter** –for younger pupils, get everyone to **decorate their bike, clothes or scooter** based on a theme, such as a seasonal event or a curriculum topic. **Award prizes** for the best dressed. Encourage the use of **recycled materials** and make sure everyone knows about the need to keep moving parts of their bike or scooter free from obstructions. These competitions can be run remotely/virtually if required.
- **Be bright, be seen** – a great activity involving the whole school. Get everyone to wear something **very bright** to school using reflective and fluorescent materials. Arrange a **high-vis fashion show** and award prizes for the brightest attire, or investigate different hi-vis materials and lights in a Science class.
- **Wheely great sports day** – give pupils the opportunity to practice their new found skills, for example setting out an obstacle course or putting on a **slow race** competition where the winner is the last to cross the line.
- **Guided ride, scoot or walk** – find out if there are local community groups which can help organise a family bike ride or walk to a park for a picnic, games day or treasure hunt. Teenagers may prefer trips to skate parks, bike tracks, climbing walls or other local amenities.



With the increased amount of people cycling and scooting to school, you will want to make sure everyone knows what to do to **keep their bikes and scooters stored safely and securely**.

If you are planning to lead any activities yourself, be sure to **undertake the appropriate risk assessments**.

Photo: Neil Hanna

Action | week 4

Top tips for incentive schemes

For younger pupils, award a **sticker or stamp** to pupils when they arrive at the school which can be redeemed against a **prize or reward**. These don't necessarily need to be expensive – you might be able to get a **local shop to provide some prizes free of charge** in return for some promotion. Or the reward could be a privilege like extra **golden time**, skipping to the front of the lunch queue, leaving school five minutes early or watching a film at break time.

Raffle tickets can also be a popular incentive, especially for secondary pupils. Every time someone travels to school under their own steam, give them a raffle ticket and at the end of the week, draw the raffle and award a prize in assembly.

Alternatively, if your school has an **existing reward scheme**, take advantage of this.

Good luck getting your school active!

Photo: J Bewley

Moving Forward

Your success in getting more people active on the school journey deserves to be shared. **Celebrate your achievements** and tell everyone what happens next.

What next?

- Were there any popular activities that you could organise again?
- Did any individuals or groups miss out on some of the activities – perhaps you need to provide something special for them or consider any particular needs or interests they might have?
- Thinking about the time of year that you ran the programme, could you repeat it at another time for the benefit of new pupils or to better fit with the school calendar?
- Identify areas of the curriculum where active travel can be discussed, investigated and encouraged. Embedding cycling, walking, wheeling and scooting into the school culture is crucial. Using the curriculum is an ideal way to facilitate this.

Shout about it

- Hopefully you have already had contact with the local press during your programme. Get back in touch with them again now to tell them about everything you have achieved
- Keep communicating with parents, they will want to know about your future plans and what they can do to get involved. The school website, newsletters and noticeboards are a great way to maintain ongoing interest
- Ensure the school governors and PTA hear about the successes of your programme. Is there anything they can do to help get more people active on their school journey?



How Sustrans can help

Our team of expert engineers may be able to 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 also 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. For core project schools, this might include on-site officer support.

For further details, [visit the Sustrans website](#).



Planner

| Action | Empowerment | | Raising Awareness | | Getting Started | |
|--------|-------------|--------|-------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------|
| | Week 3 | Week 3 | Week 2 | Week 2 | Week 1 | |
| | | | | | | Monday |
| | | | | | | Tuesday |
| | | | | | | Wednesday |
| | | | | | | Thursday |
| | | | | | | Friday |
| Week 4 | | | | | | |