

Assembly Plans for 11-14 years

Road Safety Assemblies for 11-14 year olds

These assemblies are designed to link to topical issues and themes that pupils may need reminders about. They will complement occasions when the school or year group are given information and notices about behaviour, school rules and responsibilities to do with travel.

There are related moral issues to do with responsibilities and the consequences of their own actions.

Information for transfer to overhead transparencies is included for some assemblies.

Assembly Plans for 11-14 years

Theme: Responsibilities as Road Users

Aims

To begin to understand about the responsibilities that come with being a road user and how the students can set a good example, especially for their younger siblings/friends.

Teacher's Notes

This assembly would be ideal to use at the beginning of the term, with students who have been at secondary school for at least a year. It could also be adapted to use if you are introducing a mentoring scheme for the new intake in your school.

Content

Begin the assembly by asking the students to remember how they felt when they were leaving their primary schools to start secondary school. What sort of things would be different? What did they worry about?

Emphasise that travel is a big change for many people and it can be a worry too.

As they probably know from their own experience, secondary pupils tend to travel further to school. They may have to use public transport to get to school now, instead of walking, which is perhaps how they got to primary school. Secondary children tend to travel further for social activities as many are given more independence.

With greater independence comes more responsibility. This means starting to really think about how they behave on the roads. Younger children will see them as being a group of people to look up to and will follow their example. It's very important they think about the way that they come across to other road users, when out and about.

Unfortunately a lot of people stereotype young people as having no road sense at all. Don't let them be right! Here are some things for the students to think about.

Read the following:

- Road accidents account for 25% of all deaths of school children. In fact, road accidents are the biggest single cause of death for all children aged between 1 and 15 years.
- Almost 20% of child pedestrian casualties occur on the way to or from school.
- Most road accidents happen in built up areas.
- Most road accidents happen in daylight.
- Road accidents cost almost £17 billion a year (£32,000 per minute),

Reflection

Emphasise that these statistics make grim reading.

Younger children do learn by example, so it is important to remember this and to set good examples, especially with regards to something as important as acting sensibly whilst using the roads.

The European Day of Remembrance and Hope has been established on the third Sunday of November each year as the day on which the bereaved and injured victims of road crashes are remembered, as well as their families and those who come to their rescue. For more information contact RoadPeace (see page 81).

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Theme: Conspicuity

Aim

To highlight the importance of being seen, especially on darker nights and mornings, and to demonstrate how different clothing can affect the pupils' safety as pedestrians and cyclists.

Resources and Preparation

- Reflective/fluorescent jackets or materials, light and dark clothing (this can be worn by the children who help with the assembly)
- Torch
- Ability to darken room

Teacher's Notes

It is suggested that this assembly is most suitable in the Autumn term when it gets dark early and the weather is often poor. However, conspicuity is important all year round; in good weather children tend to be out and about more, and so are at risk.

It is important for children to understand the need to see and be seen, and how difficult it can be for drivers to see them. Children need to know how their clothing can affect their visibility to other road users. Children (and parents) should not be made to feel inadequate if they haven't got appropriate clothing, but suggestions for improvising could be made, e.g. wearing light colours, carrying something white.

Content

Ask the students what the weather was like on their way to school this morning and if it made the journey easier or more difficult. Was it light or dark when they travelled? Ask how many of them think about the need to be seen when they are using the road and what they can do about that as pedestrians and as cyclists. Is being seen only something to worry about if they are going to be out after dark? When else do they need to think about making sure that drivers can see them.

Introduce an activity to show how different weather conditions such as heavy rain, snow, mist and fog, can reduce visibility. Ask some volunteers to demonstrate how the fluorescent and reflective materials work and then ask the students which material is best for which conditions. Ask three pupils to help. Make sure that one is wearing light coloured clothes and one dark, and ask the third to put on the reflective/fluorescent jacket or hold up the materials. Turn out the lights and ask who is the most visible – use the torch to show the reflective material. Why do they think it is harder to see the fluorescent material in the dark?

Ask them how they ensure they can be seen as a pedestrian – wearing some light-coloured, or better still, fluorescent clothing in light conditions and reflective clothes in reduced visibility. Ask them how they ensure they can be seen as cyclists – use front and rear lights and reflectors on their bicycles, and wearing fluorescent clothing in light conditions and reflective clothes in reduced visibility. Ask the students, next time they are in a car, in heavy rain, snow or fog to think about how difficult it is to see things around them. Ask them to make sure that when they are on their bikes or walking that they are visible to drivers.

Reflection

Ask the pupils to spend a few minutes reflecting on how they can keep safe through the winter.

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Theme: Pedestrian Safety

Aim

To encourage students to consider their behaviour as pedestrians and how they ensure their own and others' safety by behaving as responsible road users.

Teacher's Notes

Students need to be aware that as pedestrians they are responsible for their own safety on the road. The majority of drivers speed. Drivers are taught to look out for children and young people and to slow down when they are around, yet the majority do not do so once they have passed their test. Young people need to be aware that they cannot expect car drivers to look out for them and that it takes a car travelling at 40mph a long way to stop. Many of the younger children hurt on the road are with older children and follow their example.

Content

Ask the students: Do you feel safe when crossing the road? How many of you have seen what happens when a pedestrian is knocked down, either in real life or on television?

Did you know that...?

- In Britain over 42,000 pedestrians are hurt every year.
- 95% of these casualties happen in built up areas – and these are the areas where a lot of schools are situated.
- People walking account for 27%, that's over a quarter of all road deaths. This is because pedestrians have no protective shell, such as a car body, so they suffer more severe injuries in any impact with a vehicle.
- Those most at risk are 5-14 year olds, particularly your age group. This may be because you are quite inexperienced and are more prone to taking risks.
- Nearly one third of these casualties are on their way to or from school at the time of the accident.

In built up areas one out of five pedestrian casualties are injured on or very near to a crossing. Just because you are doing the right thing and crossing at the correct place, it is still important to be aware what is happening around you.

- In urban areas 70% of cars are travelling more than the 30mph speed limit.
- When pedestrians are hit at 40mph, 9 out of 10 will die, at 30mph, 5 out of 10 are killed and at 20mph, only 1 out of 10 will die.

Ask the students:

- Why do you think people get knocked down on a crossing? Sometimes pedestrians get things wrong, sometimes drivers get things wrong.

Reflection

It is obvious that something we take for granted every day, crossing the road, is actually a dangerous activity. It is something you have to do well, not only to make sure that you get safely across but because smaller children will follow your example and could be hurt or killed.

Ask the students to remember how exposed they are, when crossing roads. Ask them to think about one fact that they have heard today, by which they have been shocked or surprised.

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Theme: School Trips

Aim

To make students aware of their responsibilities on school trips to help keep themselves and others safe.

Resources and Preparation

Guidance for school trips is available from the DfES good practice guide, 'Health and Safety of Pupils on School Visits' which can be downloaded from www.dfes.gov.uk/h_s_ev, and from the Association of Scottish School Boards' guide 'Safe School Trips'. Background guidance is also available in RoSPA's 'Guides to School Trips' available from www.rospa.com.

Teacher's Notes

This assembly can be used before a school trip to help prepare the students. Let them know what is expected of them and encourage them to take responsibility for their own safety. The assembly is still valid even if only some of the school are going on a trip, as all the school will be going at some time and it reinforces acceptable behaviour and coping strategies.

The students should be involved in the risk assessment process and in deciding what behaviour is and is not appropriate on the trip. They also need to be aware that injuries are more likely to happen in activities when they feel safe, since that is when they will take risks. After the assembly, they could go back to their classes and create rules for how they will behave on the trip.

Content

Explain that a risk assessment must be carried out for the trip and any activity that might be dangerous. This looks at any dangers and ensures that there are measures in place to reduce the danger to acceptable levels.

Ask the students what kind of dangers they think might be involved during the journey and at their destination. Point out that sometimes things that seemed safe, like a river walk, have proved dangerous. Ask them if it is just the school and the teachers who are responsible for keeping them safe? Do they have a responsibility for their own safety? How can they reduce the dangers involved? Bring the discussion round to the idea that the students need to create a set of rules about how they will behave on their school trip.

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What can they do before the trip to help make sure it goes safely and smoothly?

- Make sure their teacher knows if they have any particular needs (special diet, medicines, etc.). Bring something to do on the journey – magazines, books and comics. Arrive on time, and wait for the bus, coach or minibus away from the road. They should also make sure that they know the arrangements for being picked up when they get back (if this will be outside normal school hours).

What can they do during the trip?

- Find a seat and put on your seat belt. Make sure your bags do not block the gangways or take up seats. Stay seated when the vehicle is moving and keep your seat belt on. Explain that it's fine to talk but moving about the bus unnecessarily can cause problems. Don't throw things or play about in the vehicle. Only speak to the driver when he or she is not driving, or in an emergency.

What about when they arrive?

- Wait until the vehicle has stopped and the teacher has told them to undo their seat belts before getting up to leave. Take all belongings with them. Tell them it is important to stay in the group they are allocated to, but if they get separated there should be a designated meeting place for them to go to and wait for a teacher to come and find them. Emphasise that they must not, under any circumstances go anywhere with anyone other than one of the teachers or helpers.

Reflection

Ask the students to think about what kind of behaviour should not be allowed on a school trip, and what sort of rules they need to keep themselves and others safe.

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Theme: Safe Cycling

Aims

To begin to understand the issues involved in riding on the road and think about the road and traffic situations and other road users. To understand the difference between riding and playing on a bicycle and begin to acknowledge responsibilities as road users.

Resources and Preparation

- Overhead projector
- OHTs

Teacher's Notes

A good time to do this assembly is at the start of the Autumn or Spring term as children are considering cycling to school for the first time.

Content

Acknowledge that starting secondary school has led to a change in travel arrangements and that the children now have greater independence.

Find out how many children own a bicycle, how many use it regularly and in what ways. How many cycle to school? Is this a change – previously did they only use their bicycle for play? Emphasise that the children using their cycle as a means of transport on the road now have more responsibility for their own safety and that of others.

Emphasise the importance of cycle training and wearing the right protective gear; helmet, fluorescent and reflective clothing. Confirm that as road users, just like car, bus and lorry drivers, they have to follow the Highway Code.

Explain that you are going to do a quiz about cycling and the Highway Code. Display the Question OHT. Go through each question in turn, getting the pupils to vote on the multiple-choice options. You can then overlay the answer OHT at the end of each question. Use the points and statistics below as additional information to support the answers:

1. Encourage children to use marked cycle routes and paths, it IS illegal to cycle on the pavement but acknowledge that there are times when it is safer for young children to do this because they are not ready to ride on the road. But they must be aware of their greater responsibilities to pedestrians at such times.
2. 90% of cycling accidents occur in urban areas and 75% happen at, or near, a road junction. A cycling accident commonly occurs when cyclists are turning right from a major road and when motorists turn across the path of a cyclist, or emerge from a side road.

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3. It is tempting for young people to carry their friends on their bicycle, but it is illegal – ensure they are aware of the dangers. Many people are not aware that the drink/drug 'drive' laws also apply to cyclists. Raise their awareness now at an early age.
4. Most child cycling accidents occur during daylight hours, the most dangerous hours being 8.00am to 9.00am and 3.00pm to 6.00pm on weekdays. However, cyclists involved in accidents at night are more likely to be killed or seriously injured than those involved in daytime accidents.
5. It is not safe to use a mobile phone; balance and operation of the steering and brakes are impaired as well as the cyclist's concentration because of distraction due to the conversation. A personal stereo deprives the cyclist of one of the key senses – hearing – and makes them more vulnerable.
6. Cyclists should only overtake a parked vehicle, if they are certain it is safe to do so. They should be alert to a driver still in the vehicle; it is common for drivers to open their doors onto cyclists. Be alert for pedestrians crossing in between parked vehicles and look for traffic coming towards you or overtaking you.

Reflection

Ask the pupils to reflect on any new information they have found out today.

Is cycling on the road like playing on their bicycle or are there more serious implications?

Do they think they should learn the relevant part of the Highway Code before cycling on the road?

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OHT: Cycling Safety – Questions

- 1. When are you allowed to cycle on the pavement?:**
 - a. On a busy dual carriageway.
 - b. Only when there are special signs allowing you to do so.
 - c. When it is raining.

- 2. What should you do when you want to turn right?:**
 - a. Shout “I’m turning right”.
 - b. Put your head down and pedal hard to get across quickly.
 - c. Depending on the road, either look to make sure it is safe and then give a clear arm signal, or get off and wait for a clear gap before walking with your bike across the road.

- 3. When cycling you must not:**
 - a. Carry a passenger unless your cycle has been built or adapted to carry one.
 - b. Ride when under the influence of drink or drugs.
 - c. Both of the above.

- 4. At night your cycle must be fitted with:**
 - a. White front and red rear lights.
 - b. Red rear reflector.
 - c. Both of the above.

- 5. Whilst cycling it is good to:**
 - a. Use a mobile phone.
 - b. Wear a cycle helmet.
 - c. Use a personal stereo.

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OHT: Cycling Safety – Answers

1. **When are you allowed to cycle on the pavement?:**
 - a. On a busy dual carriageway.
 - b. **Only when there are special signs allowing you to do so.**
 - c. When it is raining.
2. **What should you do when you want to turn right?:**
 - a. Shout “I’m turning right”.
 - b. Put your head down and pedal hard to get across quickly.
 - c. **Depending on the road, either look to make sure it is safe and then give a clear arm signal, or get off and wait for a clear gap before walking with your bike across the road.**
3. **When cycling you must not:**
 - a. Carry a passenger unless your cycle has been built or adapted to carry one.
 - b. Ride when under the influence of drink or drugs.
 - c. **Both of the above.**
4. **At night your cycle must be fitted with:**
 - a. White front and red rear lights.
 - b. Red rear reflector.
 - c. **Both of the above.**
5. **Whilst cycling it is good to:**
 - a. Use a mobile phone.
 - b. **Wear a cycle helmet.**
 - c. Use a personal stereo.

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Theme: In Car Safety

Aim

To consider risk taking.

To consider reasons for wearing/not wearing seat belts.

To highlight the importance of seat belts for rear seat passengers.

Resources and Preparation:

- Seatbelt discussion OHT
- Answers OHT

Teacher's Notes

Many people still do not wear seat belts in the back of cars. This leads to many fatalities, not only for the back seat passenger without the belt, but also for the driver and front seat passenger, even if they are wearing theirs.

Content

Ask the students to think of a time they have taken a risk on the road. Give one or two examples of commonly taken risks e.g. riding a bike without a helmet.

Identify some reasons for taking risks, e.g. showing off, to save time, lack of knowledge. Emphasise the potential consequences of the risks. The negatives far outweigh the positives. Now focus on seat belts. Ask the students if they wear seat belts themselves. What about other people in their families? Do people act differently in the front seats/back seats? Explain that you are going to test their knowledge on seat belts.

Display Questions OHT. Go through each question in turn, getting the pupils to provide answers where possible. For the first two questions they can vote.

At the end place the answer OHT over the top of the question OHT and run through the answers.

Reflection

Ask the pupils to reflect on any new information they have found out today.

Do they now think not wearing a seat belt is a risk they would take?

Are they now more likely to ask other people they travel with to wear seat belts?

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OHT: Seat belts – Answers

1. Who must by law wear a seat belt?

All of them!!! (Wherever a seat belt is fitted) It has been law since 1983 for drivers and front seat passengers. It has been the law since 1991 for rear seat passengers. The police can give on the spot fines if seat belts are not worn.

2. Who do you think is less likely to wear a seat belt, under 14's or over 14's?

Over 14's are less likely. Only 60% wear one. Over 90% of under 14's do. Both age groups are more likely to wear seat belts in the front.

3. What sort of excuses do people give for not wearing seat belts?

Some commonly given excuses are:

They are uncomfortable.

They crease your clothes.

It may offend the driver by suggesting you don't trust their driving.

4. What are the risks to back seat passengers who don't wear seatbelts?

About 120 unbelted back seat passengers are killed every year. Many more are seriously injured with chest injuries, broken ribs, fractured skull or facial wounds. In an accident, they are three times more likely to be killed or seriously injured as passengers who do wear their seat belt.

5. What are the risks to people in the front seats if back seat passengers don't wear their seat belts?

In a crash at 30mph an unbelted passenger will hit the front seat with a force of between 30 and 60 times their own body weight. About 40 front seat passengers and drivers are killed each year in this way. Research shows that people know that they could be hurt themselves, but many don't know that they could kill the driver/front seat passenger.