Moving from Primary to Secondary School: Parent information

Your child is about to go through some big changes in their life, moving from Primary School up to Secondary School. There will be lots for you both to think about but it's important to begin to prepare your child for the new journey from home to school.

Follow the tips below to ensure that your child's transition to secondary school is as safe and smooth as possible.

Young people are in a higher risk group as road users during the early years of secondary school. Research shows that pupils in Years 7 to 9 are twice as likely to be hurt on the roads compared to pupils in Years 4 to 6.

This may be the first time your child is travelling to school without you. Help prepare them for their new school journey and make sure they have the skills needed to judge traffic and make safer decisions.

Before your child starts school in September discuss and practise the new school route together. Use the same mode of transport they will be using either walking, bicycle or bus.

Have you used our Footsteps child pedestrian parent guide? Download your **Footsteps Guide.**

OXFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

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Walking

Walking is a great form of exercise that can have a positive impact on both your child's physical and mental health.

If your child regularly walks to school, not only will it benefit them, but it will also reduce traffic, meaning less pollution and a better environment for us all.

- Practise the route during the school holidays; even though the traffic is likely to be lighter or different from the normal school run, it will help.
- Under your guidance, let your child plan their route, and perhaps an alternative as well, allowing them to work out problems for themselves as far as possible.
- Discuss any changes to the routine, such as visits to friends' houses, after-school clubs or late finishing and how this might affect their safety – it might it be dark, could the route involve busy roads, will they be alone or in a group?
- Talk to your child about using mobile phones while walking. Is it a safe thing to do? Can they concentrate on traffic if they are distracted or cannot hear?
- Talk about behaviour on the journey to school, how to overcome peer pressure and stay sensible.
- Is your child worried about this new journey or are they feeling confident?

Cycling

As with walking, practise the route before the first day at school, and alternative routes they may need to take. Like walking, cycling is a great form of exercise that will benefit your child and help to reduce congestion on our roads and pollution in the environment.

- Has your child completed Cycle Training at school?
- Do they own and wear a cycle helmet?
- Do they have and wear bright or high visibility clothing to ensure that they can be seen by other road users?
- Is the bike in good working order – check the brakes, tyres and steering?
- Does the bike have good lights for dark, gloomy or foggy conditions?
- Do they know the rules of the road (Highway Code) for cyclists?
- Discuss with your child whether it is safe to use their mobile phone while cycling. Can they really concentrate on traffic if they are distracted or cannot hear?
- Talk about the importance of obeying traffic signals and, in particular, not cycling on the inside of large vehicles. Ask your child what are the risks of doing this?
- Ask your child if they understand the need to respect pedestrians and give way to them as necessary on shared pedestrian / cycle paths?
- Moving from cycle paths on to the road. Talk to your child about what they must do before joining the road from a cycle path.
- Can they resist peer pressure? Talk about what they would they do if other children make fun of them for wearing a cycle helmet or high visibility clothing?
- Ask if your child is worried about this new journey or are they feeling confident?

For more information on Cycle Safety visit

Buses

If the new route to school involves a bus journey, find out where the bus stops near to the school. Will they need to cross a road and, if so, where is the best place to do this?

- Look into the timings for both the morning and afternoon journeys.
- Think about how after school clubs or any other changes to your child's normal routine might affect their journey.
- Remember in the winter, it could be dark in the morning or after school. Is your child likely to be alone at the bus stop?
- Talk to your child about the plan of action if they should miss their bus.
- Ask your child if they would be allowed to travel if they forget or lose their bus pass and talk about how they can ensure that they always have it with them.
- Talk to your child about the importance of always wearing their seat belt, even if there are others who are not.
- Ask how they should behave on the bus and what sort of behaviour might make it difficult for the driver to concentrate.
- Discuss how silly or dangerous behaviour by just one person could put everyone at risk and explain that they should tell you about it so that you can report it.
- Ask your child why it is important to wait for the bus to move away before crossing the road.
- Talk to your child about whether they have any other worries about the new journey or whether they are feeling confident.

For more information **Email: roadsafety.education@oxfordshire.gov.uk**