

Pocketsize Road Safety

Safe Cycling with Children (April 2020)



Cycling can be a great way for children to keep physically active during the COVID -19 lockdown, when we are very restricted in our movements. A walk or a short cycle ride can become part of your daily exercise routine, helping give structure to the day and be an activity you can enjoy with your children living with you.

Here's some advice and information to help you enjoy your cycling whilst keeping safe and within the current guidelines (at 24 April 2020).

Please note, this information is only appropriate for well and symptom free families living together in one household. Do not exercise if you have any symptoms. Please check latest Government guidance at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> Cycling advice is regularly updated by Cycling UK at: <https://www.cyclinguk.org/coronavirus-covid-19>

Cycling within the Government Guidelines

- Avoid any unnecessary risks, be extra careful and cycle well within all the family members limits. (Remember any injuries that may happen to cyclists would add to an already pressurized NHS.)
- Observe social distancing and keeping two metres away from others. <https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/coronavirus-guide-social-distancing-and-cycling>
- Stay local and close to home. Avoid stopping if you can and if you do, don't stop where there's someone else. Observe social distancing.
- Plan your route to avoid parts you know are narrow and likely to be busy and think about the time of day you pick for your ride. Staying close to home will enable you to return by foot if you have a problem. Ride on routes you know well, that are close to home and that are well within your rider's ability level/s.
- If on a cycle path, be prepared to stop and move over onto the verge to let them have enough space to pass.
- Before passing any other cyclist on the road, look all around and particularly behind to check it's safe to do so.
- Wash your hands as soon as you are back indoors and a good idea to wash your kit and gloves too.

Is your bike safe to ride?

- Before going out, make sure your child's bike is adjusted so it fits and that your bikes are roadworthy. Here's a simple bike 'M' check to make before you ride:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/get-active/2019/everyday-walking-and-cycling/the-m-check-for-your-bike-in-11-steps/>
- Here's how to repair a puncture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVNxD6rW3zQ>

Need help teaching your younger child how to ride?

- You may want to help teach your younger child to ride a pedalled bike. Help here at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6SNCvIN4EI>
<https://www.islabikes.co.uk/knowledge/teach-your-child-to-ride/teach-child-ride-bike/>

Helmets

- Helmets are recommended but they need to fit properly to be effective. Here's how to fit a child's cycle helmet correctly: <https://www.halfords.com/cycling/video-how-to-fit-a-cycle-helmet.html>

Ride carefully and safely

- If you're on the road with your child, take up a position behind them. If there are two adults riding, it's a good idea to have one at the back and one in front.
- Keep a good distance and at least a bike length between each other and if riding on the road, at least 0.6 metres from the kerb. Riding too close to the kerb can result in a tyre puncture as there are often stones and debris close to the kerb. You may also risk hitting the kerb with your pedal which may lose control of the bike.
- Set a good example and adhere to the Highway Code [follow the Highway Code](https://www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk/changes-and-answers/highway-code-for-cyclists) <https://www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk/changes-and-answers/highway-code-for-cyclists>
- Just because there might be less traffic on the roads, ride as though there are normal traffic conditions and keep to a sensible and safe road position. There will still be dangers from passing vehicles including other cyclists and quieter e-vehicles. Some might be breaking speed limits and appear very suddenly so always watch and listen out!
- Avoid listening to music and other distractions as you need to use your senses to keep safe.
- Bikeability cycle training Level 2 film shows a child riding her bike safely – at: <https://bikeability.org.uk/bikeability-training/bikeability-level-2/>

Be bright and be seen

- Make sure to be seen by passing drivers by wearing bright and colourful clothing and don't listen to music whilst riding - stay focused. If you are out early or late and/or it's a dull, cloudy day, consider having some bike lights switched on such as a flashing red rear light.

Want to get creative?

See helmet, T shirt and Cycle sign templates for colouring fun at:

<https://bikeability.org.uk/support/school-resources/>

Ray Hughes, Active Travel and Road Safety Officer, WSP (23 April 2020)

Providing Road Safety Education on behalf of Shropshire Council



Ray.j.hughes@wsp.com