

September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

## RE: TRAVEL TO SCHOOL

Cycling, walking or wheeling the school run is a great way to spend quality time with your children whilst getting some extra exercise into your day.

The physical and mental health benefits of fresh air and regular exercise that result from choosing these activities are well known, but teachers often report that children actually focus and learn better at school if they've been active! Active travel also reduces traffic congestion, improves local air quality and helps to make the roads around schools safer and calmer.

Did you know? ([Benefits and Facts & Figures of Active Travel - Travelwest](#))

- Most children live 1.5 miles or less from their primary school.
- In May 2023, there were 27,873 primary age pupils and 20,915 secondary age pupils in BCP schools.
- In slow moving traffic the pollution levels inside a car are 2-3 times more than outside.
- On average every time a child is driven to primary school and back their car releases 84 balloons' worth of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. If every household in the BCP Council area drove their children to school, that's 4,098,192 balloons' worth of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere each day.
- 90% of children own a bike. 48% of children want to cycle to school. But only 2% of children actually do.
- A 10 minute walk will take 3 minutes by bike.

## Lift Share

Did you know that there is a dedicated Liftshare platform in BCP? Its free to use and will help to connect you to others that are doing the same journey as you. [BCP Liftshare community - part of the Liftshare network](#)

We hope that traveling actively to school will be your first choice, but we understand that it isn't always possible. For active travel tips, please see - [Supporting active journeys to school \(bcpcouncil.gov.uk\)](#)

## Travelling by car

If you need to drive, please remember to park considerately and follow the highway code. Consider parking a little way away from the school and walking the last few minutes. Parking restrictions are outside every school: inconsiderate parking is dangerous and reduces the safety of those that are walking, wheeling or cycling.

Failure to comply with the road markings could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice. [The Highway Code - Road markings - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

20mph is plenty around a school.

## Idling engines and keeping the air clean

Research carried out for UNICEF shows that children are often exposed to higher doses of pollution during the school run and while they are at school, but particularly when they're outside in the school playground, especially if it is in a more urban area.

Air pollution from idling engines can drift across the school grounds where children are playing or taking part in sports activities.

Children are particularly susceptible to the impact of air pollution as they breathe faster than adults and they tend to be closer to the height of exhaust emissions. Exposure to air pollution puts them at greater risk of developing asthma and increases the frequency of asthma attacks.

Our children deserve clean air to breathe, so it is vital to bring these pollution levels down wherever possible.

A '[Clean Air School Toolkit](#)' has been created to help infant and junior schools across the BCP region run their very own air quality and anti-idling campaign.

**Please do not leave your engine running when you are parked. 150 balloons' worth of toxic gases is realised from the exhaust every 60 seconds.**

## World Car Free day – 22<sup>nd</sup> September

We would encourage you to leave the car at home on world car free day and travel sustainably to work and school. Why not try a new route or a different mode of travel to normal?



We hope that your children have a great new year at school.

Yours faithfully,

The Sustainable Travel team  
BCP Council

[ActiveTravel@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:ActiveTravel@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)