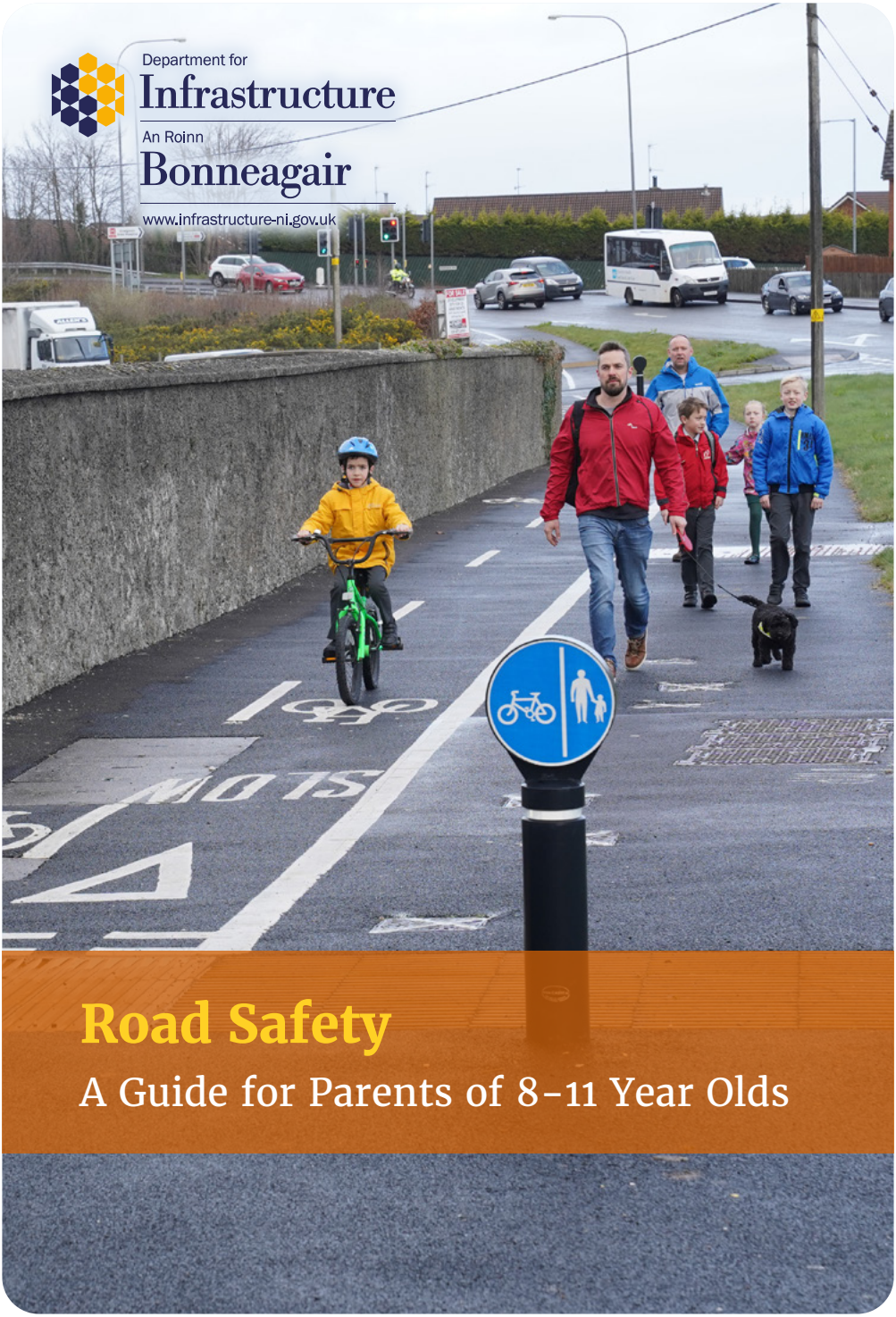
Department for
Infrastructure
An Roinn
Bonneagair
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk



Road Safety

A Guide for Parents of 8-11 Year Olds


GIVE
WAY

This leaflet provides you, as a parent, with information on how to help your child stay safe as a young road user. Your responsibility is to ensure they are protected from the dangers present on or near roads and you should use opportunities, as they grow, to teach them age appropriate lessons.

Children follow by example, so make sure you practise positive road safety behaviours – from ensuring everyone in the car is wearing a seatbelt, crossing the road safely using the Green Cross Code, to insisting all the family wear a helmet while cycling.

By setting a good example, you can help your child remain safe and develop road traffic awareness as they grow older and become independent. Whilst this is not an exhaustive list, we hope that the guidance contained proves useful and helps you educate the new generation of road users!

Pedestrian Safety

Walking is a healthier way to travel than going by car. Use the opportunity while out walking to lead by example and help teach your child about road safety, discussing what they should/ shouldn't do in certain situations. You should also encourage and involve them in making decisions in relation to road safety on your route. This can help your child to learn, build their confidence and help them to stay safe on pavements and by the roadside.

When you are out and about remember the following:

- ✓ Talk about what is going on in the street and on the road around you;
- ✓ Encourage your child to talk about what they see and whether it is safe or not. As you walk, encourage your child to make decisions with you about road safety to build their confidence and help them to learn;
- ✓ Always walk on the footpath if there is one. Do not stray on to the road. If there is no footpath - walk in single file on the right side of the road facing the traffic;
- ✓ Walk on the inside of the footpath, away from the kerb;
- ✓ Remind your children to concentrate on what is happening around them. Children can be easily distracted, for example, by using a mobile telephone or listening to music. This can cause them to forget what they have been taught and be unaware of what is happening around them.

Always follow the Green Cross Code

Children should not go out alone until they are old enough to know the Green Cross Code and be able to use it correctly. Whilst this stage will vary according to the child, in general

children cannot judge distance and speed of vehicles until they are around eight years old and many will not be ready even then.

To follow the Green Cross Code:

1. Find a safe place to cross;
2. Stand on the footpath, feet behind the kerb;
3. Look all around for traffic and listen;
4. If traffic is coming let it pass, then look all around again;
5. When there is no traffic near, walk straight across the road;
6. Keep looking and listening for traffic while you cross.

Pedestrian Crossings – Safer places to cross

Tell your child about safer places to cross the road – these include:

- Pelican Crossing;
- Puffin Crossing;
- Toucan Crossing;
- Zebra Crossing;
- Pedestrian island;
- Footbridge;
- Subway;
- School Crossing Patrol;
- Level Crossing.

If none of the above are available or close by, it is important that your child learns how to choose a point with good sightlines i.e. clear visibility of the road in both/all directions;



REMEMBER TO:

» explain that pedestrians have to wait on the footpath until all the traffic coming from both/all directions has stopped - only then is it safe to cross;

» explain that if there is a pedestrian island in the middle of the road, you should treat each half of the road as a separate crossing;

» tell your child it is important to keep looking and listening while crossing, in case a driver has not seen them;

» warn your child to watch for cyclists or motorcyclists who might not have seen them;

» make sure your child can be seen easily - bright or fluorescent materials are best during the day and reflective materials work well at night.



Walking to School

It is recommended that children from the age of five need to do moderate to vigorous intensity activities for at least 60 minutes daily. Walking to school is a good way to increase physical activity and reach this daily target. If it is not possible to walk the whole way to school, you should consider the option of parking away from the school gates and walking the last part of the journey.

Another advantage of walking to school is that it helps to reduce the congestion and pollution in and around the vicinity. It also provides an excellent opportunity for you to spend time with your child talking to them about road safety issues on route.

REMEMBER TO:

- Use the same crossing points where good sight lines exist;
- Practice the six steps of the Green Cross Code;
- Point out how some pedestrians are more easily seen than others.

You can find more information on pedestrian safety at: **www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/rules-pedestrians-1-35**

Be Safe, Be Seen!

All road users are at risk, particularly young pedestrians and cyclists. To safe stay and help avoid a collision, it is important that your child can be seen by other road users. This is especially important during autumn and winter when the weather can make visibility poor and daylight hours are shorter.

During the day it is best to wear bright and fluorescent clothing.

You can also brighten dark clothes by providing your child with bright and fluorescent accessories such as scarfs, gloves, bags or stickers/tags.



At night reflective materials are best as they reflect the light from vehicle headlights.

For the best protection you should encourage your child to wear clothes or accessories which combine fluorescent and reflective materials.

Cycling Safety

Cycling is a good way to increase physical activity and is a healthy, fun way of encouraging your child to enjoy the outdoors. Learning to ride safely also gives your child an important life skill, especially as they gain independence and begin to go cycling on their own or with friends.

Here are some points to help prepare your child to stay safe while cycling:

- Always wear a properly fitted cycle helmet;
- Obey traffic signs;
- Remind your child to be on the lookout for other road users at all times and show consideration;



- Stay alert and do not become distracted by using a mobile phone or listening to music;
- Encourage your child to take notice what is happening around them as they cycle;
- Teach your child to make their own decisions and to become independent cyclists – they shouldn't blindly follow what others are doing without making their own checks first;
- Practice judging distance and speed of approaching vehicles;
- Help children plan and work out the safest routes for their journeys – this should include how to navigate junctions safely;
- In some cases, it may be a safer option for young cyclists to get off the bicycle and walk for a short time rather than try to deal with busy junctions.

Cycling Proficiency Scheme (CPS)



The Cycling Proficiency Scheme has operated in Northern Ireland for over 45 years and is a key step in teaching children safe cycling as an important life skill.

Each year primary schools across Northern Ireland are invited to participate in the scheme which is aimed at year 6 and 7 pupils who can already ride a bicycle. CPS combines



theoretical and practical aspects and covers many topics such as looking over your shoulder properly, making turns safely, what to wear when cycling, bicycle maintenance and rules of the road.

The scheme can help your child to build confidence as a cyclist and road user.

For more information on cycle safety for children go to:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/cycle-safety-children

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/cycling-proficiency-scheme

Moving schools

As your child prepares for and then makes the transition to a post-primary school, you should consider and discuss with them the issues associated with more independent travel and the choices available. This will help your child to become more aware of the risks and dangers they may encounter as a road user and help them to stay safe on their journey.

To minimise the risk of travel you should consider the following:

- Be aware of the route to and from school – are there designated cycle paths or pedestrian routes available?
- Familiarise your child with the best crossing points on route to and from school and take account of sight lines, traffic volume and busy junctions etc.
- Ensure your child knows and can use the Green Cross Code;
- Talk to your child about taking care and staying alert - be aware of distractions such as music through headphones, mobile phones or even messing around with friends.

Bus Safety

It is important for children to stay alert and be fully aware of the safety issues associated with bus travel. Being aware of the dangers encountered as a pedestrian is also vital before and after their bus journey. Pay attention and never take risks while getting on or off the bus or when travelling by this mode of transport.

Factors to discuss with your child:

- Do not distract the driver – the bus driver needs to concentrate on the road.



Getting on and off the bus

Although your child may travel daily on the same route it is still important for them to stay alert and remember safety rules for getting on and off the bus safely:

- Tell your child never to walk in front of, or behind a bus. As buses are large vehicles it can be difficult for the driver to see children in the mirrors. Buses may also obscure your child's view from the dangers of traffic – if they can't see the traffic then drivers can't see them;
- Line up for the bus in an orderly queue, don't push or shove;
- Allow those in front to enter/exit the bus first;
- Place bags in overhead racks or under the seat so they don't become a tripping hazard;
- Sit down and always wear a seat belt where one is available – only remove it and get out of the seat when the bus has stopped;
- Once off the bus, explain to your child that they should stand on the footpath (or grass verge) and wait until the bus has moved away before attempting to cross the road;
- Always find the safest place to cross and ALWAYS use the Green Cross Code.

Passenger Safety

Seat belts and child restraints

Seat belts save lives. It is the driver's responsibility to make sure that any child under 14 years of age uses a seat belt or the right child restraint.

All children up to 135cm (approximately 4ft 5in) in height, or up to 12 years of age (whichever occurs first), must use an appropriate child restraint – that is, one that is suitable for your child's height or weight.

You can also reinforce safe passenger behaviour by ensuring your child does not distract the driver. It is also important to remember that it is always best for your child to get in and out of the vehicle on the footpath (or grass verge) side.



Summary of seat belt and child restraint requirements

Driver or passengers	Front seat	Rear seat	Who is responsible?
Driver	Seat belt must be worn if fitted		
Child under three years of age	The right child restraint must be used	The right child restraint must be used. If one is not available in a taxi or minibus, the child may travel unrestrained	Driver
Child from third birthday up to 135cm in height (or 12th birthday whichever they reach first)	The right child restraint must be used	The right child restraint must be used where seat belts fitted. Must use adult seat belt if the right child restraint not available: - in a taxi or minibus; - for a short distance in an unexpected necessity; - if two occupied child restraints prevent fitting a third and suitable child restraint is not available in the front passenger seat.	Driver
Child 12 or 13, or over 135cm in height	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	Driver
All passengers 14 and over	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	Passenger

More information on child car seats, restraints and seat belts is available at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/child-car-seats-restraints-and-seatbelts

Safe & Accessible Travel Division

The DfI Safe & Accessible Travel Division aims to help everyone to connect safely, no matter how they travel and to enable and encourage shifts to more sustainable modes of travel. It promotes, encourages and enables an increased take up of sustainable and active travel with the promotion of increased use of public transport, car share, park & ride, cycling or walking.

In co-operation with other Departmental / Local Government colleagues, DfI helps to provide the roads and networks for public

transport services and promotes moves to more sustainable forms of transport including taking forward the Bicycle Strategy, developing urban bicycle network plans, a plan for greenways, a small grants programme for greenways and the Active School Travel programme.

In addition, it also contributes to the reduction of road casualties. This is done through monitoring and oversight of the Road Safety Strategy by developing policies to address poor road user behaviours and by working with schools and communities to promote road safety.

Benefits of Safe, Sustainable & Active Travel

Walking and cycling for short journeys are easy and convenient ways to build physical activity into our daily routine. The Northern Ireland Public Health Agency recommends that from age five, children need to do moderate to vigorous intensive activities for at least 60 minutes every day.

Walking & cycling helps:

- Improve health and fitness;
- Reduce commuting time;
- Protect the environment (by reducing road congestion and pollution);
- Reduce car maintenance, fuel and parking costs.

Choosing public transport helps:

- Reduce the risk of being involved in a road traffic collision;
- Protect the environment (by reducing road congestion and pollution);
- Reduce stress and save you time;
- Save you money;
- Improve health and fitness (when combined with short walks);
- Allow you to use travel time for other activities such as reading, catching up with friends, etc.

If you start making some small changes to your normal travel arrangements today you will soon realise some of the many benefits.

For more information, contact us at:

Promotion & Outreach Branch,
Safe & Accessible Travel Division,
Department for Infrastructure (DfI),
Room 3-09,
Clarence Court,
10-18 Adelaide Street,
Belfast BT2 8GB

Tel: 030 0200 7838
and ask for 'road safety'

Email: safeandaccessibletravel@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk


SLOW

Department for
Infrastructure
An Roinn
Bonneagair
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Road Safety
A Guide for Parents
of 8-11 Year Olds

Promotion & Outreach Branch,
Safe & Accessible Travel Division,
Department for Infrastructure (DfI),
Room 3-09,
Clarence Court,
10-18 Adelaide Street,
Belfast BT2 8GB

Tel: 030 0200 7838
and ask for 'road safety'

Email: safeandaccessibletravel@
infrastructure-ni.gov.uk