



## **THINK FEET FIRST. STEP, CYCLE, SCOOT TO SCHOOL. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **What is active travel?**

Active travel involves walking, cycling or other non-motorised modes of travel.

### **Why Think Feet First?**

'Think Feet First.' is about encouraging families and communities to look at active ways to travel to and from school. Being active every day is important for everyone's health and is essential for children. One way for kids to be active is to Think Feet First – step, cycle or scoot to school.

### **Why should my kids actively travel to school?**

There are many health benefits to increasing active travel. Children who are physically active have increased bone and muscle strength, balance, coordination, flexibility and cardio-vascular health. They are also more likely to maintain a healthy weight and have a reduction in stress levels, anxiety or depression.

Children who regularly actively travel will develop a greater knowledge of their neighbourhood, improve communication and social skills and have more road safety and route planning experience.

Other benefits include:

- Less congestion around the school with fewer vehicles at drop off and pick up times
- Environmental benefits due to reduced emissions from cars
- Free, accessible activity available to all

### **How much active travel should kids get?**

National guidelines recommend a minimum of 60 minutes (and up to several hours) of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. Currently, only 32% meet these guidelines. This can be achieved through a variety of activities including active travel.

### **I drop my kids off at school then go onto other destinations including work, shops, gym or a friend's place. How can I step, cycle or scoot to school with the kids?**

If you are unable to walk, cycle or scoot to school, consider other opportunities such as parking away from the school and walking to meet the kids. Alternatively, you can walk, cycle or scoot to other destinations, such as, the local shops, park or a friend's house.

### **At what age can my child step, cycle or scoot to school on their own?**

Preparing your kids for active travel enables them to gain skills in road safety, route planning, route familiarity and gaining confidence. Each child develops differently, most kids provided with active travel opportunities and support from parents with route planning and familiarity could be able to step, cycle or scoot to school on their own in the upper primary years.

### **We live too far from the school how can I actively travel?**

If the journey to or from school is too long, park a little further from the school so you step, cycle or scoot with the kids for the last 10 minutes of the trip.

### **I use public transport. How can I Think Feet First?**

Public transport is a great way to incorporate active travel into your day. If you want to increase your physical activity try getting off one or two stops earlier and walking.





### What about safety?

As a parent it is natural to be concerned about the safety of your children. Being active on the way to and from school is a great way to teach kids about road safety. It is important to reinforce the road safety messages of Stop, Look, Listen and Think.

**Stop** on the footpath before crossing the road.

**Look** out for vehicles and other road users.

**Listen** for approaching vehicles.

**Think** about the safest way to cross the road and act accordingly.

If your child is under the age of 12 years, they can ride their bike on the footpath; this is a great way for them to build their confidence before riding on the road. It is important to ensure kids always wear a safety helmet when cycling or scooting.

Some of the common safety concerns that parents have revolve around road accidents and fear of strangers. However, statistically speaking, children are more likely to die in car crashes than at the hands of a stranger. Australian data indicates that the risk of a child being a victim of either traffic or stranger harm has decreased over the past 30 years.

Data indicates that an Australian child is nearly twice as likely to be killed as a car passenger, than as a pedestrian and more than four times more likely to be killed as a car passenger than as a cyclist. In addition, data shows that countries with high levels of active transport have low pedestrian and cyclist fatality rates.

### My kids are used to me driving them to school, they will never walk! How can I encourage them?

Most children when asked would love to walk, cycle or scoot to school. It is a great opportunity to have fun and socialise with friends.

Kid's choice is influenced by many things including what their peers do, but it is also influenced by parents and what parents role model. Encourage your kids to Think Feet First. Step, cycle, scoot to school. It can take 3-4 weeks to establish a habit, so why not set a 4 week challenge and record your child's efforts using the Think Feet First chart.

### How do I fit walking to school into my day when I work full time?

Mornings can be a busy time, get the kids up a little earlier and involve them in getting breakfast and lunches ready. Kids can also pack their school bag, check their bike tyres and get their helmet ready the night before.

If walking, cycling or scooting to or from school is not possible for your family consider walking, cycling or scooting to other destinations like the local shops, park or a friend's house on the weekend or after school.

### I'm about to get my driver's licence. I want to use every opportunity to drive the car.

Getting your licence is an exciting milestone and it is understandable that you would want to get as much driving experience as possible. However, short car trips are not economical, so save money and petrol and help reduce environmental damage by walking, cycling or scooting, instead of driving the car for short trips.

Being active everyday is important for everyone. Walking or cycling to school with your friends is also a great opportunity to catch up.

For further information on Think Feet First. Step, Cycle, Scoot to School visit [opal.sa.gov.au](http://opal.sa.gov.au)

