



Safeguarding Newsletter - October 2020

Edition 18

Road Safety - A Guide for Parents

On the 25th October 2020 we will be setting the clocks back an hour and summertime ends. Road traffic collisions increase by 20% in the fortnight after the time change. Sadly, some of those collisions will involve child pedestrians and cyclists. Children under-16 are one of the most vulnerable groups of road users.

Whilst younger children are at risk, the data shows that 11 - 15-year olds are actually at more risk from accidents that kill or result in serious injury.

Road safety is a great subject in which to engage children and young people. It is a subject even the youngest children know something about because everyone uses the roads, whether driving, walking, or travelling as a passenger. Unfortunately, this comes at a price, which includes people being killed and injured. However, road deaths and injuries are not inevitable. The last few decades have demonstrated that effective and comprehensive road safety strategies can reduce the number of people killed or injured on the road, despite increasing traffic.

Walking and cycling to school are an important part of the government's active travel agenda and help build daily exercise into our lives, resulting in health and environmental benefits. Parents and carers play an important role in preparing children to become independent travellers. This guide provides advice on what age specific road safety information children should be taught and simple techniques for doing this.

Children aged 5-7 (Key Stage 1)

Children are never too young to start learning about how to cross the road safely, how they should walk on the pavement and how to behave safely near the road and around traffic. They are more likely to learn when out on the road, rather than in a classroom or through talking about road safety at home.



Bear in mind that younger children might not understand that different situations require different responses and behaviours. For example, if you do not stop at the kerb when crossing the road to search for traffic because it is clearly an empty road and continue directly into the road, your child may not understand that they need to actually look before stopping for the traffic.

At this age, children should always be accompanied by and hold hands with an adult they know around roads, particularly when they are crossing the road. Although the onus is on the motorist to look out for pedestrians, it can be difficult for motorists to see smaller children, particularly when reversing, so take extra care. Never let your child go near a road alone, even with an older child. If your hands are full, you can ask your child to hold onto your shopping bag or a pushchair handle.

Children at this age cannot accurately judge the speed of traffic and safe gaps in traffic in the way that adults can and should not be left unsupervised to cross even quiet roads alone.

Key messages

- How pedestrians walk safely on the pavement and vehicles use the road
- How to walk with an adult who they know and hold hands when walking near the road
- Safer crossing places and how to use them
- The Stop, Look, Listen and THINK sequence.
- How pedestrians walk on the pavement and vehicles travel on the road
- Places where it is not safe to cross the road

The Department for Transport has teaching resources that you can use:

<https://www.think.gov.uk/education-resources/>

Children aged 7-11 (Key Stage 2)

When your child reaches the age of eight or nine, you may be starting to consider whether to allow them to walk independently. It can be a tough decision, as you will need to consider their development and weigh up the benefits of them being active with the traffic danger they may face in your area. You will also need to begin preparing your child for the transition to high school as they become an independent traveller. However, it is important to bear in mind that as children develop at different rates, some children will not be ready to cross the road independently at the age of eight. As a parent, walk with and speak to your child to get an idea of their knowledge and understanding of road safety. Remember that children can be impulsive and forget for a moment the dangers of traffic if they are distracted.

How do I know my child is ready to travel independently?

Children are ready to go outside and navigate roads alone only when they are aware of the key pedestrian road safety rules, understand them fully and can put them into practice. Your child must also be able to demonstrate that they can accurately judge traffic and interpret

how far away it is and how fast it could be moving, so that they know how long they have to cross the road safely. Initially, always walk with your child to make sure that they are aware of and can put into practice the Green Cross Code.

Key road safety messages

- The Green Cross Code and how to put it into practice, recognising safe crossing places on the road
- Road signs and pedestrian crossings
- The Highway Code and the rules of the road



THE GREEN CROSS CODE

A thorough knowledge of the Green Cross Code is vitally important to primary school children **over 7 years:**

1. First find a safe place to cross
2. Stop just before you get to the kerb
3. Look all around for traffic and listen
4. If traffic is coming, let it pass, look all around again and listen
5. When it is safe go straight across the road - do not run
6. Keep looking and listening for traffic while you cross

STOP - LOOK - LISTEN

Practice the Green Cross Code when crossing roads

The Green Cross Code

Children aged 7 can begin to learn the Green Cross Code and how to put it into practice.

- 1) Find a safe place to cross
 - Use a pedestrian crossing if there is one
 - Choose a place where you can see clearly in all directions
 - If an obstacle is blocking your view of the road, choose a better place to cross!
- 2) Stop just before you get to the kerb
 - Do not stand on the kerb
 - If there is no pavement, stand at the edge of the road.
- 3) Look all around for traffic and listen
 - Traffic can come from any direction
 - Sometimes you can hear traffic before you see it
 - If you see or hear an emergency vehicle in the distance, let it pass.
- 4) If traffic is coming, let it pass
 - Never run across the road when traffic is coming, even if you think there is time. It can be difficult to judge the speed of traffic
 - Be aware that traffic may speed up.
- 5) When it is safe, go straight across the road- do not run
 - Continue to look and listen as you cross
 - Look out for cyclists and quieter vehicles, you may not hear them approaching
 - Walk straight across the road.

The Green Cross Code is an important aid in learning to cross roads safely. If children learn this and always follow the code when they cross the road, it will help them to be safer. Explain to them that it is important to stop at the kerb, look both ways and listen out for traffic before crossing the road. When it is safe to cross, remind your child to walk straight across the road and keep looking and listening for traffic. Do not cross diagonally.

Teaching Road Safety: A Guide for Parents

Where possible, use pedestrian crossings such as Zebras, traffic light crossings (Puffin, Pelican or Toucan), subways or footbridges. You can let your child help you to decide when and where it is safe to cross the road. If there are no crossings, explain to your child that they should choose a place where they can see clearly in all directions, and where drivers can see them, with pavements on both sides.

Remind your child that they must wait for the green man before crossing a Puffin or Pelican crossing and to make sure that all traffic has stopped before crossing at a Zebra crossing. They should also be aware that if there is an island in the middle of the road, they should treat it as two separate crossings. When using a safe crossing place such as a pedestrian crossing, it is important to remind your child that they should keep looking and listening while they are crossing, in case a driver has not seen them. They should also watch for motorcyclists and cyclists.

Explain to your child that it is not safe to cross when they cannot see far along the road and that they must not cross until there is a safe gap in the traffic and there is plenty of time to get across, reminding them that even if the traffic is a long way off, it may be approaching very quickly. They should also look out for buses and never cross the road in front of a bus, because it may be concealing oncoming traffic. The bus may start moving; and the child won't be able to see vehicles on the road coming towards them because the bus blocks their view; they are also hidden by the bus, so drivers cannot see them. Remind them to wait for the bus to leave so they have a clear view of the road from both directions and they can also be seen by other road users.

