

North East Sustrans Active School Travel Programme Autumn Term 2018 Newsletter

I'd love to hear from you...

I'm Johnny McCrystal, Sustrans' schools officer for the North East of NI. Please get in touch if you have any great school stories or would like to find out more about our schools work.

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Message from Sustrans ...

The Active School Travel Programme is an exciting initiative for schools who wish to see more of their pupils choosing an **active and healthy** journey to school. The aim of the programme is to increase the number of pupils walking, cycling and scooting to school.

Sustrans is being funded by the **Public Health Agency** and the **Department for Infrastructure** to continue delivering the Active School Travel Programme across Northern Ireland until 2021.

Sustrans has been delivering this successful programme for the past three years. In 2017-18 within participating schools, there number of pupils travelling actively increased from 34% to 44%.

We are currently working with over 340 schools across Northern Ireland. Please visit our [website](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) where you can learn more about the programme and download newsletters from other areas.



St Mary's PS, Portglenone enjoyed their first 'Ditch the Dark' event as well as on-road cycle training and road safety lessons in their first term.

The Active Autumn Term

The first term of the new school year has got off to a flyer with over 170 activities delivered in schools in the North East between before Christmas!

In September we welcomed in 10 new schools who join the other 20 schools with Officer support and in the area; and they've made a fantastic start to encouraging their school communities to be active on the school run.

Amongst all these activities we've had over 2000 pupils hear about the positive benefits of active travel in their first Sustrans led assemblies; 80+ bike safety lessons in classrooms; 215 pupils take part in road-safety themed lessons; 46 pupils complete a 3-day on-road cycling course; and even a dozen P2 pupils learn to ride a bike for the first time!

..... But that's not all, read on to find out more!



Sustrans is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. It's time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today. www.sustrans.org.uk

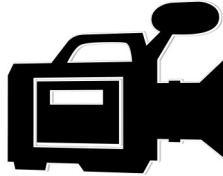
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JOIN THE MOVEMENT

New Webinar Support!

Lights, camera, action!

We're always looking for new ways to help support schools as best we can.



This term we've hosted 2 live webinars from the Sustrans Office in Belfast, direct to screens in schools all over Northern Ireland.

The webinars are designed to help support Active Travel Champions in their role and to share resources & ideas.

So far our team have presented on the themes of the 'Sustrans School Mark Awards' and our family-focussed active travel event 'Feet First Families'.

If you missed them live but would like to view them, feel free to send me an email and I'll gladly pass on the links!



Look out for more live webinars from our schools' team in the spring and summer terms.

Making Safe Journeys Lesson



Road Safety Week took place in November and this was a

great time to launch our new road-safety themed lesson called 'Making Safe Journeys'. Pupils get the opportunity to discuss good/bad places to cross the



road; take the 'Green Cross Code' quiz; learn road signs and lots more!

GREEN CROSS CODE

- FIND A **safe** PLACE TO CROSS (4)
- STAND ON THE PAVEMENT NEAR THE **kerb** (4)
- LOOK ALL ROUND FOR TRAFFIC AND **listen** (6)
- IF TRAFFIC IS COMING - LET IT **pass** THEN LOOK ALL ROUND AGAIN (4)
- WHEN THERE IS NO TRAFFIC NEAR, WALK **straight** ACROSS THE ROAD (8)
- KEEP **looking** AND **listening** FOR TRAFFIC WHILE CROSSING (7) & (9)



Pupil Champions Target Gold

Fresh off the back of receiving the School Mark Silver award, pupils at Camphill PS have already begun their preparation for working toward Gold!

The Eco Committee, Active Travel Champion Mrs McCullagh and myself spent an afternoon looking at what the Gold Award entails, using our child-friendly planner and together we decided which parts we'd work on first.



The pupils all agreed that everyone in school had loved the big active travel challenges that they'd had before like Feet First Families, The Big Pedal and the Superhero Challenge so they thought that it'd be great to try a new even bigger challenge to keep everyone in school active!

So in the New Year the pupils will be taking the lead on introducing a new 'Active Travel Class Trophy' in their pupil-led assembly. The eco committee will be collecting data from each class for the rest of the year and awarding the class winners the special trophy at a monthly awards assembly! The winning class will not only pick up the trophy for that month but they'll also receive a class prize too, all decided by the pupils of the Eco committee. What a great idea to keep everyone motivated!



To finish off our afternoon of planning the pupils headed to the ICT suite to research the work that Sustrans do as well as looking into other active travel initiatives at schools around the world to see if they could pick up any ideas!

Cycle Training

60 schools across NI will benefit from having 'National Standard Cycle Training' with Sustrans instructors this school year, as a part of their place on the Active School Travel programme.

The course takes place over 3 days and covers a range of on-road principles including road positioning, signalling, passing a parked car, making a 'U-turn' and bike safety checking.

It's always a huge-hit with schools! Here's some feedback from St Mary's PS, Portglenone who have had their training earlier this term – **"The kids loved it! Robert and John were also lovely visitors to have in school and wonderful ambassadors for Sustrans so thank-you!"**

If you'd like to find out how your school can get involved please email johnny.mccrystal@sustrans.org.uk



130 Bling'd Bikes at Parkhall

Parkhall Primary are one of 10 new schools to join the Active School Travel programme in the North East region this September.

The school were looking forward to focussing on the theme of 'transport' this year and decided on a 'Bling your Bike' day to kick things off in October.



An incredible 130 pupils brought bikes and scooters to school for the school's first event of this kind.

Active Travel Champions Miss Harbinson & Mr Hanna led by example by meeting the pupils as they cycled to school and naturally they were on their bikes too! Well done to all!

School Mark Awards

I've been delighted to present 5 School Mark Awards to schools in the North East in the Autumn term. Braidside IPS, Macosquin PS & St Malachy's PS all received their Bronze awards whilst Buick Memorial PS & Camphill PS have progressed onto receiving their Silver Award.



Macosquin PS 'Ditched the Dark' for their Bronze award presentation on the same day as their weekly walking bus.



Buick Memorial PS in Cullybackey proudly show off their Silver award.



A special whole school assembly for St Malachy's PS in Coleraine as they pick up their Bronze award

Want to get involved?

Would you like to see more families walking, cycling and scooting to your school?

A place on the Active School Travel programme comes with hands-on support from a regional Sustrans Schools Officer who can help you to plan and deliver a programme of activities to support schools getting active on the school run.

Activities range from **assemblies** and **lessons**; to on-road **cycle training** and **road safety** talks, all of which are free to schools as the programme is fully funded by the Department for Infrastructure & the Public Health Agency.

Our application period opens again in January! But places are limited. Please get in touch if you'd like to receive an application pack—johnny.mccrystal@sustrans.org.uk



Active travel has many benefits for families including reduced environmental impact & healthier journey choices.



New Year, New Gear?



Made a New Year's resolution to be more active?

Getting a bit more exercise needn't always be a case of trying to squeeze in a trip to the gym in an already busy schedule. The journey you already make to work can be a great place to start. Here are a few of my tips especially for teachers!

Everyday Adventures — Do you dread traffic jams through school run traffic? **Cycling and walking are lots of fun and can often be quicker than taking the car** especially in built up areas. Consider trying a 'Park & Stroll' journey to get started!

Plan a quiet route — Sometimes the shortest way can be the busiest with traffic! **Look for quieter routes to walk or cycle**, even if it's slightly longer, you'll enjoy the journey so much more.

Invest in some panniers — Carrying books to/from school can be heavy. Your local bike shop will be able to offer advice on suitable **pannier rack systems which will allow books, clothing etc to be carried, with the weight distributed onto the bike** rather than your back.

Buddy up! - Find a colleague to walk or cycle with; and pick a day of the week to **travel actively together for extra motivation**.

A Week in the Life of a Sustrans Schools Officer

Being an Active Travel Officer for schools is without a doubt one of the best jobs in the world! It's great to meet so many people and help school communities to be active on the school run.



Here's a taster of what just one week in September looked like!

Monday — Off to Portrush bright and early on the train! Assembly & bike safety lessons in every class to 70+ pupils at St Patricks PS

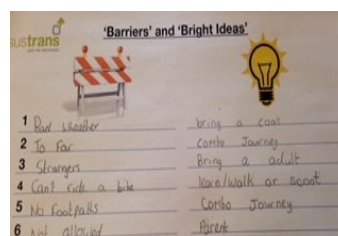
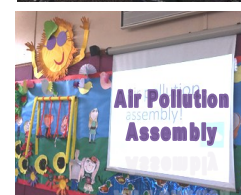
Tuesday — *Dr Bike* pedals to St Mary's PS in Portlengone to safety check bikes in preparation for our on-road cycle training course.

Wednesday — Ditch the Stabilisers day at Fourtowns PS, Ahoghill helping 14 P2/3 pupils to learn to ride their bikes for the very first time!

Thursday — Award time! A special assembly for 300+ pupils at Braidside IPS in Ballymena for successfully achieving our School Mark Bronze Award! We also discussed 'Air pollution' and how active travel can help! Before setting off on the train to the Sustrans Office in Belfast for a team meeting.

Friday — Finishing off the week at St Columba's PS in Kilrea who were excited to have their first Active Travel assembly to launch an upcoming Ditch the Dark Day to 250+ pupils. Following

that, special 'Bike Friendly Cities' lessons for P5-7 pupils, looking at how pupils in other countries travel to school; and how we can overcome barriers to travelling actively.



Save the date: Big Pedal 2019

25 March - 5 April

Registration opens in January
via www.bigpedal.org.uk

Sustrans is grateful for the continued support of our schools work in Northern Ireland from the following:

