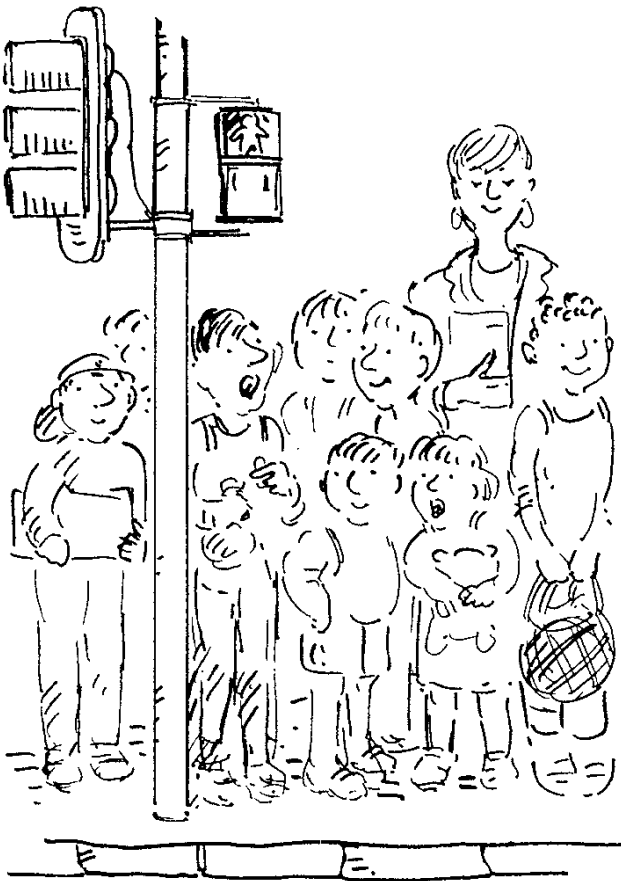
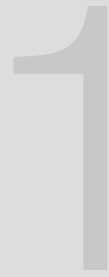


# Road safety



## Travelling safely to and from school on foot

Statistics indicate that the journey home from school is the one that results in most casualty collisions to primary-aged children. Many parents and children assume that by the age of 11, children have mastered the skills they need to be safe in the traffic environment. The perceptual and motor skills needed require attention, judgment, timing and control.

Like learning to play tennis or the piano, road crossing needs supervised practice in

successively more difficult situations before it is mastered. Parents need to observe how their children go about choosing the safest place to cross, how thoroughly they scan for traffic, how directly they cross and whether they behave as carefully when they have friends with them. It is not sufficient for a child to 'know' what to do, or be able to explain what to do when asked: parents need to observe deliberately and determine for themselves how ready their child is for independent travel. Children aged 10 and 11 are still likely to be confused when traffic conditions change suddenly.

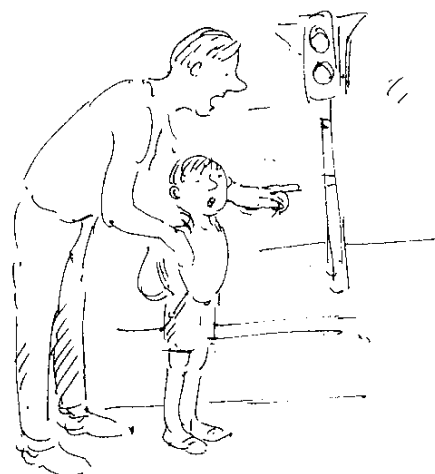
Above all, parents need to lead by example, following road rules and choosing the safest road crossing option.

## What parents need to know and do

- Continue to reinforce the need to search thoroughly for traffic no matter how quiet the road may seem.
- Encourage children to use controlled crossings wherever possible.
- Work out with the child the safest route to take to and from school – especially when starting secondary school.
- Encourage the child to wear or carry something bright on dull days and if the child will be travelling in the dark.
- Be aware that children may seem to know what to do in traffic but can still be distracted when with a group.
- Observe children's road crossing behaviour to determine their readiness for independence.
- Talk to children about the road rules that affect pedestrian safety. Stress that children should aim to spend as little time on the road as possible: i.e. take the most direct route when crossing.

## What children need to know and do

- Explain and demonstrate safe road crossing at controlled and uncontrolled intersections, using the 'Stop, Look, Listen and Think' procedure.
- Explain and demonstrate how to use children's crossings, pedestrian and railway crossings and at lights.
- Work out with parents the safest route to take to and from school and explain what makes it safe.
- Cross safely mid-block and, when necessary, from between parked cars.
- Be aware that it is easy to be distracted from checking thoroughly for traffic when with a group.
- Have a good understanding of the road rules that affect pedestrians: such as drivers do not have to give way to pedestrians at roundabouts, but are required to give way to pedestrians crossing the road into which they are turning. Children also need to be aware that drivers do not always do this.



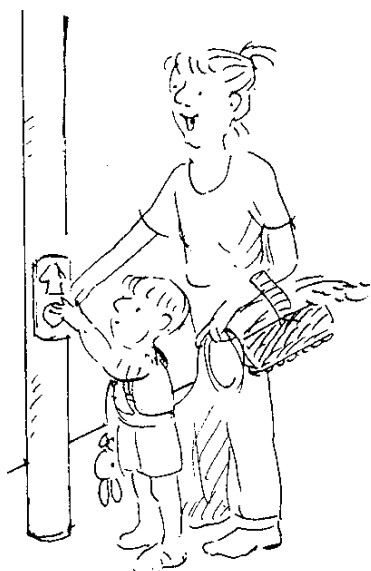
## What parents need to know and do

- Make sure all child passengers use a correctly fastened seat belt on every journey – one seat belt per passenger.
- Carry child passengers in the back seat where it is safer. If the front seat has to be used, the biggest (not necessarily the oldest) child should travel in the front.
- Drive slowly and carefully near schools, and obey the lowered speed limits around schools. This will be a 40kph zone during school pick up and drop off times, or 60kph in some settings.
- Obey **all** parking signs. In particular, never double park.
- Make sure you do not park too close to or on a school crossing, so that drivers and children have maximum opportunity to see each other.
- Children must always enter and exit the car on the kerb side, the safety door side.
- Try to pick up and drop-off on the school side of the road even if this means parking further away from the school.
- Make sure children understand that vehicles only have to stop at a school crossing when the flags are in place.
- Give children plenty of time to get to school. A child, who is anxious about being late, is likely to take risks when crossing the road. (It is also true that a driver who is anxious about being late is likely to be less cautious when approaching a school.)

## Travelling safely to and from school by car

Many parents believe that they are keeping their children safer by driving them regularly to school. In fact current road statistics show that the likelihood of death or serious injury in a car is far greater than as a pedestrian, school bus traveller, public transport user or bicyclist. Driving may actually contribute to more dangerous traffic congestion around schools. Being driven to school deprives children of the opportunity to develop and practise vital road crossing skills under supervision. (See *Travelling safely on foot*).

Parents need to be aware of the dangers associated with dropping-off and picking up children from school. Many schools resort to calling their council by-laws officers to police unsafe parent parking. Crossing the road is the greatest danger to children who are driven to school, but passenger safety is equally important.



## What children need to know and do

- They need to wear a seat belt on every journey. It should sit flat on the shoulder, and low over the pelvis and have all slack removed if it is to provide maximum protection in a crash.
- Expect and prefer to travel in the back seat because it is safer. If absolutely necessary, older students should occupy the front passenger seat rather than younger children.
- Know how to use a children's crossing with or without a supervisor and understand the 'Stop, Look, Listen, and Think' road-crossing process.
- Enter and exit the car via the kerbside door, the safety door.
- Understand that quarrelling, scuffling and noisy behaviour can distract the driver who needs to be particularly alert when driving around schools.
- Understand that on wet days vehicles may take longer to stop and drivers will find it harder to see pedestrians crossing the road.
- Be confident that it is better to be late than never.

## Travelling safely to and from school by bus

Bus travel is traditionally a very safe form of transport. Only one child has died on a school-route bus in the last thirty five years in Victoria.

It is unusual for buses to crash or for bus passengers to be hurt. When children do suffer serious or fatal injury it is on their way to the bus stop or after leaving the bus; again, most frequently after school.

## What parents need to know and do

- Make sure your child has plenty of time to get to the bus stop. A child who is anxious about missing the bus is likely to take risks.
- Drop your child on the same side of the road as the bus stop if possible. If it is not possible, stop the car and accompany your child to the other side of the road. Make sure you demonstrate the 'Stop, Look, Listen and Think' procedure when crossing the road.
- Encourage your child to wear light coloured clothing or carry a bright coloured school bag, especially on wet or dark days.
- Make sure your child understands to wait quietly for the bus, well back from the kerb and knows what to do if the bus is late or does not arrive at all.
- Remind your child to keep bags and sports equipment under seats and that nothing should go out the window – no papers, litter, arms or heads.
- Make sure your child knows where the emergency exit is in case they ever need to use it and advise them to follow the driver's instructions in an emergency.
- When meeting the bus to collect your child at the end of the day, do not park in the bus-parking bay. Buses need all the space that they are allocated. Wait and/or park on the same side of the road as the bus stop. If you can't park on the bus stop side of the road, try to wait for your child on the bus stop side. Children, who are tired or excited at the end of the day, are safest if you meet them at the bus stop and cross the road together.
- Notify the school if an older child, who usually travels with a younger child, will be away from school.
- Notify the school if your child is going to travel home by a means of transport that is different from usual.

## What children need to know and do

- Feel that being ready on time is a good thing.
- Understand that they need to step well back from the bus to leave room for it to leave, wait until the bus has gone and **stop** at the curb, **look** to see there is a clear view **both** ways down the road **listen** for any traffic that maybe out of view (say round a corner or obscured by vegetation or construction) and **think** before deciding to cross the road.
- Assist in selecting bright clothing or bag that they are happy to wear or carry in order to maximise their visibility.
- Know where it is safe to wait for the bus and what to do if the bus is late or does not come.
- Try to sit in a seat, with bags under the seat and not put their heads or arms out the window.
- Know where the emergency exit in the bus is and expect the driver to take control in an emergency.
- Wait at an agreed place to be collected or have identified a safe route to take home.
- Not behave in such a way as to distract the driver who is responsible for the safety of everybody on the bus.
- Take responsibility for their own and others' safety.

## Travelling safely to and from school by bike

Like road crossing, cycling skills take many years of practice to develop and need graduated, supervised practice in the real world with a caring adult. Most deaths from crashes involving bicycles result from head injury. Protecting the head from sudden impact is vital. When riding a bicycle on the road, a cyclist is regarded as being in charge of a vehicle and must obey the same rules as motorists as well as some special ones for cyclists.

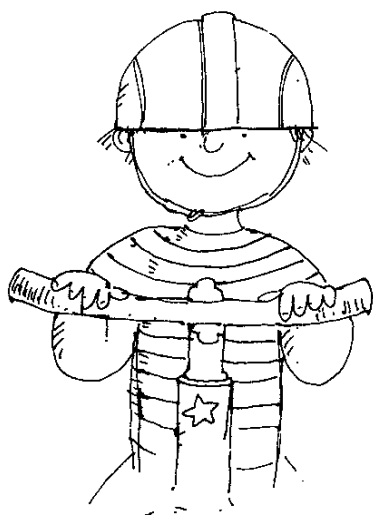
## What parents need to know and do

When cycling, set a good example not only to your own but also to others' children.



Ensure that:

- You do a regular bike check with your child. It is a good idea to ask your local bike shop that has the expertise to help you with this.
- Your child's bike is the right size.
- Handlebar ends are covered.
- The seat is the right height and firm.
- The bell or horn is in working order.
- The pedals spin freely.
- Tyres are fully inflated.
- Brakes are in working order.
- There is a white headlight and red tail light and reflectors if the child is likely to ride at night or even at dusk.
- Insist that children never ride without a helmet. Allow children to choose the helmet as long as it meets the Australian Safety Standard AS/NZS 2063.
- Ensure children's helmets fit well, are not damaged and that children understand that the helmet will not do its job if the straps are not done up or are loose.
- You ride with your children on the footpath (this is legal if you are supervising a child under 12) and check that both you and your children:
  - Keep left
  - Give way to pedestrians
  - Obey signs
  - Do not ride too fast for others' safety
  - Are extra careful around dogs, young children or elderly path users
  - Are aware of the dangers associated with driveways, laneways and intersections



- Dismount at pedestrian and children's crossings.
- If children ride on the road, check that they ride predictably, by using bike lanes correctly, signalling their intentions well, moving precisely and clearly, scanning properly, and gaining eye contact with other road users when appropriate.

### What children need to know and do

- Understand it is important to have a well maintained bike that is the right size.
- Be able to pump up their own tyres and check that brakes, horn and lights are working well before each use.
- Wear an approved helmet (with an Australian Standards certification – this should be a tag stuck on the helmet) that is correctly positioned, firmly fastened with no slack in the straps when and wherever they are cycling.
- Understand the rules for riding on footpaths, shared footways and roads.
- When riding on the footpath, keep left, give way to pedestrians and ride at a speed that is safe for other path users.
- When riding on the footpath take special care when approaching driveways, laneways and intersections.
- When riding on the road, ride predictably, one metre out from the kerb.
- Understand that motorists find cyclists very hard to see, especially at dusk and at night. It is important to wear bright clothing and have good head and tail lights.

- Wherever they ride they need to scan well ahead, checking for others and potential hazards.
- Cyclists are expected to dismount and wheel their bikes across pedestrian and children's crossings.
- It is important not to let friends distract them from safe, responsible riding when travelling together.

### Resources for teachers

While the perceptual and motor aspects of road crossing and cycling are most effectively developed in the real world with parents and carers, school based activities are important in giving children the opportunity to reflect on what they have learned from experience. Teachers can provide additional reinforcement activities that assist in the development of responsible attitudes to safety, and can clarify rules and responsibilities and confirm children's understandings.

#### **Kids on the Move**

A new traffic safety education resource for primary schools has been developed. *Kids on the Move* provides the essential learnings in Traffic Safety. The resource consists of three books and a DVD for use with parents and carers. Book 1 explains a whole-school approach to improving road safety for students. Books 2 and 3 contain essential and practical activities for schools to conduct. The DVD, *A Child's World of Traffic*, highlights for parents the developmental issues that put their children at risk. *Kids on the Move* can be downloaded online at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/traffic/resources.htm>

#### **Bike Ed – for children aged nine to 13.**

The Bike Ed program (years 4–6 primary school resource) has been redeveloped throughout 2007/2008 and is now available for schools as of Term 1 2009.

Resource components:

- 1 DVD – *Ed's Excellent Bike Ed Adventure* a ten-minute film designed to motivate and instruct students on best practice for cycling on the road. [NEW]

- 2 Teachers manual – with practical and classroom activities, information sheets and take home activities (130 pages)
- 3 Family Guide – information for parents (20 pages) to support their child's riding skills development, emphasise the need for correct riding gear and a safe bike and highlight safer places to ride. [NEW]  
Available online at <http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/Home/RoadSafety/RoadSafetyEducation/PrimarySchools/#Ed>
- 4 Cycling scenes – for class discussion (11) with teacher notes on back pages (A3)
- 5 Student certificates (3 levels)
- 6 Traffic signs – 5 durable/plastic coated (A3) signs are used by teachers to simulate on-road traffic signs that riders observe and respond to whilst on the Bike Ed course in the school ground.
- 7 Vehicle cards – 4 durable/plastic coated (A3) used to simulate on-road vehicles used during sessions taking place on the *Bike Ed* course in the school ground.
- 8 Set of checklists – A5 size laminated sheets are designed for use during riding activities to ensure that all riding manoeuvres are covered.
- 9 CD Rom – This resource provides an opportunity for teachers to print any components of the Bike Ed program they require. [NEW]

To order – contact Vic Roads Bookshop,  
60 Denmark Street, Kew Vic 3101

**T** (03) 9854 2782

**E** [bookshop@roads.vic.gov.au](mailto:bookshop@roads.vic.gov.au)

### **Bike Ed training**

Schools wanting to run a bicycle safety education program must have a staff member in charge who has successfully completed the Bike Ed instructor training course conducted by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's preferred provider – Wilcare Services Pty Ltd.

**T** 03 5277 2327 or 0438 525 889

**W** <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/traffic/proflearn.htm> or  
<http://www.bikeed.com.au>



### **Additional materials**

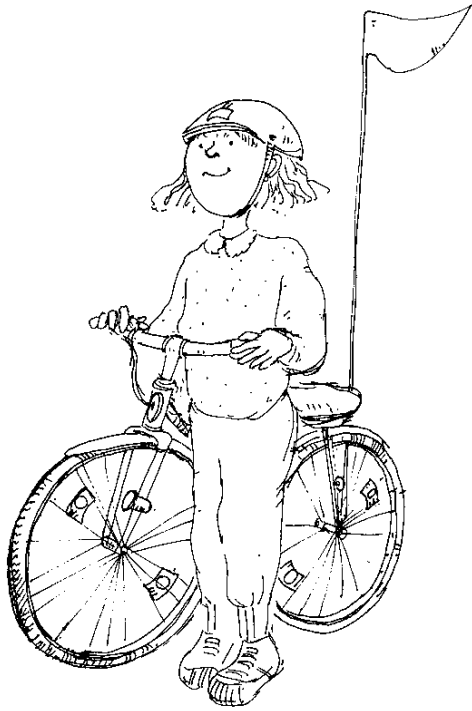
VicRoads Bookshop can also supply a range of posters, stickers and parent information free of charge to teachers of traffic safety education. VicRoads also has a video library that makes available a range of videos on all road safety issues free of charge to schools and community groups. For further information, to order a catalogue or a title you already know, contact VicRoads

60 Denmark Street, Kew VIC 3101

**T** (03) 9854 2782.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has a number of online resources and links to other agencies' support for schools:

- *One Near Miss is a Miss Too Many* is a bus safety DVD for use by teachers, parents and students. This DVD covers all the major teaching points on bus safety for parents and students in the one resource. Available from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
**T** (03) 9637 3328
- *The Administrative Guidelines for Traffic Safety Education* can be accessed at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/traffic/>. The guidelines provide information on policy direction and how to run practical programs in schools.
- Links to all the key road safety agencies that support schools can be found on the Department of Education and Early



Childhood Development website <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/traffic>

- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development supports schools, together with the key road safety agencies, to incorporate Traffic Safety Education in

their core curriculum with resources, professional learning opportunities and readings and links to other support agencies.

- To find a wide range of classroom and support materials, programs and guidelines for teachers and school leaders visit <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/traffic/resources.htm>
- To find out about Traffic Safety Education teacher training, local and regional support officers, conferences and research materials visit <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/traffic/proflearn.htm>
- For further assistance and resources offered by a wide range of Victorian agencies that support Traffic Safety Education in schools visit <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/traffic/agencies.htm>

*Our thanks to Vic Roads and The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for contributing this section.*