



# ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS K–12

## Cycling school bus

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### **Cycling school bus planning and implementation: considerations for schools**

A cycling school bus is a group of primary school children who ride bicycles (or another wheeled device) to and/or from school along a set route, accompanied by supervising adults. One adult 'drives' at the front of the 'bus' while another adult supervises at the rear of the 'bus'. The cycling school bus picks up 'passengers' at designated 'cycling bus stops' on the way to and/or from school.

The responsibility for a child's travel to and from school remains a parent responsibility.

The decision to implement a cycling school bus should be made at the local school level in consultation with the school community as a number of significant concerns must be considered prior to implementing one.

Your local council's Road Safety Officer or local police youth liaison officer may be able to provide additional support in planning and/or implementing a cycling school bus at your school.

Implementation and management by the P&C is preferred if the parent/carers are the volunteers.

Regular reviewing and evaluating of the cycling school bus by parents/carers, students and volunteers should be conducted to check for ongoing suitability, safety and risk management.

The organisers and drivers of the cycling school bus should be clearly identified, e.g. on the school P & C website, and in all correspondence.

#### **Concerns**

- child protection procedures and current working with children checks for volunteers
- potential risks for children in the traffic environment, e.g. assessing local traffic conditions, distance students need to ride, age of students, inclement weather, students who miss the cycling school bus, stray dogs, students level of cycling skills
- liability of supervising adults if an incident occurs
- potential risks
- absences/unavailability of cycling bus drivers and supervisors on any given day
- managing behaviour of cycling bus 'passengers' in the traffic environment
- knowledge of safe road user behaviours by cycling school bus 'drivers' and supervisors
- parental permission for student involvement in a cycling school bus
- managing daily participation in a cycling school bus, e.g. late comers, absent students, attendance lists

#### **Questions to consider when planning and implementing a cycling school bus**

- How far does this cycling school bus travel? Is it a suitable distance for the age of the students?
- What ability level of students will be expected to participate in the cycling school bus? How will this be assessed?
- What if a student shows up without a helmet, or with an un-roadworthy bike?
- Who decides the route/s?



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- How many cycling school bus routes would be needed to cater for the current students interested in participating?
- Will there be different routes for different ability levels?
- Will students riding bikes with training wheels be able to participate?
- What happens if a parent wants their student involved but the cycling school bus doesn't travel that way?
- Is the route changed each year to cater for the current students who want to participate?
- Does the cycling school bus operate to and from school or just one way?
- Who is responsible for gaining written permission and ensuring all students who travel on the cycling school bus have signed the relevant forms?
- How do new parents join and could this affect the route?
- Who do parents inform if a student is absent from the cycling school bus that day? Who keeps the list of who's attending?
- What happens if a student turns up to ride to/from school and no written parental permission has been given?
- What happens if a student is running late? Does the cycling school bus wait?
- Who coordinates the cycling school bus if the organising team pulls out?
- What happens if the cycling school bus driver and/or supervisor don't show up?
- What happens in wet weather?
- What happens if there is a change during the day and a student is picked up from school early by the parent?
- Who conducts the driver/supervisor training? What road safety messages are given at the training?
- What happens if a student's behaviour is not safe near the roads?
- Can a student be banned from travelling by the cycling school bus?
- Who deals with misbehaviour and when?
- Is there a limit/ratio to the number of students involved in the cycling school bus?
- Does the volunteer need to have a first aid certificate and carry a first aid kit?
- How will the supervisors manage when a student gets a flat tyre?
- What happens if the numbers of volunteers drop?
- What happens if the volunteer takes a different route to the designated route and a crash occurs?
- What happens if the route becomes dangerous due to changes in the traffic environment, e.g. road works? Who decides to change the route? Can the volunteer change the route?
- How are hazards communicated to the volunteer and who develops the strategies to lessen the risk, e.g. stray dogs, driveways, building works, uneven footpaths, no footpaths, parked cars on footpaths, et al?
- What happens if students are kept in at school, or are late back from an excursion? Does the cycling school bus wait? Who is responsible for notifying parents of the delay?
- Does the volunteer pick up and drop the student at the gate/house or a cycling school bus stop?



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- Who is responsible if no adult is there to meet the student at their home at the end of the day, especially if it's a younger student?

#### **Suggested strategies to assist volunteers**

- wearing high vis vests by cycling school bus driver, supervisors and students
- carrying mobile phones, or walkie talkies if mobile reception is poor, by driver and supervisors
- setting clear communication around routes/timetables and procedures that are readily accessible to the whole school community
- providing and reinforcing key cycling safety messages by parents/carers, students, the cycling school bus driver and supervisors
- reinforcing and practicing safe cycling behaviours with all students on every cycling school bus route.

Speak to your local [Road Safety Education Officer](#) for further advice.