

# School Travel Planning

## Walking Audit Workshop – guidance notes

### Introduction

This workshop has been developed as part of Aberdeenshire Council's School Travel Planning initiatives. The aim of School Travel Planning is to look at the journeys made to school and to see how pupils can be encouraged to travel more sustainably, actively and safely.

As part of a School Travel Plan, schools may wish to undertake walking audits with its pupils. This is a process which involves taking a group of pupils out of the school and walking on a pre-assessed route and discussing various points in the road infrastructure. The route taken should be one that covers as many routes that pupils take to school as possible.

The best age group for this is aged 9 and up, as this is the age children can start judging distances more accurately and have more ability to determine safe crossing locations. This is also the age group where pupils more often than not are likely to want to travel to school themselves, if they do not already.

### Benefits of a Walking Audit are

- a real life road safety learning experience. According to Road Safety Scotland (<http://www.road-safety.org.uk/>) the best way to teach child about road safety is to take them out on to the streets and show them real life scenarios.
- gaining a greater insight of pupils' opinions on the routes they take to school and their perception of transport issues around the school gate
- allowing pupils to make a difference in their community. If while walking the pupils identify a concern, the school should take this on board and try to resolve the issue, involve the Council or contact their local Councillor.
- giving parents and pupils confidence in allowing pupils to travel to school independently.
- giving pupils the opportunity to discuss their route to school with parents/ carers before they set out on a journey.



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## Preparation of the Project

Before you begin your walking audit, you must prepare

- A suitable route to walk starting from your school, which should take roughly 1 hour, including discussion breaks.
- The chosen route should consider having opportunities to discuss the following (where available):
  - Transport issues around the school during pick up and drop off times.
  - Crossing facilities in the area; traffic islands, lollipop persons, zebra or none – use crossing facilities if they are available.
  - What are the speeds like on these routes? Do cars go too fast? (discuss speeds with the pupils, where are cars more likely to pick up speed? – e.g. straight roads, heading out of a village/ town, country roads, main roads. Parked cars and narrow streets are natural traffic calming methods as they restrict the drivers' vision, but they can also restrict pedestrians' vision. Try and incorporate these into your walk and discuss pros and cons.
  - Are the pavements narrow or wide?
  - Can pupils identify where difficult places to cross the road would be: - bow on a hill, sharp corners, parked cars, crossroads (4 directions to check are clear before crossing).
  - What other infrastructure do you see – dropped kerbs, build outs, yellow lines, speed zones, street signs, speed bumps.
  - Can pupils think of other pedestrians and what infrastructure has been made available for them; for example; people with buggies, wheel chair users, people with sight difficulties.
  - Other things to think about; driveways, doors opening from parked cars, refuse collection day.
- Once you have planned a route, make sure you have this risk assessed (see template for this).
- Plan how to take the group of pupils out on this route (your school may have a set adult:pupil ratio).



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- You will need the following equipment:
  - Hi viz jackets
  - Camera and ability to print photos
  - Clip boards with maps and paper for notes
  - Map of route highlighting areas to stop for discussion
  - Crib Sheet, showing things to think about to remind pupils
  - Question sheet, see template
  - Suggested props: possibly prams and walking sticks, give these to pupils to act as different social groups, how do they find getting about?
  - Giant map of school catchment for final task

## Task 1 – Class Briefing

**Length of time:** Approx 30 minutes.

**Location:** Class Room

- Find out how pupils travel to school by taking a Hands Up Survey. If you can find out the school's Hands Up Survey results, taken in September every year, discuss these with the pupils; how do they compare with other local schools and why? (ask your school travel planning officer to provide you with this information).
- Discuss with pupils the benefits of walking and cycling to school. These may include: keeping fit and increasing motivation, reducing congestion, safer roads through less cars, non-polluting, more sociable, learning first hand road safety experiences, developing a sense of place.
- Discuss what they will be doing today; walking a pre-planned route and discussing road safety and their opinions of the infrastructure available.
- Brief discussion on different types of infrastructure that they may see. Ask pupils to think about these and other types of road safety dangers such as speeding, narrow pavements – Crib sheet available to help pupils with this.



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- Before leaving the class room, brief the group on road safety and the need to stay together and obey the teacher. Any pupils misbehaving may be removed from the activity.
- Some pupils should be tasked with various responsibilities: leading the group with maps showing the way to go (teacher or lead member should monitor this but give pupils the chance to read maps and take leadership), camera person who is responsible for taking pictures of areas of discussion, note takers to record discussions.

## Task 2 – Walking Audit

**Length of time:** Approx 1 hour

**Location:** on neighbouring streets

- Set off on your planned route, asking pupils with maps to show the way
- Ask pupils to think about the conditions available for pedestrians as you walk, giving pupils opportunities to discuss the conditions.
- You will have certain planned areas to stop for discussions, but encourage pupils to ask questions along the way.
- Find out if pupils are already aware of the purpose of some infrastructure, meanings to street signs or have the ability to judge safe/unsafe places to cross a road. With any answer given make sure you explain why they are right or wrong.
- Remember to take photos and notes.

## Task 3 – Discussion and Planning a Route to School

- Once returned to the classroom, print off photos.
- Highlight the route taken on the giant map and discuss points with pupils, stick on some of the photos to highlight these areas and write a description next to the photo to explain what it is.



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- Pupils should highlight
  - Which areas they feel could benefit from infrastructural improvements and why (for instance, the need for a crossing at a specific location, parking restrictions, speed bumps etc),
  - Which infrastructure did they feel was useful or helpful and why,
  - Anything they learned regarding finding a safe place to cross the road: are the areas discussed earlier safe to cross, or not?
- If you can, supply each pupil with a small map showing the school catchment and encourage pupils to draw their route from home to school. You could ask pupils to use different coloured pens depending on which mode of transport they use. If some pupils are travelling by bus or car from outwith the map, ask them to draw on the map from where they enter.
- Some pupils may need help locating their house. Give them the opportunity to try and work out where they live, possibly by retracing their route home from school.
- Set pupils some homework; ask them to try the techniques they have learnt during their walking audit on their journey home. Ask them to discuss their route home with an adult and highlight areas they find concerning, or areas to comment on.
- Discuss with pupils what they have learnt from this exercise: how has it been useful in route planning, have they learnt anything about determining risks associated with road safety and how to overcome these risks?
- Finally, you may want to do something with the results from this exercise: share them with the rest of the school, forward concerns raised to the Council either via your local roads team or the school travel planning officer. Are there solutions (either infrastructure or educational solutions) that would help the issues?