

Road Safety Education Newsletter Spring 2023



Set off with a spring in your steps!

Spring can be an inspiring time to get out and about, with flowers, green shoots, buds and blossom breaking through. Walking and cycling for pleasure or your daily commute, brings different things each day as new life comes through after the dark days of winter.

A child's journey to school is recognised as having an impact on the child's safety, on their health and personal development and on the environment. Cambridgeshire's Road Safety Education Team assists schools in developing travel plans, setting up **Junior** and **Youth Travel Ambassador Schemes** and other initiatives to enable pupils and their families have a better school run. These initiatives aim to promote safer, more environmentally friendly and healthier ways for children to get to and from school.



Junior Travel
Ambassadors
lead the way!

A good way to encourage active travel at school, is to take part in a national event such as **Walk to School Week** in May. The 5-day challenge takes place from the 15th to the 19th of May and is designed to help children reach their minimum 60 minutes of exercise per day in a fun way.

School Travel STARS in Cambridgeshire

The Modeshift STARS travel planning system is very successful in Cambridgeshire with to date, 77 Schools actively taking part. It's a great way to encourage sustainable travel and involve the whole school community as well as gaining national recognition for the travel planning.

Schools can achieve 5 levels of award, Green Level for a basic travel plan, Bronze for a good travel plan, Silver for very good, Gold for excellent and Platinum for outstanding.

The schools who have taken the pro-active approach to encouraging active healthy travel have seen numbers of cars near the school drop, and increased numbers of pupils walking, scooting cycling, or walking part of the way to school if families live too far away to walk the whole distance. The most successful schools engage with the community, parents and carers, involve pupils through schemes such as JTA and YTA, and encourage people to park safely away from school.

Currently in Cambridgeshire we have 24 schools at Green level, 36 schools at Bronze level, 1 school at Silver level, 3 schools at Gold level, and 3 schools have achieved Platinum level. The Platinum level schools have been selected by Modeshift to attend the School of the Region Event for their achievements in travel planning and sustainable active travel.

If you would like help with your school travel plan contact:

Rosemary Mullen, Road Safety Officer, STARS School Travel Plans

rosemary.mullen@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Did you know a STARS travel plan can be used to support a planning application and its FREE for schools? STARS also get Road Safety Education input and resources



Headteacher Anthony Aguda and former pupil Hannah Todman with Hatton Park's Modeshift Award

Junior Travel Ambassador News

The Junior Travel Ambassadors have been busy preparing for the 2023 Sustrans Big Walk & Wheel campaign, promoting active and safe travel to and from school. The focus will be on using your wheels, wheelchairs, scooters, and cycles. They will be doing assemblies, running competitions, including the golden lock. (The JTA's put a golden lock on a bike or scooter randomly each day and if you find it you get a small prize.) They will also be doing the mini helmet/egg demonstration to show the importance of wearing a cycle helmet.

The JTA's are involved in national campaigns, and have amongst them, conducted travel surveys, speed surveys, met with a local magistrate to discuss road safety laws, made videos, worked in partnership with a whole village project on a road safety campaign, promoted horse safety and encouraged considerate parking away from the school gate.

They do so much amazing work to help us at the road safety team to get important road safety messages out as well as inspiring active travel not only in their school community but to the wider area too.

Maree Richards, Road Safety Education Officer and JTA Champion



Children (Or Bond!) at Littleport Community Primary were out doing speed checks



Fabulous display of competition entries at Bewick Bridge Community Primary

Youth Travel Ambassadors



The Youth Travel Ambassadors are well underway preparing their campaigns for summer term 2023. Impington Village College, St Bedes Inter-Church School and Northstowe Secondary College have completed their pitches and are now working towards starting their campaign, buying in resources and preparing materials for their idea.

Impington Village College will be splitting their campaign in two parts: firstly, working with the local Spire Hospital to improve bike and pedestrian safety at their entrance, secondly working with link schools to prepare Year 6 pupils for the transition to secondary school, in particular dangers that need to be avoided and encouraging best practice in safe sustainable travel.

St Bede’s Inter-Church School are hoping to use their money to create a bike shop where they can sell discounted goods to fellow students. They also hope to promote safe routes to school to Year 6 pupils in local link schools.

Northstowe Secondary College will be investing the money in a bike toolbox, to help those students who have bike maintenance needs. They will also be working with the local community, development workers and builders to make their route to school safer.

Abbey College and Cromwell will be presenting their pitches soon and the team are looking forward to seeing what the students have come up with! The hard working and enthusiastic YTA’s will be having a busy summer!

Bethany Wiseman, Road Safety Education Officer and YTA Champion



YTA Smoothie Bike Event at St Bede’s Inter-Church School

Helping schools find active travel solutions

Walk to School week!

15-19 May 2023



Take up the challenge and see how many journeys to school can be made on foot (or other active travel method) during this week in May. It is a great opportunity to promote healthy habits and there are plenty of resources to support along with badges as rewards from [Living Streets](#).

Reducing school run traffic is a huge battle for many schools. Focussing on the positives of an active week can help reduce congestion and create cleaner air around the school gate. Additionally, children are proven to be happier and arrive at school ready to learn if they get exercise on the way.

It has been great to see schools across the County embrace active travel and promote walking zones around their school with the **Take 5 Project**. Last term Coates Primary School and Orchard Park Primary School have been among the schools enthusiastically taking up the challenge.

The Road Safety Education Team are here to support schools wanting to make a switch away from car journeys. We can assist with 5 minute walking zones (The Take 5 Project), walking buses and other schemes to help your school make a more permanent switch to active travel.

Sarah Swire, Take 5 Project Officer



The School Crossing Patrol Service

For generations they have been a friendly face helping schoolchildren in Cambridgeshire to cross the road safely.

History

It's a role that has a long history as the first lollipop lady was Mary Hunt, a school caretaker who began work helping pupils in Bath get to lessons on September 21, 1937. Two of Britain's first Road Safety officers – Dorothy Pummell in Barking and Jock Brining in Dagenham – began recruiting 'active retired gentlemen' to help school children cross the road, issuing the men with a lollipop, white coats, yellow armbands, and peaked caps.



Other boroughs followed suit and the patrols were recognised officially with the introduction of The School Crossing Patrol Service as part of The London Traffic (Children Crossing Traffic Notices) Law of 1952.

The Act allowed any person authorised by the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, using the prescribed traffic sign, to stop traffic in order to allow children to cross. Traffic had to stop before reaching the patrol or be fined £5. The 1953 School Crossing Patrol Act extended the idea nationally. Since then patrols have been granted the right to stop traffic and to escort adult pedestrians across the road as well as children.

The first stop signs on a pole were black-and-white rectangles; the round sign, immediately dubbed the lollipop, was introduced in the 1960s.

Later this year is the Platinum Jubilee of the formation of the School Crossing Patrol Service.

Commemorative badges are being sent out to all SCP's with a special presentation for the longest serving SCP's we have in Cambridgeshire.

For the men and women who still carry out this important role each week it remains a rewarding job. Patroller Sue Lambert says it's the children she meets that make being a lollipop lady such as enjoyable job. "The kids are great. They tell you everything, they're like open books. It's a lot of fun," says Sue, who lives a short walk away from her post.

The good old British weather can make it a challenge at times but Sue says she enjoys being outside in the fresh air. "The weather can get you down a bit when it's cold or it's throwing it down with rain but you've got to remember why you're there and get on with it. Time runs away with you and before you know it it's the end of the school year," she says.

Teaching children – and quite often their parents – about road safety is an important part of the job. Although patrols sometimes have a varied day! One such occasion was when Janice Woodland had just helped a child cross the road to Alderman Jacobs Primary School when seven horses ran into Drybread Road shortly before the start of school. The horses stopped charging down the road when they saw Mrs Woodland and jumped into a garden. "I just stood there and held my stick out a bit and they must have been startled by my jacket. It was just like one man and his dog the way they saw me and all went into the garden!" This year Janice is being presented with a long service award for her 25 years in the role.





It's tempting to think if Spring as a dry season simply because it isn't winter. But April showers and strong winds can cause all kinds of challenges for motorists

Here are some of our top tips to stay safe on the roads this Spring:

Rain and water

- Rainwater can make the road surface slippery, especially if it's mixed with oil. It'll take you longer to come to a stop on slippery surfaces, so make sure you give yourself plenty of space
- Ensure your tyre tread stays within legal limits, even when parked
- Look for signs of wear and tear on your wiper blades and use windscreen wash rather than just water
- Watch out for flooded roads. If the surface water looks too deep to drive through, or if you're not sure, find an alternative route. If it's passable, keep a safe distance to avoid bow waves from other cars and test your brakes as you exit the flooded area
- Beware of aquaplaning, which is a loss of contact with the road due to surface water. If you lose control of your vehicle's steering and braking, remain calm, keep a low speed and ease off the brake and accelerator until your tyres are touching the road again
- Keep an eye out for potholes that might have formed over the winter months. Hitting one at speed can cause damage to your vehicle. If you do hit one, try not to brake too sharply

Wind

- Strong winds can blow all kinds of things into the road. Pay attention to which direction the wind is coming from and look for potential hazards
- Take care when driving alongside high-sided vehicles. They'll shield you from the wind, but you may be hit by a sudden gust when you've passed them. Make sure you give yourself enough distance to stop if you need to react quickly

Sun and brightness

- The low spring sun can cause glare on your windscreen. Try cleaning the inside of it with water and detergent and then drying it with a microfibre cloth
- Use your visor if you need to, adjust your mirrors and wear sunglasses. Always be alert – just because you're prepared for it doesn't mean that other road users are



Animals and atmosphere

- Spring sees a lot of animals taking their first steps into the world. Be extra careful when driving on rural roads – slow down and don't rev your engine if you see an animal
- If you suffer from hayfever or other allergies, make sure any medication you take is non-drowsy. Take all necessary precautions and change the pollen filter in your car regularly to avoid streaming eyes



As the days start drawing out and the temperature becomes a little milder, driving conditions will change too. Here's some tips to help keep you safe and prepared through the spring months

Vehicle Checks

Every week

- Check that your windscreen and bodywork is free from cracks, chips or damage
- Check your electrics – turn on all your lights and make sure they are all working
- Keep your tyres inflated – check the pressures and ensure your tread stays within legal limits, even when parked

Every 2 weeks

- Keep the battery in condition by starting the engine. Keep it running for around 30 minutes to let the battery charge up, but make sure you do this in an open space, not a garage as the fumes can be toxic
- It's a good idea to top the fuel tank, it helps to stop moisture from getting in and stops the pipes and seals from drying out too much
- Check your coolant, oil and screen wash levels

Top tip: reduce the weight of your car by removing all the winter equipment you kept in the boot. A lighter car will mean better fuel or battery efficiency.

Not sure what to check? Remember FLOWER

So, when it comes to general maintenance, there are 6 key areas to keep on top of:

- Fuel
- Lights
- Oil
- Water
- Electrics
- Rubber

When it comes to remembering them, just think **FLOWER**.



Useful for traffic updates

[\(@Cambs_Traffic\) / Twitter](#)

[Travel Updates - Highways England](#)

[BBC Weather](#)