

HOME-LINK SHEET

Know the road

Dear Parent or Carer,

Your child is currently learning about road safety at school as part of a national campaign to reduce the number of road casualties. This Home-link Sheet contains ideas for simple activities that you can do with your child. Learning together this way is enjoyable and helps you to know what your child is being taught. It also reinforces the key safety messages that he or she is learning in class.

Remember that showing a good example through your own behaviour on or near the road is one of the best ways to help children learn how to stay safer.

Know the road

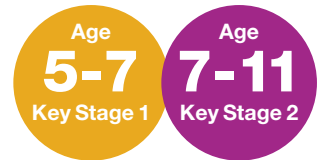
This is all about pedestrian safety for children. The activities below will help your child to:

- recognise the different forms of traffic
- understand that traffic can be dangerous
- know that when possible they should hold hands with their carer when near traffic
- learn that wearing bright or fluorescent clothing (in daytime) and reflective clothing (at night) will help them be safer when near traffic.

Activities

1 Recognising traffic

- If there is a suitable road nearby, you can play 'spot the vehicle' with your child to help him or her think about the different types of traffic, or you can play it when out in the car or on the bus. You can also try to spot particular vehicles and play counting games with vehicles or passengers.
- Play 'guess the vehicle'. Take turns to draw and guess different types of vehicle before the picture is finished, e.g. car, lorry, bus, ambulance, van, taxi, motorcycle, bicycle, fire engine, police car, minibus.
- Talk about the various types of road around your home and the traffic on them. Where is there most traffic? Where is it quieter? Where are big lorries mostly found? Where does traffic go fast or slow (and why)? Why is traffic sometimes dangerous?



2 Holding hands

These activities are more suitable for younger children but may also apply to some older children.

Whether or not your child needs to be holding hands in a particular situation will depend on their age, where you live, their maturity and any special needs. Generally speaking:

- Children aged 5-7 should be holding hands with an adult (or holding onto a pushchair pushed by an adult) near busy traffic in town and in a busy car park.
- Children at the upper end of the age group may not need to hold hands walking along the street – it is up to you to decide.
- Whether all children need to hold hands outside school will depend to some extent on the age of the child and the location of your school – again, it is up to you to decide.
- The children do not usually need to hold hands in a playground or on a country footpath crossing a field, unless other hazards are present, e.g. a pond or river, or animals.

Children should always hold hands if the adult looking after them asks them to, even if they are in a place where there is no traffic. There may be other hazards present, or it may be busy and there is a risk that they'll get lost.

- Talk about why it's important to hold hands near traffic. Ask your child if he or she knows which side to stand on (away from the road if possible) and mention this when out walking. Talk about what to do if there is no pavement (walk facing the traffic) and if you have a pushchair (children can hold the pushchair). If there is no pavement, it may be safer to cross the road well before a sharp right hand bend so that oncoming traffic has a better chance of seeing you. Cross back after the bend. Underline how important it is to pay attention when walking near traffic.

3 Bright is right

- When out and about with your child look out for people wearing high-visibility clothing and talk about why they do so. Ask your child to spot pedestrians who are easy to see and who are not, especially when you are travelling by car or bus. Widen this to talk about colours which are easily seen and which are not, then explain why it's important for your child to wear bright clothing near traffic during the day. Do the same thing at night and look out for reflective clothing.
- Find out how reflective clothing works by using a torch and a reflective object (preferably clothing). Talk with your child about why it's important to be seen by motorists and what can keep you safer. Look for reflective items for sale on websites to encourage your child to wear them.
- **Playing safely**
 - Together with your child, do the 'Who is safest?' on the next page. This is a simple game where the child looks at the illustration showing children at play outside and decides who is playing safely and who is not. Use the picture to talk about the dangers of playing near traffic, and compare the scenes with local roads. Where are the safest places to play here or near here? Where is not safe?
 - Safe behaviours include playing in areas away from traffic, e.g. in areas such as a park, holding an adult's hand or staying close to an adult when roller skating or skateboarding, carrying a ball in a bag rather than kicking, bouncing or throwing it while walking on the pavement and keeping pets on leads when by the road.
 - Another helpful game involves taking turns with your child to think of safer and unsafe places to play outdoors. For example, safer places might include a back garden, a park, a playground, the school field. Unsafe places might include, roads, pavements, driveways, car parks, near traffic, cycle paths and behind shops (where delivery vans park).



Who is safest?

