Introduction
The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) has prepared this material to help schools develop a safe school travel plan.

The development of school travel plans varies across the country – some are managed by the school community and some are supported by staff members employed by regional or local councils.

A safe school travel plan provides an opportunity for parents, caregivers, schools and the community to work together to improve safety. Considering safety at every stage is a fundamental priority of all successful safe school travel plans. This booklet was updated in June 2011 and is published online only.

This document is part of the Whole School Road Safety Resources that can be found at www.education.nzta.govt.nz and at www.feetfirst.govt.nz.

Here are ways you can get involved and use this information:

• Some schools and their local communities may want to run a coordinated safe school travel plan. Support for this may include resources for pedestrians, scooters, skaters, cyclists and passengers. A safe school travel plan may include plans for engineering, with council support.
• All schools can participate to find safe travel solutions and curriculum content and read other school stories on how to plan for safer journeys for children at www.feetfirst.govt.nz and www.education.nzta.govt.nz.

Road safety education is about preparing them to become safer road users.

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Resources to run a safe school travel plan

The impact of a safe school travel plan is helped by the level of people and resources committed to using this tool.

Coordinator skills
The coordinator needs to manage relationships, understand local community needs and traffic issues, be aware of regulations and legislation, work with council resources and build supportive networks in the community.

Working group
The working group represents its school community and appropriate transport agencies. Three to four meetings may be required during the planning phase, with a meeting each term during the implementation phase.

Project costs
For a school travel plan, operating costs will be incurred throughout the plan’s development and implementation.

Ongoing time and resource costs
Schools are encouraged to view and implement school policies and procedures regarding transport and road safety that can be clearly communicated to parents, caregivers, whānau and children. For an example, go to www.education.nzta.govt.nz/whole-school-approach/school-ethos-and-organisation.

Resources are available to include as links in the school’s newsletter at www.education.nzta.govt.nz.

Responsibilities of a safe school travel plan coordinator

Project management
• Managing the project
• Monitoring implementation, troubleshooting where necessary, and ensuring evaluation and reviews take place.
• Working with community and relevant agencies.
• Highlighting the benefits of a safe school travel plan for the community.
• Enabling partners to develop the skills and networks to address ongoing road safety issues and sustain the school travel plan once implemented.

Working group management
• Coordinating a working group.
• Providing ongoing effective facilitation of the working group.
Parking officers/wardens
Parking officers are an additional group of council personnel who may make a significant contribution to the programme by:
• helping develop an action plan, especially regarding enforcement strategies
• ensuring aspects of enforcement strategies are carried out as agreed in the action plan
• liaising with the working group on an ongoing basis to address new issues.

Specialists
It’s sometimes possible to engage specialist local or regional council staff where these exist and where there is an identified need for specialist input. Examples are engineers and transport planners who have an interest in or a dedicated role related to walking, cycling, school buses or public transport. Transport planners have a role in determining in which schools to establish a safe school travel plan. Parks and recreation staff may need to be involved if walking or cycling routes go through parks.

School principal
A school principal’s role may include:
• approving teacher time and school resources for related activities
• considering a safe school travel plan lead teacher from the staff
• participating in the working group, when required
• supplying information to the coordinator to generate a school profile
• planning for road safety education being of a whole school approach.

Board of trustees
It’s useful to encourage as much board of trustees’ involvement as possible. Specific roles for the board include:
• approving school participation in the programme (or delegating this authority to the principal)
• providing a representative to participate in the working group reviewing and endorsing the safe school travel plan
• getting involved in monitoring and reviews of the safe school travel plan.

Staff
All staff will need to be aware of the safe school travel plan and what it’s about.

Actions for staff may include:
• data collection
• police road safety education sessions, if recommended in the plan

Teachers may want to include curriculum materials found at www.education.nzta.govt.nz/curriculum

Police officer
A police officer’s role may include:
• participating in developing an action plan
• participating in road safety education as agreed by NZ Police
• training and monitoring school traffic safety teams (school patrols, traffic wardens, bus wardens, kea crossings)
• providing education advice.

Make contact with your local police station as early as possible.
Set-up phase

Overview

Objectives
The objectives of the set-up phase are to:
• encourage the whole school’s commitment to participate in the programme
• develop a list of relevant partners, make contact with them and clarify roles and responsibilities
• develop an appropriate timeline covering data collection, planning and likely start date for implementation.

Indicative timeframe
The set-up phase can take from one to three months, but may be delayed to fit into the school calendar or other major events.

Completion of set-up phase
The coordinator has completed the set-up phase after the school is engaged in the process and an overall timeline has been determined, aims have been set and a review process agreed to.

Steps

1. Contact the council traffic engineer to discuss their involvement
   They can alert you to any traffic issues associated with the school.

2. Gain principal and/or board agreement to proceed
   The principal and/or board will discuss and agree the overall objectives and timeline. Obtain written commitment of the principal or board to continue.

3. Identify possible working group members and their roles
   Involve the principal, and possibly some or all of the trustees. Apart from parents, caregivers, students and staff, consider other people who should be included.

4. Determine overall aims and evaluation process
   Establish the school’s overall aims for the safe school travel plan. These can be revisited at the planning phase, but discussing them at this stage helps focus the whole process.
   Aims will need to be written so they can be measured through a cyclic review process.
   • Create a safe school travel policy.
     Check resources at www.education.nzta.govt.nz/curriculum/wholeschool-approach.
   • Place road safety outcomes into the school curriculum within each year level. This can be supported using curriculum resources at www.education.nzta.govt.nz/curriculum.

5. Prepare a timeline for the safe school travel plan process
   A timeline is critical for ensuring the whole school is prepared for their involvement in both curriculum and co-curricular work. This also allows for school events to be integrated into the process.
   For example, integrating part of the consultation process into a planned parent-teacher evening ensures a maximum number of parents and caregivers (and students) are involved.
   The timeline does not have to be detailed but should contain:
   • a list of the actions or tasks that need to be completed (eg writing the travel plan document)
   • an indication of when school events (eg sports days) occur and how the safe school travel plan ties in with them
   • the names of the people responsible for completing each task
   • the timeframe.
Overview

Objectives
The objectives of the scoping and planning phase are to:
• gather information about the school and school communities’ safe school travel routes, including safety issues
• compile a summary report for all to consider.

Important themes
• Gaining and developing the active participation of the wider school community.
• Selecting data collection and communication methods appropriate to the community.

Indicative timeframe
The scoping and planning phase usually takes about one school term.

Completion of scoping and planning phase
The coordinator has completed the scoping and planning phase when the wider school community has been provided with an opportunity to comment on the results.

Steps

1 Gather information
The most common method of gathering the information is through students and their families. Some safe school travel plan tools include a survey questionnaire or online survey, along with a local area map or Google maps that can be filled out in class time or at home. The questionnaire for parents, caregivers and whānau can be emailed or sent home with the children, including an explanation of the purpose of a safe school travel plan and why this tool is being used within this community. It will also contain an explanation of what will happen to the information they provide, how it will be used to inform the outcomes and when the provided information will be destroyed after the safe school travel plan has been implemented.

Safe school travel surveys or questionnaires aim to gather data about:
How students currently get to school – this data shows the extent to which travel options are currently being used and discusses the students’ perception of road safety issues. It also provides a baseline for future surveys, to measure the impact of the safe school travel plan.

2 Undertake traffic and pedestrian counts if suitable to the outcome
Another possible investigation method is to carry out traffic and pedestrian counts. These counts may provide a baseline for safe school travel plan evaluations. Some suggestions include counting:
• cars parked in the streets around the school
• bikes in the bike stand
• vehicles travelling past key points around the school
• students and adults walking past key points around the school.

If traffic and pedestrian counts are to be used for assessing the impact of safe school travel plan policies over time, they may be carried out twice a year to take account of seasonal fluctuations.

3 Compile and analyse data
All the information from the surveys and any other consultation should be analysed. In recording the routes walked and cycled by children, each road and street is assigned a separate tally sheet to give an individual profile of use and problems.

The main objectives are to identify:
• number of children using each road
• number of children crossing intersections at peak times
• hazards or safety concerns.

After this information is summarised, it’s possible on a GIS map to identify the most frequently used routes and intersections, and assess appropriate travel options and issues that should be resolved (eg addressing major hazards).

4 Carry out site assessment and review relevant school documents such as school policy and procedures
The site assessment describes the school’s physical environment in terms of its travel-related facilities and infrastructure. It also outlines the school’s travel policies.

The following are the key elements of a site assessment:
A plan of the school and surrounding road networks – this locates the school within its environment and how it fits within the surrounding road network.

This plan should also include information on bus, cycle and pedestrian routes, car parking areas and their designation, and any traffic problems arising from the school journey. Current planning applications or construction work, including start and completion dates, may be mentioned.

School entrance description – this describes the ‘school gate’ includes information relating to housing, parking, vehicles, pedestrians, road markings (eg clearways) and other road users.

Crossing the road – it is useful to locate any school crossing patrols and other crossing facilities, and observe how these facilities are being used by children, as well as record any issues for people crossing the road where there are no crossing facilities. Police education officers could be consulted regarding information about school patrols, as they train the school traffic safety teams.

School travel policies – the site assessment should also include an analysis of any current school policies that may impact on the safe school travel plan.

5 Prepare a safe school travel plan report
The following report format is suggested as a guide:
Introduction – outlining the purpose of the report and how the data was gathered.

Travel – summary statements that will help identify and locate.

Danger spots/key sites – summarising the key sites (eg intersections and crossing points). Highlighting danger spots and describing the dangers (maps and photos are particularly useful).

Road safety issues – summarising concerns from the perspective of children, parents, caregivers, whānau and the community.
Planning & implementation phase

Overview

This phase looks at how to generate actions to address identified transport issues in the curriculum.

The whole school approach to safe school travel and road safety for schools is based on the SDERA (www.det.wa.edu.au/sdera/detcms/navigation/road-safety/getting-it-together/).

The whole school approach in New Zealand can be found at education.nzta.govt.nz/curriculum/whole-school-approach.

Objectives

The objectives of the planning phase are to:

• develop a plan that uses the whole school approach to address the identified issues
• ensure the action plan is acceptable to the school community and local council, and that it is achievable.

Steps

1. Bring together the working group using the whole school approach

Look at the three different areas within the whole school approach and their differing influences on the outcome of a safer school travel plan.

It’s the coordinator’s role to bring together the working group members and clarify the group’s purpose and an agreed way of working together. Working group membership need not be fixed, as it may be useful to bring in specialist input at various points.

2. Formulate a plan

• Review the data report, results of any consultation and any coordinator recommendations.
• Agree on the priority issues.
• Explore all possible solutions.

3. Seek feedback from the school community and partners on the action plan

After a draft action plan has been developed, let the school community know that it is available and that the working group is keen to gain feedback before finally approving it.

Four weeks is usually allotted for feedback from the school community and other partners. The working group then meets to finalise the safe school travel plan and begin implementation. The working group needs to remain flexible about the proposed actions and be prepared to alter the draft plan.

4. Finalise the safe school travel plan, and share with the school community and partners

The working group should meet to finalise the action plan and compile the overall safe school travel plan. While the plan forms the body of the safe school travel plan, it is also useful to include background information and supporting materials (eg school policies, monitoring tools). The safe school travel plan is then usually tabled at the next board meeting for approval, and subsequently circulated to appropriate interested groups.

A safe school travel plan document can be detailed, or very simple and straightforward. It is suggested that each of the three areas of the whole school approach diagram form the headings of the safe school travel plan.

- School Curriculum
- School Ethos and Organisation
- School Community Partnerships

Formats may include:

- Introduction
  - Location and description of the school (possibly including maps)
  - School catchment area and number of students
  - School ethos and vision
- Body
  - Policy background/why the safe school travel plan is necessary
  - Aims identified in the set-up phase
  - Expected benefits (including who will benefit and how)
  - Reference to school travel policies
  - Who is involved in the project (school, community and other partners)
  - Survey and consultation results
  - Current travel patterns (local and any links with regional or national patterns)
  - Key issues and obstacles that have been identified

- Plan
  - What the school is doing already
  - What else the school community can do (action plan in table format)
  - Selected measures to be implemented (prioritised)
  - Safety considerations

- Review
  - How the plan will progress and the changes to be monitored
  - The targets and indicators to be evaluated
  - The frequency of the monitoring
  - How the changes will be reported
Using all the data for action

Overview

Objectives
• Facilitate the implementation of all aspects of the plan.
• Formally review the plan with the working group, signing off the tasks that have been completed.
• Inform the school community of the impact of the implemented strategies.

Using the travel plan to support change

Steps

1. Launch the plan
Implementation begins with announcing or launching the safe school travel plan. Some schools choose to launch the plan with their community by holding an event. Some ideas to consider are:
• holding the launch during a regular assembly
• involving students in the launch
• inviting VIP guests, such as the mayor
• announcing the commencement of the safe school travel plan through the school website, social media and any printed publications.

2. Implement the plan
The coordinator may have a range of tasks, such as:
• overseeing the implementation process
• undertaking tasks allocated in the action plan
• convening the ongoing meetings of the working group
• reviewing and updating the action plan with the working group at regular intervals
• ensuring all stakeholder groups are updated on programme progress, as necessary
• identifying and removing obstacles to programme implementation
• organizing milestone celebrations in conjunction with the working group.

3. Review the plan
The working group should ensure that:
• any loose ends can be identified and properly attended to
• a plan is in place for completing any strategies that haven’t been implemented (e.g., major engineering works)
• there is a clear plan in place for the continued implementation of ongoing strategies (e.g., annual education of children on the correct use of a crossing facility).

4. Modify and revisit the aims
The travel plan should be a fluid document that adapts to changes in travel issues and patterns. A record should be kept of all actions and note how each initiative has helped (or failed) to achieve the aims and objectives of the plan. This will help identify best practice for future modifications and adaptations of the safe school travel plan.

5. Evaluate
Ongoing monitoring is managed once the major work of the working group is completed.

If the evaluation has identified areas where no change has occurred, then the related school policies and measures need to be revised. For example, if new parking controls at the school gate or around the school haven’t decreased the number of cars parking illegally and dangerously during pick-up and drop-off times, parking policies need to be revisited (e.g., a new policy could be instigated where the council is notified of illegally parked cars and owners receive a ticket).

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Evaluate

Ongoing monitoring is managed once the major work of the working group is completed.
The NZ Transport Agency is committed to a safe system where crashes resulting in death and serious injury are virtually eliminated.

Every child deserves to be able to travel safely in New Zealand. These road safety resources support safer journeys for children.