

# North East Sustrans Active School Travel Programme Autumn Term 2017 Newsletter

## I'd love to hear from you...

I'm Johnny McCrystal,  
Sustrans' Active Travel Officer for  
the North East.

Please get in touch if you would  
like more information on how the  
Active School Travel Programme  
works and how your school can  
get involved.

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## Message from Sustrans ...

The Active School Travel  
Programme is an exciting initiative for  
schools who wish to see more of their  
pupils choosing an **active and healthy**  
journey to school. The aim of the  
programme is to increase the number  
of pupils walking, cycling and scooting  
to school.

Sustrans is being funded by the **Public  
Health Agency** and the **Department  
for Infrastructure** to continue  
delivering the Active School Travel  
Programme across Northern Ireland  
until 2021.

Sustrans has been delivering this  
successful programme for the past  
three years. Since 2013 within  
participating schools, there has been a  
**38% increase** in the number of pupils  
travelling to school by an active mode.

We are currently working with over 280  
schools across Northern Ireland.  
Please visit our [website](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) where you  
can learn more about the programme  
and download newsletters from other  
areas.



Nicolas Roche (pictured right, wearing orange) at St Joseph's PS, Dunloy

## Tour de France Cyclist visits St Joseph's PS, Dunloy!

In the summer months, BMC Racing Team professional cyclist Nicolas Roche lined up against the likes of Chris Froome and Peter Sagan but in October things were a little different when he took part in a 6-mile kids' cycling sportive at St Joseph's Primary in Dunloy.

The event, organised by Dunloy Cycling Club, gave the opportunity for pupils at the school to ride alongside the Grand Tour rider as well as hear his advice for safe cycling at a special assembly in school beforehand.

This event was a *huge* hit with the pupils and a highlight for myself!



Sustrans is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. It's time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today. [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

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## Antrim PS' first 'Bling your Bike Day'

**Antrim Primary** joined the Active School Travel programme this year and kicked off their first term with a 'Bling Your Bike Day'. Pupils, parents and staff were encouraged to decorate their bikes and scooters in creative ways and then to travel actively to school that day.

Over 200 bikes and scooters flowed in through the school gates that morning with parents and staff remarking on the noticeable reduction in traffic congestion on the road outside the school. The school have continued to encourage active journeys by launching an 'Active Travel Trophy' which is awarded by the Eco Council each week!



Mrs McClean, Classroom Assistant at Antrim PS, with some pupils who cycled to school on Bling your Bike Day.

## School Mark Awards



Several schools have been awarded School Mark Awards in the first term of the 2017/18 year. Our awards are issued to schools who show excellence in sustainable travel.

Congratulations to **Camphill PS** (pictured above) and **Buick Memorial PS** who have both received their Bronze awards at special assemblies already this term.

Don't forget to log into your School Mark Online account regularly to chart your progress toward the Bronze, Silver or Gold awards. [schoolmark.sustrans.org.uk](http://schoolmark.sustrans.org.uk)

## Hi Vis Vests for Safer Active School Travel

Across the region lots of schools have held 'Ditch the Dark Days' to raise awareness of the importance of being seen during the darker months. Following this we were delighted to be able to issue new Year 1 schools with hi-visibility vests for every pupil to keep them bright on active journeys to and from school. These vests were kindly funded by the PHA, one of the funders of the Active School Travel Programme. Now every day can be a 'Ditch the Dark Day'!



Pupils from **St Malachy's PS**, Coleraine (above) wearing their new hi-visibility vests. **Macosquin PS**, Coleraine (below) Principal Mrs McElwee, Active Travel Champion Miss Dunlop and pupils celebrated their 'Ditch the Dark Day' by launching the school's new weekly walking bus.



## Dr Bike visits Crumlin IPS



Dr Bike visited **Crumlin IPS** to tighten brakes, pump tyres and oil chains as part of a bike safety day to help the pupils keep safe on their active journeys.



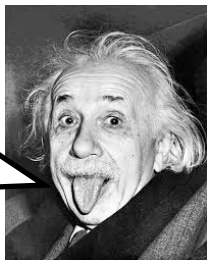
## Ditch the Stabilisers

Over 80 pupils accompanied by a parent/guardian have taken part in 'Ditch the Stabilisers' sessions in the North East in the first term of the school year!

Many of these pupils reached the point of cycling independently by the end of the session, which is always exhilarating to see!

We've already got lots more of these sessions booked in for the next term so look out for an update in the next issue.

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving!"  
(Albert Einstein)



Pupils and parents from Antrim PS ditching the stabilisers.

## Active Travel Mapping



The Eco Committee at **Buick Memorial PS**, Cullybackey have been working hard to encourage more pupils to walk, scoot and cycle for school journeys. With help from Active Travel Champions Miss Stirling and Mrs Carleton and Sus-trans Officer Johnny, the group surveyed the local area and have produced an Active Travel Map to display in school.

## Teacher Cycling Skills



What do teachers get up to when all the kids go home at 3pm? Usually working hard marking class work and preparing lessons for the next day ahead. So we thought they deserved a bit of fun! Active Travel Officer, Johnny organised after school training sessions at **Harryville PS** (above),

**Braidside IPS** (right) and **St Malachy's PS** (below) for some adult cycle skills sessions.

The staff had the opportunity to develop their own confidence on a bike, some having said it was many years since they last cycled; as well as to learn how to run a simple cycle skills session for pupils in school.



If you'd like to hold a Teacher Cycle Skills session at your school, please get in touch as we'd love to help.





## Feet First Families

On **9<sup>th</sup> March 2018**, Sustrans will be launching a new national initiative within the Active School Travel Programme called 'Feet First Families', which aims to inspire families to put their feet first by walking, cycling or scooting to school and making their school a car-free zone. School all across the country will be encouraging families and staff to ditch the car and use their own steam to travel to school. Some schools will be hosting a 'Party in the Parking Lot' on the day! Please put this date in to your school's calendar. There will be more information and resources to come. Come along to one of the School Champion Training workshops for more information as well.



## The Daily Mile

One of the aims of the Active School Travel Programme is to increase children's physical activity levels. Walking, cycling or scooting to school is a great way to help children reach their 60 minutes of exercise per day. It's also important to build physical activity in to the school day. The Daily Mile is a perfect way to do this.

It is a profoundly simple but effective concept, which any primary or nursery school can implement completely free of charge and without the need for staff training. Its impact can be transformational – improving not only the children's fitness, but also their concentration levels, mood, behaviour and general wellbeing.

The Daily Mile takes place over just 15 minutes, with children averaging a mile each day. Children run outside in the fresh air – and the weather is a benefit, not a barrier. There's no set up, tidy up, or equipment required. Children run in their uniforms so no kit or changing time is needed. It's social, non-competitive and fun. It's fully inclusive; every child, whatever their circumstances, age or ability, succeeds at the Daily Mile.

Please visit the **Daily Mile website** to learn more, access resources, register for newsletters and add your school to the worldwide participation map.

Save the date: **Big Pedal 2018**

**23 April - 4 May**

Registration opens in January  
via [www.bigpedal.org.uk](http://www.bigpedal.org.uk)

## Message from Eco-Schools:

Eco-Schools is thrilled to see so many schools getting active with Sustrans, one of our delivery partners, with every step, cycle and scoot counting towards the Eco-Schools Transport topic.

If you're collecting data for Sustrans, this can now be easily added to the Eco-Schools Data Zone on the [Eco-Schools website](http://Eco-Schools website) to track how travel habits have changed and contribute to your Monitoring and Evaluation step. If you're not sure of your log in details or you would like to find out how you can become more engaged with the Eco-Schools programme, please contact [eco-schools@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](mailto:eco-schools@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org).

Green Flag applications can be made at any time throughout the year, but we have some deadlines if you want to be assured of being assessed before the 22<sup>nd</sup> June:

- If your school is renewing its Green Flag, even if it is currently lapsed, by **Wed 10<sup>th</sup> January** and your assessment will be scheduled for Feb – May.
- If this is your school's first Green Flag, please submit an application by **Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> March**, and your assessment will be scheduled for April – June.

The application process is the same for first flags and renewals; however this year not all renewal schools will receive a site visit. For more information on this, please visit the Eco-Schools [awards page](#).

Pictured below is the Eco-Committee in St Colum's Primary School, Portstewart, celebrating their first Eco-Schools Green Flag award.



Sustrans is grateful for the continued support of our schools work in Northern Ireland from the following:

