Safe Routes to Schools

Information for schools

Department of Transport
Road Safety Victoria

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1.   Introduction

1.1   What is Safe Routes to Schools?

Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) is a local community-based road safety approach that responds to school-related road safety issues, which are one of the key barriers to students using active travel to school. Issues may include busy roads, unsafe driver behaviour and local area traffic congestion around schools. These are often due to a high proportion of families choosing to drive children to school.

By addressing these road safety issues in an integrated way SRTS encourages more children to walk, scoot and ride their bikes to school.

SRTS outcomes rely on a school working in partnership with its local council to deliver a mix of actions over a year.

1.2   School partnership commitment

School participation in SRTS involves:

- Providing relevant information about the school community and local context to inform SRTS program (see School Profile Information section).
- Nominating a school SRTS coordinator who works with council.
- Participating in data collection to understand issues and opportunities around road safety and active travel, including:
  - Online student survey (completed in-class).
  - Online parent survey.
  - Local observations survey (completed by students and parent volunteers).
  - On-site investigation and walk-around of the local area (school representatives and student/parent volunteers)
- Working with council to create an SRTS action plan which has a mix of engineering, education, encouragement and enforcement actions that the school and council will deliver over a year (available resources and programs are listed in Resources section).
- Continue to work with council beyond the first year to maintain and build on SRTS actions.

1.3   Role of school SRTS coordinator

The SRTS coordinator's responsibilities are:

- Liaise with the council and the Department of Transport (VicRoads), as needed.
- Participate in the school SRTS working group.
- Coordinate the distribution and delivery of the SRTS surveys, including the online travel surveys and local observations survey.
- Participate in on-site investigations.
- Coordinate SRTS staff, parent/carer and student consultation and involvement in events and SRTS actions.
- Coordinate the school education and encouragement components of the SRTS action plan.
- Coordinate SRTS articles for school communications.
- Participate in monitoring and evaluation of the SRTS program in the school.

Stage 1: Plan and build partnership

- Council contacts schools and invites them to partner in SRTS.
- Council meets with school leadership team to introduce program benefits, roles and responsibilities, understand their context and gauge their interest.
- Confirm school commitment to SRTS program, including school SRTS coordinator.
- Set up SRTS working group with school and council representatives, inform school community.

Stage 2: Assess context, issues and needs

- School provides profile information and de-identified student address data to council.
- Council maps student catchment of the school to assess the potential for active travel and to help identify priority active travel routes.
- Students and parents/carers complete online travel survey and local observations survey.
- SRTS working group and school representatives and students complete an on-site investigation around the school and along key travel routes.
- Council prepares a summary report on survey and on-site investigation results.
- School provides regular updates to keep the school community informed of program, opportunities to be involved and Stage 2 outcomes.

Stage 3

- Hold workshop with SRTS working group and school community to identify SRTS actions and priorities. Council SRTS coordinator to lead workshop coordination and delivery, with involvement from working group.
- Council prepares draft SRTS action plan with contributions from SRTS coordinator.
- Council prepares list of proposed infrastructure and parking management improvements.
- Council presents draft action plan to school council.
- School council endorses SRTS action plan.
- School SRTS coordinator provides regular updates to the school community about the SRTS action plan.
- Council promotes SRTS awareness in the local community through communications, such as local newspaper articles.

Stage 4: Implement, monitor, evaluate

- Quarterly meeting with SRTS coordinator to discuss progress and SRTS priorities.
- Conduct annual school evaluation, including online travel survey.
- Each year council and school SRTS coordinator review and update action plan.
- Updated action plan endorsed by school council.
- School SRTS coordinator provides regular updates to the school community about the SRTS action plan implementation.
- Council promotes SRTS in the local community through communications, such as local newspaper articles.

Council needs the following information to help understand the local school context, which will shape the SRTS action plan.

School information

- Contact information for: principal, SRTS coordinator.
- Total number of students.
- Number students in each year level.
- Number of families.
- Growth/change in student numbers in recent years and projected?

Road safety education resources

- Does the school own or use any road safety education resources? What year levels?
- Kids on the Move, or other in-class resources.
- Road safety incursions.
- Bike Ed.
- Are any teachers trained to deliver Bike Ed?

Travel patterns and school community

- How do children usually travel to school? (estimate proportion travelling by car).
- How many access gates are there into school?
- Is there a dedicated car park for staff?
- Are there any travel and access issues around the school?
- Parent parking, drop-off/pick-up of children.
- Staff parking.
- Local area traffic congestion.
- School crossings and access for students walking, scooting and cycling.
- Has the school participated in/is participating in any active travel to school programs such as Ride2School, Healthy Schools Achievement Program?
- Does the school have secure bike parking?
- Languages other than English spoken at home.
- Socio-demographic mix of the school community.
- Parent engagement in school: does the school have a parents association?

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4. Inform and involve the school community

As a local community-based road safety approach, SRTS' success relies on active involvement of students and parents/carers.

It is important to keep the school community up to date about the program and how they may be involved. Use the school's common communications (newsletter, school app articles etc) to introduce the program, share progress, celebrate events and achievements etc.

4.1 Example newsletter article introducing SRTS

Here is an example of a newsletter article that may be used to introduce SRTS and explain how families may participate:

"Our school is pleased to partner with [insert local council] in Safe Routes to School (SRTS). SRTS is a community-based approach to improve road safety and active travel to our school.

We will work with council over the coming year through an interactive process to understand our school's road safety issues and needs. This will include working together to identify actions to improve road safety for our students and encourage more children to walk, scoot and cycle to school more often.

Our first steps will be to run an online travel survey and local observations surveys to understand how students travel to school and locations of road safety concerns or access issues. We strongly encourage all families to participate in these surveys.

The surveys will help identify engineering improvements that council can deliver to address specific road safety concerns. Engineering improvements will be integrated with our school's focus on road safety education and other actions and events to encourage safe and active travel to school.

If you would like more information about SRTS or would like to get involved, contact [insert school coordinator name] who is our SRTS coordinator. We look forward to working together to support road safety and more active travel for our students."

5. SRTS action plan process

The data collection in Stage 2 aims to provide a good understanding of the school travel patterns, local access and road safety issues. The next stage is to develop the SRTS action plan. The process is summarised in the diagram.

Council will work closely with the school SRTS coordinator to identify and workshop actions for the SRTS action plan.

Stage 1 Plan & build partnerships	Stage 2 Assess context, issues & needs	Stage 3 Develop SRTS action plan	Stage 4 Implement, monitor, evaluate
Assess school-related road safety issues for all schools in municipality. Prioritise based on council criteria. Engage with higher priority schools. Select partner schools based on their support for SRTS. Confirm school commitment & set up SRTS working group.	Investigate the local school context (demographics, access, travel patterns). Identify issues and needs for students travelling to school. Data collection: • Mapping student catchment. • Online school travel survey. • Local observations survey. • On-site investigation.	Work with school to identify integrated actions to support road safety and active travel: • Engineering - infrastructure & parking management. • Encouragement – school events & activities. • Education about road safety. • Enforcement of road safety rules as needed. Prepare an SRTS action plan.	Council and school endorse SRTS plan. Set timeframes and priorities for SRTS action plan. Implement SRTS action plan (council and school each have responsibilities). Include monitoring and evaluation in action plan to track progress and outcomes.
Who leads? Council SRTS coordinator.	**Who leads?** Council SRTS coordinator in collaboration with School coordinator.	**Who leads?** Council SRTS coordinator in collaboration with School coordinator.	**Who leads?** School & council, agreed responsibilities.

6. Resources

The table below summarises key Victorian road safety education and active travel programs and resources. It also lists grant programs that may be funding opportunities for SRTS actions.

Road safety and active travel programs and resources

Program/Resource	Organisation	Focus
Road Safety Education resources and programs.	Road Safety Education Victoria.	• Hosts information on available resources and programs relating to road safety education in Victoria. • Resources for early childhood, primary and secondary students.
Kids on the Move.	Transport Accident Commission.	• The core road safety education resource for primary schools. Focuses on AusVELS Levels Prep to 2 and AusVELS Levels 3 to 6. • Provides a variety of in-class and outside activities for exploring the travel and road safety.

Road Safety Education.	Department of Transport (VicRoads).	• Road safety materials free to download and links to related programs, includes:
		  • Improving safety around our schools.
		  • Primary school information covers pedestrian and passenger safety.
		  • Secondary school information focuses on travelling independently and safely as a pedestrian, cyclist and passenger on public transport.

Bike Ed.	Department of Transport (VicRoads).	• Delivered in schools and community settings. Helps children aged 9 to 13 years to develop the skills they need to ride safely and independently on roads and paths. • Training must be delivered by a qualified teacher or other school support person (or through Ride2School). • Instructor's manual and resources free to download.
Road Smart.	Department of Transport (VicRoads).	• Core Victorian resource for road safety education in secondary schools aimed at Year 10 or equivalent. • Extends and reinforces key messages and learning from the Road Smart program through ten interactive lessons.
Healthy Schools Achievement Program.	Department of Education and Training.	• The program for primary and secondary schools focuses on an integrated approach to children's health and wellbeing. • Includes physical activity and provides resources to support active travel to school. • Registered school have access to resources, support and recognition as they achieve program modules. • Aligns with health policies and guidelines and Victorian Curriculum.
Public Transport Teachers Hub.	Department of Transport (Public Transport Victoria).	• Public transport safety and travel education resources for teachers and students (primary and secondary).
Walk to School.	VicHealth.	• Behaviour change program encouraging active travel to school during October and with support to carry change forward. • Councils register to participate and partner with schools. • Schools track active travel trips each day through October. • Online resources, incentives and rewards.
Ride2School.	Bicycle Network.	• Behaviour change program encouraging active travel to school. • Up to $5,000 grants following school commitment to track active travel trips. • Includes audit and mapping of active travel routes and installation of wayfinding decals. • Events and skills programs including Bike Ed. • Online resources, incentives and rewards. • Grants may fund bicycle racks and other actions.

Safety Squad.	RACV.	• In-school road safety sessions for Prep to Grade 6 students. • One school visit each year by a RACV road safety educator. • Free teacher resources and in-class activities linked to curriculum.
Bike Ed.	Department of Transport (VicRoads).	• Bike Ed is a bicycle proficiency training program delivered in schools to help children develop the skills they need to ride safely and independently on roads and paths. • Teachers, parents and community members can complete a training program to become a Bike Ed instructor for their school. • Program materials are available to download. • Funding to support Bike Ed training can be applied for under the Community Road Safety Grants Program.

Grants programs

Program	Organisation	Focus
Community Road Safety Grants Program. (includes Safe to School funding).	Department of Transport (VicRoads).	• Provides $1.5 million each year to fund delivery of community road safety programs across the state through its Standard Programs ($1.3 million) and Towards Zero Challenge ($200,000). • Councils may apply for grants to support Bike Ed, implementation of SRTS action plan initiatives (under the Safe to School program area) and other non-infrastructure initiatives, which support road safety and active travel to school.
Towards Zero Community Grant Program.	Transport Accident Commission.	• Grants of up to $30,000. • The grants support local organisations, including schools and councils, to develop and implement effective community-based road safety projects targeting local road safety issues. • Funds implementation of non-infrastructure projects and actions.
Towards Zero Local Government Grant Program.	Transport Accident Commission.	• Grants program for pedestrian and cyclist road safety projects that are aligned with the Towards Zero Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2020 and Safe System principles. • Annual grants program. • 2019 funding available includes up to $30,000 for analysis and up to $100,000 for infrastructure (1:1 matched funding with LGA).