

NSW Active Travel Charter for Children



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Active travel means walking, cycling, scootering, skateboarding or any similar transport where human energy is spent to travel.

Using public transport almost always includes walking to and from destinations. Active travel can be a healthier alternative to using motorised or sedentary forms of transport, when the infrastructure creates a safer traffic environment.

As well as being physically active, for children, being healthy is also about being safe and secure. This Charter acknowledges that the safety of children is paramount and the strategies used to encourage greater participation in active travel must address safety and security. Children up to the age of 10 years should be supervised by an adult when walking

or riding in a road environment. This can help children develop and practise their skills and knowledge in becoming an independent traveller.

The NSW Government and its partners want more children to benefit from walking or riding in their local environments. Agencies supporting this Charter recognise the need to work together to promote a culture and an environment where active travel for children is the norm. Agencies will, within the parameters of their responsibility, support parents and carers to encourage children's participation in active travel.

Benefits

Active travel can have considerable health, social and environmental benefits for children, parents and the community, including:

- ✓ Increased physical activity in day-to-day life
- ✓ Reduced traffic congestion
- ✓ Increased community cohesion
- ✓ Improved children's concentration and alertness
- ✓ Reduced noise pollution
- ✓ Improved environmental sustainability
- ✓ Increased sense of independence and resilience
- ✓ Reduced dependency on non-renewable energy sources
- ✓ Improved air quality
- ✓ Increased time to socialise and talk to our family members and friends.



Current commitment

Government and non-government agencies are working together to increase participation in physical activity.

Safe active travel for all children is one strategy to promote physical activity, and is consistent with the principles of an integrated transport system.

This Charter acts as an overarching statement on active travel for children in NSW.

The NSW government is currently committed to supporting communities to participate in active travel through a number of policies and documents including:

Department of Premier and Cabinet

- ✓ NSW 2021 (the state plan) – Goals 8,11,20 and 22

Education sectors

- ✓ Teaching and learning about safe and healthy lifestyles through the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) syllabuses K-10

Transport for NSW

- ✓ NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan
- ✓ Sydney's Walking Future
- ✓ Sydney's Cycling Future
- ✓ Cycling Safety Action Plan 2014-16
- ✓ Pedestrian Safety Action Plan 2014-2016

NSW Health

- ✓ Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy 2013-2018

There are many ways in which organisations and groups within the community can support active travel for children.

Some government agencies may have a formal role to play with actions such as the provision/maintenance of footpaths, bike paths, shared paths, safe road crossings or road safety information. Other groups, such as parent or community groups, also have interests in and resources to support active travel for children.

Without assigning specific responsibilities, this Charter offers some collaborative and evidence-based strategies that have been shown to increase children and parents' participation in active travel. Health promotion principles indicate that collaboration among stakeholders and implementation of multiple strategies is most likely to achieve positive outcomes.

Strategies to increase children's active travel include:

- ✓ Providing road safety advice to parents and carers such as holding hands with children up until the age of 10 when walking in the road environment
- ✓ Promoting the benefits of safe active travel within the community
- ✓ Support active travel where local environments provide safe infrastructure
- ✓ Encouraging an active lifestyle at home, school and within the community
- ✓ Promoting road safety using resources available on www.roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au and www.safetytown.com.au
- ✓ Taking trips to school and work using public transport
- ✓ Reducing speed limits in residential areas so that active travel is viewed as a safer and more attractive option for families
- ✓ Reviewing the local traffic environment where children travel to assess risk
- ✓ Supporting local decision-making to improve the condition of pathways, footpaths, shared paths and roads
- ✓ Increasing road signage in school zones
- ✓ Supporting the provision of facilities to promote active travel (e.g. bike and scooter racks) if suitable
- ✓ Encouraging parents and carers to 'park and walk' with their children to school, the shops, the park, and after school activities
- ✓ Offering age appropriate skills training for parents and children towards safer walking, cycling and scootering
- ✓ Parents or carers accompanying their children while cycling on the footpath
- ✓ Working collaboratively with local government to improve the active travel infrastructure (foot paths, shared paths and safe bicycle path networks) in the community, particularly around schools

This NSW Active Travel Charter for Children has the support of these agencies:



Premier's Council for Active Living

NSW Health

Transport for NSW

Department of Education and Communities

NSW Commission for Children and Young People

Office of Environment and Heritage

Bicycle NSW

Cycling Promotion Fund

Walking Volunteers

Council of Catholic School Parents NSW/ACT

NSW Parents' Council

Federation of Parents and Citizens Association

The Association of Independent Schools of NSW

Catholic Education Commission NSW

Heart Foundation NSW