

Going back to school



Now more than ever, it's important for the way we travel to be safe for ourselves and the people around us. If children walk, scoot or cycle to school then it reduces the burden on public transport, and creates a safer, less congested environment around the school gates.

Many families have been enjoying walking, running, scooting and cycling as part of their daily exercise. It's a great opportunity to keep this going when schools go back. Our surveys show that pupils would prefer to travel actively if they were given the choice. The surveys we carry out with pupils, for example, show that over one-third of pupils want to cycle to school and a massive majority are positive about travelling actively.

Children enjoy being active. They arrive at school fresh and ready to learn. The streets around school are safer with less congestion. It's healthy for us all and it's also good for the planet (and doesn't create air pollution around the school). It's a chance to chat and share things as a family.

Many of us have experienced how we can maintain distance from others while travelling actively, including making use of the quieter roads even if that is to briefly step into them to move around people. We can keep travelling actively, but the roads have got busier, so there is some advice overleaf about how to do this safely.

-  90% of secondary school children own bikes, but only 1% ride to school.
-  15 minutes of exercise (including a walk, scoot or cycle to school) can improve a child's mood.
-  Active travel to school can increase a child's concentration level by up to 4 hours.

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

www.sustrans.org.uk

Advice on Social Distancing on the Journey to School

- Give yourself a bit more time in the morning. People walking, running, scooting and cycling tend to arrive at school over a longer time period. This makes it easier to manage limited space on the roads and paths around school.
- Vary your route if you can. This can be more interesting and pleasant, especially if you can stay away from busy roads. Remember, you can often walk a different route to the one you would have to drive. Try and find the route less travelled.
- Stop and wait for people to pass (and say hello). Look for wider areas of the path for example at junctions, and feel confident about using other people's driveways so people can pass.
- Remind children about slowing, stopping and giving space, especially if they are scooting and cycling.

What You Can Do

If you live too far away to travel actively or don't feel it is possible for you, please try and "park and stride", ideally using an off-street car park perhaps 5-10 minutes away from school. That way, your children still get the benefits of active travel.

If you think the footpaths are not wide enough, talk to the school's head teacher and Stockton Borough Council . Many local authorities have an online resource where you can report problems directly to their Highways team. It may be possible to reallocate road or parking bay space as has happened elsewhere in the country. There may be opportunities to widen footpaths, try pop-up cycle lanes and close the roads around schools to traffic during drop-off and pick-up times. It is your ideas that can help make this happen.

Stay in touch with us, and share your ideas and concerns. The Hub is the UK's longest running Active Travel Centre and we've been helping keep Stockton moving for 10 years.



If you're walking or cycling to school, it's important to know the best route to take so your journey can be as quick and safe as possible. Scan this QR code with your phone's camera, find your school map, and follow the best route to get you there! Clicking on the top right on the map should open it in the Google Maps app on your phone.

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