

Developing a School Travel Plan

Information for parents and schools



Key Facts

- a good STP involves the whole school community
- STPs address not only travel but health, education and social issues too
- work on STPs can be incorporated into the curriculum and class activities
- STP working groups can get the plan off the ground and help it maintain momentum
- School Travel Advisors (or someone in a similar role at your local authority) can help create an STP.

Introduction

Schools create a School Travel Plan (STP) to show how they intend to make travel to and from their sites safer and more sustainable for pupils, parents and teachers. The STP document itself should then link in with the school's development or improvement plan. It is an important tool in reducing the number of pupils who travel to school by car, a figure which currently stands at 32%, according to the National Travel Survey (Department for Transport, 2009).

STPs are created in consultation with the whole school community. They are all very different, as each considers its local situation and current trends. In addition to safer travel, STPs are about improving health; broadening education; and combating social exclusion. They contribute towards making the local community greener and improving the quality of life for everyone.

Developing your School Travel Plan

To help get your STP off the ground, why not set up a dedicated working group? This small group might consist of the head teacher, parents and governors, local authority officers and, of course, some all-important pupils. The whole school will still need to be involved in many stages, especially in initial consultations; the most successful STPs are those that engage the whole school.

Here are some suggestions as to what your STP could cover. With pointers and prompts to help you navigate the process, this guide will help as you begin to think about, get support for, and implement your own STP. For some UK-wide examples, including plans from Special Educational Needs (SEN) and independent schools, please visit:

www.sustrans.org.uk/what-we-do/safe-routes-to-schools/resources

1 Describe your school

Include pupil numbers; school type and location; catchment area; plans for future expansion; and any other factors that might affect school travel.

TIP Try to demonstrate how the STP fits into the overall ethos of your school.

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As young people make the journey to and from school each day, it is only natural that they are going to have some of the best ideas and suggestions.

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2 Provide the evidence

Show evidence of your consultations concerning staff and pupils' current travel behaviour, and how they'd ideally like to be able to travel. Survey data should be presented in both figures and percentages, including the number of respondents or people surveyed. To get this information, pupils and parents could complete a questionnaire exploring the reasons for their travel choices, such as those available for download from the Toolkit section of our website (as above), or use www.viewfinder.infomapper.com

TIP A simple hands-up survey in assembly or during registration might give you the results you need.

3 Summarise the problems

Identify the key issues for pupils, parents, staff and governors. This section typically includes traffic problems at the school gates; reasons for not walking or cycling to school; and issues relating to start and finishing times and after-school activities. State how these problems were identified, for example at a parents' evening, during a workshop, or through the travel audit.

TIP Much information in this section will come straight from your initial consultations and surveys.





STPs are not written overnight. It will take a while and require commitment from a number of people, but will be time well spent.



Case Study

STPs don't have to be dry, wordy documents, they can be colourful and fun. In Aberdeenshire and Moray, STPs have been taken home on tea towels and table mats to share the message with the school's wider community. Similar projects could be funded by sponsorship from local businesses, or subsidised by selling such articles to parents and friends.



4 'SMART' targets

Your STP's objectives will come from the consultation. Each will describe how your school intends to achieve it. What will the school do to reduce car journeys by 20%? What will be done to improve road safety and by when? What schemes might triple the number of cyclists in a year? Develop some initiatives to help you meet your targets and deliver your objectives. Examples are cycle clubs with maintenance sessions; fitting secure storage for bikes (or for the bags of those who'd like to walk); or liaising with local bus companies to amend timetables to meet new demand from staff and pupils.

TIP

Set SMART targets for each objective, making them specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-related.

5 Plan of action

It is vital that you now create and follow an action plan in order to achieve your STP objectives. For each of the targets and initiatives you decide upon, consider recording the following:

- start and end dates for key tasks
- actions needed by other bodies (eg local authorities or the police)
- costs in time and money
- sources of funding.

TIP

Identify a lead person at your school to keep your STP progress on track.

6 Monitor and review

Having devoted valuable time to developing your STP, you'll want to ensure that work towards its targets is genuinely progressing. As things change, it may be that some original targets have been reached or surpassed early, or that some are no longer relevant. Consider:

- how and when changes will be monitored
- how any changes will be reported
- when and who will review the plan.

TIP

Keep your STP flexible, to make as positive a change as possible to your school's travel behaviour.



STP benefits

If you start with small steps, you'll be surprised at how much can be achieved through classroom work or other existing initiatives.

An STP will:

- demonstrate your school's commitment to environmental and community concerns
- promote school travel issues amongst parents, pupils and staff
- prove to school inspectors (though focused on school standards) that you take sustainable development education seriously, with projects that involve the wider school community
- help to secure funds for Safe Routes to Schools initiatives and projects such as bicycle parking or road safety improvements
- improve your school's chances of planning consent for further school development
- provide a framework for curriculum links on subjects as diverse as citizenship, geography and personal, social and health education
- contribute towards initiatives such as Healthy Schools and Eco Schools.

Involve the pupils

Pupil participation is vital in the development of a successful STP, for it is primarily their travel behaviour that you are hoping to influence and change for the better with this plan. It is important that the pupils' views and opinions are sought and taken into account.

Pupil participation can extend to delivering projects and monitoring progress through the curriculum, school council or out-of-hours clubs. See our information sheet on 'Pupil Engagement and Participation in School Travel Plans' for more ideas.



Further information

Sustrans can give you contact details for your local authority's school travel advisor or coordinator. They will be able to give you advice, templates, contacts and support in your efforts to create and implement an effective STP. Visit the School Travel website www.sustrans.org.uk/schooltravel to find out:

- latest news and information on school travel issues
- specific information on each of the UK regions
- downloadable resources including other information sheets, case studies, curriculum materials and newsletters
- information on Links to Schools, a project funded by DfT and Cycling England to create traffic-free paths and on-highway interventions to make it easier for pupils to cycle and walk to school
- details about the Sustrans Bike It Project, a scheme working directly with schools to get more young people cycling.

Department for
Transport

About Sustrans

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity, working on practical projects so that people can choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. Sustrans works with schools and young people to enable many more children to walk and cycle safely to school and beyond.

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