

Fact Sheet

Travel safe



Travelling to school or other familiar places by themselves is an opportunity for children to develop confidence and new skills. Many children start travelling independently in primary school. Parents and carers can help their children make the move to independent travel by using a few simple safety tips.

Recognise, React and Report

When teaching travel safe skills it's important to remember the following general safety advice for children:

Recognise - What's happening around you? Are you safe?

React - What can you do if the situation is not safe?

Report - Tell an adult at home or school if something is not ok or you don't feel safe.

Parent and carer responsibilities:

- Practice catching public transport, riding or walking the route together until your child is confident
- Know the timetable and how long it should take for your child to reach their destination or home
- Create a safety test for your child to pass before they can travel independently (ie ask them to lead the walk to school and demonstrate the safety skills they have when crossing roads)
- Very young children should always walk or ride with an adult or older child
- Make sure your child has your contact details and knows how to reach you. This might mean your child needs a mobile phone
- Develop a safety plan together about what to do if there is an issue (such as a bus not stopping, missing a train or falling off a bike)
- Make sure bikes and scooters are well maintained, that car seats are available and that your child has all the safety equipment required
- Always tell your child exactly who will be picking them up and what time
- Make sure you have met other parents or carers providing transport
- Ensure you have contact numbers of parents and emergency contact details for all children you transport and that others have the same for you and your child
- Ask to see licence and or insurance details for any drivers and ensure the vehicles are road worthy and safe

SAFETY TIPS

When using public transport there are rules we all have to follow.

Being asked to leave or get off a bus, train, tram or ferry because of disruptive behaviour can be a safety issue for a child. It's important to remind them of their responsibilities when catching public transport.

Create a family password to be used by anyone who is picking up your child. If they do not have the password, your child does not go with them

Safety tips to teach your child

Public transport (bus, train, tram, ferry)



- Know the timetable and how many stops between home and school
- Always have a travel pass or money to pay for a ticket
- Travel with siblings or friends if possible
- Sit where the driver can see you (particularly for younger children)
- Wait in a safe place, standing back from the edge of the road or platform
- If catching a bus, make sure the driver can see you waiting and hail the bus by raising an arm in the air
- When getting off transport make sure it is a safe place like the footpath or platform
- Always wait for the bus or tram to leave before trying to cross a road
- Ensure it is clear, left and right before crossing the road. Do not try to cross from behind or in front of a bus or tram
- Always stay on the platform, never walk on railway lines
- If you miss the bus, tram, train or ferry or it doesn't stop, implement the safety plan
- Talk to a trusted adult at school or home if you ever feel unsafe

No child left behind principle

Some bus companies follow this principle. It is not a law. It is in place to ensure that children are not left stranded at bus stops.

It means drivers cannot leave a child at a bus stop if they do not have a bus pass or they don't have enough money to pay the fare.

It is important that children do not take advantage of this principle. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure children have their bus pass or money to pay for the fare.

If your child is dropped off before their stop or is not allowed on the bus you can write a formal letter to the bus company or Transport Minister in your state or territory.

Walking

- Choose the safest route to school and back
- Use basic road safety skills such as how to safely cross the road and only ever crossing when the green walk signal is active at lights or at a pedestrian crossing
- Walk with siblings or friends if possible
- Always walk towards traffic but on the footpath or nature strip
- Be safety aware and on the lookout for hazards such as reversing cars
- When using headphones, only use one earpiece to stay alert to other noises like traffic or people
- Do not make stops along the way (ie to play in the park) unless this has been discussed and agreed to
- Do not accept a lift from anyone who is not known. Remember the family password rule
- Talk to a trusted adult at school or home if you ever feel unsafe



Bike, scooter or skate board



- Always wear shoes, appropriate clothing and a helmet when riding, make sure it is fitted properly
- Stay on the footpath or a bike path if possible and make sure to look out for cars and pedestrians
- If there is no choice but to ride on the road, stay to the left and leave 1 metre between any other bikes or vehicles
- Understand the road rules for bike riding including the hand signals for indicating direction
- If riding in low light use lights and reflective clothing
- Travel with siblings or friends if possible
- Bikes and scooters are designed for one rider, doubling is illegal and unsafe
- Although it's not illegal to use headphones while riding, it's important to be alert to traffic or people noise. If wearing headphones use only one earpiece