

Newsletter tips and template articles

Contained in this document are over 50 articles with a road safety theme that may assist in reducing road safety issues at your school or broader community. These short articles can be reproduced in weekly school newsletters, in your School Road Safety and Traffic Guide or wherever the committee decides that this education strategy is appropriate.

An electronic version of this appendix (that can be cut and pasted) is available on the CD ROM that accompanies this handbook.

1.1. Information about Roadwise and your School Road Safety Committee

Welcome from your School Road Safety Committee

Recently our school formed a School Road Safety Committee. This Committee consists of _____, _____, _____, _____, _____ (names and position in school community e.g. teacher, parent, students etc.). The committee members, with your help, will be identifying and addressing local road safety problems around our school. To do this task effectively we ask that you complete the School Road Safety Survey that will be sent home this week with your child. For more information please contact (school contact number).

Road Safety Action Plan

Thanks for the information you provided the School Road Safety Committee. The committee has developed an action plan for road safety around our school which includes: *(list key aspects of action plan)*

- Amend with any additional activities

For more information please contact <insert school phone number>.

Your RoadWise Committees

Throughout the State of Western Australia, there are currently over 73 Local Government areas that have active RoadWise Committees who work on local projects to improve road safety in their area.

These committees consist of interested members of the local community, including Local Government representatives, police and teachers.

If you would like to become involved with your local RoadWise Committee or would like further information about RoadWise, please telephone 9213 2066 or call your Local Government.

1.2. Information about vehicle movement around schools

Using the safest routes to schools

Parents, teachers and students have recently been involved in the school's Safe Routes to School Program by painting blue footprints and red and yellow stop smiley faces on the most commonly used footpaths leading to and from school. The Safe Routes to Schools Program aims to develop a safer environment for children to walk to and from school and also encourage more children to walk and cycle safely to school.

The blue footprints show the safest and quickest way to walk or cycle to school. The yellow and red stop smiley face at intersections have been placed at the safest crossing points on the safe routes and remind children to:

- STOP back from the kerb
- LOOK in all directions
- LISTEN for traffic
- THINK about when it safe to cross

We ask you to:

- be aware and supportive of the use of these designated safe routes with your children;
- avoid parking on footpaths or verges marked with the Follow me footsteps or safest crossing points which are identified with a Stop sign and a Smiley Face;
- remember that no child under the age of 10 should walk unsupervised to school.

School 40 km per hour zones

In 1997 Main Roads WA introduced a new speed zone applicable only to roads located around schools.

Today the 40km/h school zones are still in place and are working towards their aim of a reduction in road trauma for school aged children. The zones are applicable from 7.30am-9am and 2.30pm-4pm on school days and normal speeding penalties apply.

If you do speed you can expect a fine and the loss of demerit points. Please take care when driving around our school and observe the 40km/h limit for the safety of all children.

For more information please contact Main Roads WA on 138 138.

No stopping signs

No Stopping signs are located around our school to help your children stay safe. They mean that cars cannot park or drop off/pick up children at all or in some instances during the hours specified on the sign. It may seem convenient to park or stop in these areas but it may also endanger the lives of children, especially small children, who cross the road or walk through this area to school. This sign consists of a red 'S' in a circle with a line through it.

Double Parking

Double parking is unfortunately a problem that places the lives of our young children at unnecessary risk. Double-parked vehicles are visual obstructions for young children trying to cross to the other side of the road. They also place children getting in or out of the car at risk, as they must venture to the middle of the road to do so. Please refrain from double parking around our school and use the other safer parking options available to you.

Park on which side?

Many of us never give a second thought as to which side of the road we should drop off or collect our children. ***It is much safer for your children and other motorists if your children leave the car from the rear kerb side door.*** Your child will know this door as 'the safety door'. This stops children getting out of the car into oncoming traffic and reduces their risk of being injured. It is safer if you park on the school side of the road. Please take care not to park in the 'No Parking' and 'No Stopping' areas marked around our school as this places children at unnecessary risk.

Pick up areas

When picking up children in the afternoon, here are a few suggestions for you to help ease traffic congestion around our school.

- Pre arrange a pick up place with your children
- If possible, arrange to meet your children a little further away from the school
- Arrange to meet your children 5 to 10 minutes later than school finish time to avoid congestion.
- If this is not possible, then always attempt to park on the school side of the road to collect your children.
- Use the Kiss and Drive pick up area – if your child is not there, move through the area and go around the block
- Otherwise park your car further away and walk into the school ground to meet your children.

How does 'Kiss and Drive' and 'Stop and Chat' work?

We have recently installed some *Kiss and Drive* and *Stop and Chat* Bays alongStreet to help overcome the traffic congestion that occurs before and after school.

Kiss and Drive

In the morning:

- Move to the forward most bay in the Kiss and Drive area
- Ask your children to get out of the rear left hand side door (the safety door)
- Parents and carers must remain in the vehicle
- When children are clear of the vehicle, indicate and enter traffic flow.

In the afternoon

- Only enter the Kiss and Drive area if you can see your child is ready to be picked up
- Remain in the car with your engine running and handbrake on
- If you can not see your child, drive on around the school and rejoin the queue.

Stop and Chat

- For those parents/carers who need to park for extended periods of time before or after school, please park in these designated bays.

Please discuss with your children your most preferred pick up point.

Motorists and Guard Controlled Children's Crossings

When driving around schools, motorists need to be aware of children's crossing locations. When the orange Children Crossing flags are displayed, the crossing is in operation, and all drivers should be prepared to stop. Here are a few rules to adhere to:

- Look out for the advanced warning Children Crossing signs and flags.
- When you see the warden entering the road, you must prepare to stop your vehicle at the stop line just before the crossing.
- Remain stationary until all pedestrians and the warden are safely on the kerb or median.
- Do not overtake any other vehicle stopped at a Guard Controlled Children's Crossing.

For further information please contact Traffic Warden State Management Unit, Police Traffic and Operations on 9222 1922.

Disabled parking

We have disabled parking bays reserved near our school. Please do not park or stand in these bays if you do not have an ACROD sticker in your vehicle. Even dropping your children off in these bays can be inconvenient for those people who need to use these bays. Please be considerate when around these reserved bays for the safety and convenience of others.

School Holidays

School holidays are a time to relax and enjoy the break from school, however they are also a time when many children are injured on our roads. As parents we have a responsibility to ensure our children are properly supervised when on or near roads, car parks and driveways, as this is where many injuries and fatalities occur. Please keep watch over children during this time, as we want to see you and your family back after the break.

School Road Safety Reminder

As we embark on a new school term, it is important to remember the importance of some basic road safety rules around school. Please drive carefully remembering the 40km/h speed zones. Be mindful of children and their parents walking and cycling to school, as well as those students catching buses or waiting to be picked up by parents in vehicles. Schools can be very busy places at drop off and pick up time, and your courtesy and patience are appreciated.

1.3. Information about pedestrian and bus safety

Walking to school

While walking to school is encouraged for school children, here are some hints for parents to follow to ensure your children enjoy a safe trip to and from school every day:

- Where possible, walk to school with your children, especially if children are under the age of 10.
- Arrange for another adult or a group of older friends to walk with your children.
- Walk your children along the safest route to school and identify hazards and appropriate crossing locations along the way.

Crossing at a marked pedestrian crossing

Pedestrian Crossings are designated by road markings (either painted white lines or concrete centre islands) that warn motorists that a crossing is ahead, to take care and give way to pedestrians.

To use a crossing safely you must;

- Walk up to the crossing
- Stop
- Look
- Listen
- Think
- Keep looking and listening whilst crossing
- Do not run, ride or skate across

Crossing at a guard controlled children's crossing

Following are some simple steps to ensure you and your children use guard controlled children's crossings safely.

- When approaching a Guard Controlled Children's Crossing, stop back from the edge of the kerb.
- Wait for the attendant to blow the whistle for you to cross.
- Keep your eyes on the traffic and warden whilst crossing.
- If you are on a bike, skateboard or scooter get off the vehicle and wheel/carry it across the road.

Safer playing areas

Most of us know that children will play anywhere at any time. However there are places where children should be discouraged from playing. Playing in driveways, car parks and even local cul-de-sacs should be strongly discouraged as these have all been designed for vehicle movement, not as child play areas. Suggest that your children play in the back yard, in a local park or skateboard facility instead.

Picking up your children from the bus stop

When picking up children at their bus stop, there are a few tips for you to follow to get your children home safely.

- Park your car on the same side of the road as the bus stop.
- If you are not driving or cannot park your car on the same side as the bus stop, ensure you wait for your child at the bus stop and accompany them across the road.
- Encourage your children to get off the bus, take five steps away from the road and wave goodbye to the driver as a signal they have alighted safely.
- If required, always cross the road with your child **after** the bus has driven away.

Dropping your children off at their bus stop

Below are some hints for dropping your children off safely at their bus stop:

- Always arrange for an adult to accompany your child to the bus stop.
- Always drop your children off on the same side of the road as the bus stop.
- Encourage your child to wait quietly for the bus and to refrain from playing games or with toys by the side of the road.

Getting off the bus

It is extremely important that children are taught how to get off a bus safely to avoid confusion for the driver. Small children can be very hard for the driver to see, and often cross the road in front of the bus, without the driver seeing them. Here are some tips for your children:

- Get off the bus once it has stopped moving.
- Take 5 steps away from the bus.
- Wave goodbye to the driver.
- Wait away from the bus for the bus to leave – then find a safe place to cross the road.

Bus Rules – O.K.!!

Bus safety is extremely important and your child should be aware of how to travel safely on buses. All children catch a bus, either to or from school or on excursions. The following are good tips to remind your children about bus travel:

- Always sit quietly on the bus.
- Do not distract the driver.
- Do not put any part of your body outside the bus windows.
- Stay seated.
- Place schoolbags etc. out of other people's way.

Road Trains

Road trains can weigh up to 170 tonnes or the same amount as 113 cars and therefore can take more time to stop. This is why our children need to take special care when road trains are passing. The following are some tips to give to your children:

- Stand well back from the side of the road if a road train is passing to avoid the wind draught.
- If you are riding your bike, get off your bike and wheel it off the road to avoid the wind draught.
- Allow plenty of time for a road train to pass.
- Always look for cars behind the road train before crossing.

For further information please contact Main Roads Heavy Vehicle Section on 9311 8450.

Crossing at railway lines

Do your children have to cross a railway line to get to school? The following tips will help you and your children reach school safely:

- Only ever cross at designated crossing points
- Obey all warning bells, signs and boom gates
- Wait until the boom gate has risen and the bells and lights stopped before crossing.

Ask your children if they know these rules, and if not, take them out to the nearest railway crossing and demonstrate the correct way to use the crossing.

Where to walk on gravel roads

If there is no footpath along a gravel road that your children use often, the following tips may be useful for them to ensure they get home safely.

- Always walk in together away from the edge of the road.
- Walk on the right hand side of the road to face any oncoming traffic.
- The adult or older child should walk closest to the road.
- Always keep your eyes and ears open for approaching traffic.

Crossing between parked cars

Crossing the road between parked cars is not recommended. The potential for danger of being hit by a car whilst crossing between parked cars is enormous. Drivers cannot always see pedestrians (particularly small children) waiting to cross the road. Parents and children should plan their route to and from school to allow them to cross roads at the safest possible locations such as school crossings, pedestrian islands or traffic lights with pedestrian phasings.

School Crossings – general

For the safety of children and parents across Western Australia, Children's Crossings have been installed at over 465 locations. Pedestrians and motorists alike share responsibility for using the crossing appropriately:

- Pedestrians must wait one metre back from the crossing and wait for two short blasts of the whistle to cross.
- When crossing, all pedestrians are required to cross in front of the traffic warden and keep to the left.
- Motorists must not park or stop in the area 20 metres before and 10 metres after the school crossing.

For further information, please contact Traffic Warden State Management Unit, Police Traffic and Operations on 9222 1917.

1.4. Safety on wheels information

Cycling to school

Road safety experts recommend that children under the age of 10 should not be cycling to and from school unaccompanied. Here are some tips for you to ensure your children get to and from school safely every day:

- Cycle to school with your children
- Arrange for another adult to cycle to school with your child
- Encourage your child to ride with older children.
- Children under 12 years can legally ride on footpaths, which is a safer option. Cyclists must give way to pedestrians
- Always make sure that your child is wearing an approved helmet that is fitted correctly.

Bicycle Helmets

In 2001, one third of cyclists seriously injured were not wearing a helmet at the time of the crash. Studies show helmet use decreases the risk of head injury by 85% and brain injury by 88%. The following will help to ensure your children are adequately protected:

- Adults and children alike must wear approved bike helmets when cycling.
- The helmet should fit the child's head securely, without being too tight or too loose.
- A helmet should not be worn if it has been previously involved in a crash or fall.
- The outer shell of the helmet should not be cracked or broken.
- The polystyrene foam lining should be uncracked and should not be able to be depressed with a finger.
- It is also important to adjust the straps and buckles to assist with comfort.
- All helmets bought must carry the Australian StandardsMark™ AS2063.2 and logo.

Bicycle maintenance

A bike is just like a motor vehicle and should be constantly maintained to ensure it will perform as designed whilst riding. Below are some of the things you and your children should check regularly:

- Make sure brakes are working by trying to wheel the bike forward whilst activating the brake.
- Check that wheel nuts are not loose.
- Check tyres for pressure and wear.
- Check that pedals turn smoothly and are not broken.
- Ensure the bike has wheel and pedal reflectors and a rear red reflector.
- Check that the chain works smoothly and is free of grease.

If you have any concerns with your child's bike, please see your local police or bike shop.

Bicycle Statistics

In Western Australia during 2000, there were two bicycle fatalities recorded and 749 hospitalisations as a result of bicycle injuries. It is interesting to note that both fatalities and an enormous 80% of the bicycle hospitalisations were males.

These numbers are a huge improvement on the previous five years. Some of this reduction can be attributed to the increase in shared paths and on-road cycling lanes, bicycle helmet legislation and education of children about bike safety.

Cycling on gravel roads

Cycling on gravel and unsealed roads can be made safer by following these helpful hints:

- Don't ride narrow tyred bicycles on loose surfaces.
- Avoid riding along ridges and hollows in the road or path.
- Try to avoid turning sharply on loose surfaces.
- Concentrate on the road surface ahead, ride at lower speeds and avoid rapid braking.
- Always wear a helmet and, where practicable, wear clothes that protect the arms and legs in the event of a fall and closed-in shoes.

Bike, skateboard and scooters – where can they play?

For most children riding on their bike, skateboard or scooter with their friends is a great past time. Quiet streets and driveways have been popular choices in the past, but these are designed for cars, not as play areas. Here are some places you can suggest your children play on their bikes, skateboards and scooters:

- Backyard
- Oval or park
- Bike training tracks/facilities
- Bike paths.

Rollerblades, skateboards, scooters

Under the Road Traffic Code 2000, scooters, skateboards and rollerblades when being used are not permitted:

- On a carriageway with a dividing line or median strip.
- On a one-way carriageway with more than one marked lane.
- On a carriageway with a speed limit exceeding 60km/h.
- On a carriageway during the hours of darkness.

1.5. General road safety information

What's your rush?

One of the most common contributing factors in fatal and serious car crashes is speed. Speeding not only puts *you* at risk, but also endangers the life of your passengers, other motorists, pedestrians, your car and your wallet.

Figures show that speed was a factor in 35% of fatal crashes in Western Australia during 2001; with more speed related fatal crashes occurring in rural Western Australia. Remember, every 5km/h makes a difference.

Drink Driving

Alcohol and driving do not mix. In 2000, 35% of all fatal crashes that occurred had at least one driver (or rider) involved in the crash with a BAC of over 0.05%.

Even small amounts of alcohol can affect your reaction time, stopping distances, can impair your vision and severely affect your coordination.

Remember some hangovers last a lifetime.

For more information, please contact RoadWise on 9213 2066.

First Aid

It is most important that you establish some rules with your children if they are ever the first on the scene of a road trauma.

- Always make sure **you** will not be in danger before you offer help.
- Make sure the injured person is away from any danger (e.g. help to protect them from further injury).
- Always get an adult to help straight away.

- Call an ambulance if necessary.
- Stay with the injured person until an adult arrives to help you.

All children should be taught the basics of first aid. For more information please contact the Australian Red Cross on 9325 5111, your local St Johns Ambulance Sub-Branch or the Road Trauma Counselling Service on 131114.

Child Restraints

Every person travelling in a motor vehicle must use an appropriate approved restraint.

Penalties apply for drivers carrying an illegally unrestrained child passenger under 16 years in their vehicle.

Selecting an appropriate child car restraint

Child car restraints offer crash protection appropriate for the weight and height of the child. **Age is not an indicator for changing the type of restraint.** The following is a guide. Always check the restraint manufacturers guide for exact weights.

- **Birth to 9kg – Rearward Facing Restraint**
- **8kg-18kg – Forward Facing Restraint**
- **14kg to 26 kg – Booster seat with a lap sash belt or child harness**
As a general rule it is safer to use a rigid booster seat with a back, side wings and sash guide to keep the belt in place. Once a child's eyes are level with the top of the booster seat, it no longer provides protection for the child's head and neck and the child should be moved to a child harness without a booster.
- **14kg to 32 kg – Child harness**
- **32kg + - Adult seatbelt**
When using lap sash belts it is important to tighten the belt and remove the slack. A lap sash belt offers more protection than a lap only belt. A harness is recommended.

Braking Distances

To ensure you have enough stopping distance between you and the car in front under ideal conditions, it is recommended you leave at least a 2-second gap. To estimate this:

- Pick a stationary object that will soon be passed by the vehicle ahead of you.
- Once that vehicle passes the object, count two full seconds.
- It should take at least 2 seconds for you to reach that same object.
- When roads are wet it's a good idea to keep a four second gap behind the car in front.

Riding in the open space of utes and trucks

Travelling as a passenger in the open load space (on the back of utes, trucks etc) is extremely dangerous. The risk of death or serious injury is much greater than to passengers correctly restrained inside a vehicle.

Regulations were introduced in Western Australia in January 2006 which made it illegal to carry passengers in the open load space of a vehicle, whether a rollover protection device is fitted or not.

Parents influence on kid's future driving

New research being conducted by road safety experts suggests that children begin to develop their road safety behaviours and attitudes as young as three and four years of age. Most parents know that children are very keen to learn at this age, but may not consider that their driving habits now, may influence their child's attitudes and behaviours towards road safety in the future. Next time you get in the car, think about practising appropriate road safety behaviours and encourage your children, however old, to do the same.

For more information, please contact School Drug Education and Road Aware Program on 9264 4743.

Driving on gravel roads

Below are some tips for driving on gravel roads:

- Always drive to the conditions at the time.
- Don't brake excessively.
- Don't make sudden steering changes.
- Stay a reasonable distance behind another vehicle to avoid dust and stones.
- Be careful of soft verges in winter.
- Ensure you fill your windscreen washer bottle to allow you to regularly clean your windscreen.

Fatigue

Fatigue, often dubbed the hidden killer, is a major problem on our roads. Fatigue has earned this name because we often do not know that we are tired until it is too late.

To help avoid fatigue on long trips you can:

- Have a good night sleep before travelling
- Start your trip early in the morning
- Don't travel more than 8 hrs in one day
- Take breaks at least every two hours
- Share the driving
- Don't drink any alcohol before, or during the trip
- Drink plenty of fluids.

50km/h Speed limit on local streets

Up to a third of all fatalities and serious crashes in WA happen on local residential streets. Research shows a lower speed limit in built-up areas will save lives and reduce injury from road trauma.

In December 2001 a new default speed limit of 50km/h in built-up areas was introduced in WA. Local streets are the smaller roads in built-up areas that carry neighbourhood traffic, or give direct property access. Remember, unless otherwise signed the speed limit on local streets is 50km/h.

Road Condition Report Number – 1800 013 314

After heavy rains many roads (especially gravel roads) are closed by local Councils or Main Roads WA. This is to stop the road surface from being needlessly damaged.

Before heading off on your trip, take a minute to call the Main Roads WA road condition report number above - it's free. This will ensure that you do not have a stressful trip and inadvertently damage our roads.