



# Working together to make a safer environment

Guidance and advice for schools on  
parking, congestion and clean air



# Working together to make a safer environment

**Dangerous and inconsiderate parking around schools is an issue that many schools, not only in Wirral, but across the country face. Poor and inconsiderate parking and congestion can affect children's health and safety.**

**To help schools tackle problems with parking around their school gates Wirral's Road Safety team have created this resource pack which provides information, advice and ideas on influencing travel choices, changing parking behaviours and creating a safer and healthier environment for primary school pupils.**

## The reality

Car travel and traffic congestion continues to rise across the country, but for some people using a car to drop children off at school may be the only viable option because of work, distance from home, care commitments, health or multiple drop offs. But they may still be able to make small changes now and then.

Promoting other ways to make the school drop off can help encourage those on the school run to make a permanent change.

## The alternatives to driving for parents:

### Walking

Walking is a great alternative in helping reduce parking issues around schools as it has multiple benefits for children and parents. To encourage parents to consider walking as an alternative it's important to highlight the benefits:

- **Teaching children road safety** walking to and from school can give parents the chance to teach their children how to cross roads safely and highlight awareness around roads.
- **Health** with obesity rates for both adults and children at a high, walking is a great way to get more active and protect the body. Leaving the car at home is a great way to improve the health levels for all the family.
- **Social** walking can have a positive effect on a child's emotional wellbeing. It encourages independence, road sense and can also be an opportunity to chat with parents, carers or friends.
- **Environmental** fewer cars around schools means less fumes. With more parents walking, the air quality around your school could improve and become cleaner, resulting in more health benefits for pupils.
- **Economical** leaving the car at home means more money in their pocket.

National campaigns such as Walk to School week are an ideal time to promote walking to parents. They don't need to commit to a whole week, or walk to school all year, just starting off small with one day a week can make all the difference.

The national walking charity, Living Streets offers excellent support and information to encourage people to walk more. [www.livingstreets.org](http://www.livingstreets.org)

## Cycling

Cycling is a great way to improve health for all the family and cut down on the number of cars. When promoting cycling to parents it's important to ensure they and their children attend a cycle training course to give them road safety awareness.

All Wirral schools are offered cycle proficiency training. Whilst it is not a legal requirement, the council does advise wearing a cycle helmet. The Law requires a bell, front and back bike lights to be turned on in poor light conditions or darkness.

For more information around cycling visit: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/road-safety/road-safety-cyclists>

Alternatively take a look at: [info@bikeright.co.uk](mailto:info@bikeright.co.uk) and [membership@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:membership@cyclingsuk.org)

## Scooting

Scooting is a fun and healthy way to travel to school but parental supervision is a must for young children.

The best way for pupils to keep themselves and others safe is to make sure that they are considerate and scoot in a way that will not inconvenience other pavement users.

The council doesn't have resources to help with scooter skills classes but schools can agree on safety rules for scooting to and from school. The road safety team can offer some additional advice for this.

## Public Transport

Buses or trains are a great option for families who live close to the routes that stop near their child's school.

It can be promoted as another way to help children develop extra travel skills whilst contributing to a healthier environment.

Getting children more familiar with public transport earlier, can prepare them for independent travel as they go on to high school.

Parents can find routes and more options by visiting: [www.merseytravel.gov.uk](http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk) and [www.merseyrail.org](http://www.merseyrail.org)

## Ideas Hub:

Here's a few ideas that might help to combat parking issues and create less traffic around schools.

### 1. Become a clean air champion by Introducing a 'no idling zone'

**Air pollution is the largest environmental risk to our health in the UK.**

**To tackle air quality issues around schools, caused by congestion, the council has launched the clean air campaign, which is being backed by schools and businesses.**

**To support the campaign**, why not consider introducing a 'no idling zone' which is a zone around your school where drivers will need to switch off their car engine as soon as they park up?

This will help to reduce the build-up of air pollutants both inside and outside of their vehicle and improve local air quality.

The council supports cleaner air for Wirral and can issue fines to those caught with their engine running unnecessarily, if they refuse to turn off their engine when asked to.

To promote your school's 'No Idling' zone think about using pledge cards or posters designed by your pupils or contact the council's Environmental Health team who may be able to help with materials for you to run your own version of the clean air campaign. Please email [environmentalhealth@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@wirral.gov.uk)

### 2. Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO)

JRSO's initiatives are a way of helping pupils play an active role in road safety around their school and encourages more awareness.

Pupils can become a JRSO by holding mini elections to decide who can become an officer and play the vital role in helping to keep their roads safer.

As part of the role JRSO's would be tasked with monitoring problems around their schools, they can work with Wirral's Road Safety team who could help by providing equipment such as a speed gun to highlight the dangers of speeding around schools.

Elected pupils could contact their local Police Community Safety Officer (PCSO) who may be able to offer support in active roadside monitoring.

Further information can be found by searching for **'Junior Road Safety Officer'** online for resources and advice.

### 3. Park and stride

To encourage walking why not set up a 'Park and stride'. Highlight a safe and suitable place for parents to park nearby where they can park safely and walk, cycle or scoot the last section of their journey to and from the school. This would reduce congestion around the school, creating a calmer, more relaxed environment around the school rather than getting being stuck in traffic, it could also improve the air quality.

### 4. Walking buses

A walking bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. It can be as informal as two families taking turns walking their children to school or a structured route with meeting points, a timetable and a regularly rotated schedule of parents.

The route would need to be risk assessed by the school and the road safety team have a set of good practice guidelines to assist schools setting up walking buses.

### 5. Get competitive!

To encourage parents to consider other ways of travelling to school, why not set a competition for their family?

A summer challenge would be a great way to get families motivated to ditch the car. For example, each pupil would need to travel to school for a set amount of times over a term without using a car. Families will need to work together to be crowned the champions.

They could even be encouraged to blog as they go and tag your school on social media. A certificate or similar could be given as encouragement to the child who makes the most journeys without a car.

Alternatively, charities such as Living streets or Sustrans offer plenty of initiatives and advice to encourage parents and children to walk or cycle visit: [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) and [www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk)

### 6. Parking pledges

Encourage parents to make a 'parking pledge', to park safely or further away to keep the roads around the school safer.

This could be turned into a mini school campaign by getting pupils involved in the promotion of the initiative to their own parents.

Pupils could create their own pledge cards for drivers to be placed in the front windscreen to promote participation.

This is a cost effective way of running your own campaign as research has shown that getting people to make a public pledge does influence their behaviour. These could be individual or group pledges, so that people can hold each other accountable, while also taking personal responsibility.

## 7. Introduce a 'safe zone'.

Introduce an area around the school gates where parents are not allowed to stop and drop off children. Get children involved by designing their own parking tickets, posters and leaflets.

## 8. Wirral's got talent!

Get creative! Work with your children to create a jingle/song that encourages parents to think about road safety around the school. You could upload it to your school's social media account and let local newspapers know about it.

Put on a short play for parents in morning assembly, you could invite your local road safety team or PCSO to take part.

Create banners or individual messages to display on your school gates or railings to promote your message.

Please be aware the signs should not be placed anywhere that could restrict views for pedestrians or vehicles for example, never place signs on pedestrian guardrail or on the highway.

## 9. Involve your parents

Included with this information pack is a leaflet (CleanAir\_Flyer.pdf) with tips on how we can all start to tackle air pollution. Leaflets can be sent out by your school or why not upload a copy to your website and share on social media. Why not explain the issues to parents and ask for suggestions to tackle the problem?

Consider including expected parking behaviour in your school policy ensuring all new parents are aware of what you are trying to achieve or create a dedicated section on your school's website about the topic.

## 10. Take up the offer of free road safety education

Remember to book your Year 6 road safety session delivered by the Road Safety Team, contact us at [roadsafety@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:roadsafety@wirral.gov.uk). Free cycle training is offered to all schools and your school office will be contacted about this offer annually by an external company delivering across the Liverpool City Region. Both of these sessions teach important life-skills and will set the pupils up for independent travel.

## 11. Promote sustainable travel options to your school staff

The road safety team offer support to local businesses around travelling for work. If your school would like to access this support- including vehicle maintenance checks, cycle training, theory sessions for drivers. Please get in touch with us at [roadsafety@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:roadsafety@wirral.gov.uk)

For more information on promoting sustainable travel, please visit [www.merseytravel.gov.uk/getting-around/cyclingandwalking/Pages/walking-and-cycling](http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/getting-around/cyclingandwalking/Pages/walking-and-cycling)

If your school is trying out any of the ideas in this pack or if you have your own ideas, we'd love to hear from you.

Please email any stories: [roadsafety@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:roadsafety@wirral.gov.uk)

If you would like further information or advice please contact Wirral's Road Safety team:  
[roadsafety@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:roadsafety@wirral.gov.uk)

