

Getting to school

A Guide for Schools, Parents/Carers and Pupils



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Background

Each year, we receive numerous complaints about unsafe and inconsiderate parking around schools during drop-off and pick-up times.

As more pupils are driven to school, roads not designed for high traffic volumes become congested, leading to parking on verges, footways, and zigzags.

While Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) do monitor schools with restrictions, they can't be present at every school each day. The real solution lies in behaviour changes by parents/carers and pupils to reduce car use for school journeys.

This guide outlines strategies schools should try before requesting more enforcement or physical measures from the council to tackle problems caused by school traffic rather than usual traffic movements.



Adding cycling to PE lessons is a great way to help pupils become more confident riding a bike!

What schools can do

To help manage and reduce parking issues outside your school, we strongly recommend making full use of the Modeshift STARS accreditation programme. Modeshift STARS provides schools with a structured approach to developing safer, greener, and more sustainable travel habits within the school community.

By engaging with the programme, schools can:

- Develop a comprehensive School Travel Plan which is a package of measures that aims to reduce car use to and from your school.
- Promote active travel options such as walking, cycling, and scooting
- Reduce congestion and unsafe parking behaviours at pick-up and drop-off times
- Access tried-and-tested initiatives and resources
- Demonstrate commitment to pupil safety and environmental responsibility

Many schools have already seen significant improvements by taking part, making it a practical and impactful way to tackle parking concerns.

If you'd like support getting started or progressing with your Modeshift STARS accreditation, we're happy to help. Our Transport team can help schools develop a Travel Plan on the Modeshift STARS platform to promote and enable higher levels of active and sustainable travel.

Contact them at travelplans@milton-keynes.gov.uk

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“The great thing about Modeshift Stars is the initiatives we have delivered are now built into the school's calendar year-on-year”.

Jake Saville, Head of PE, Two Mile Ash Primary School

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Here's ten ideas to include more active travel at your school. Some or all these ideas have been successfully implemented at MK schools where congestion and poor parking was a big problem. Many schools reported a significant decrease in congestion and an increase in the number of pupils cycling or walking to school.

1. Encouraging cycling or scooting by including secure cycle or scooter storage on school grounds.
2. Get every child cycling and sign your school up to the Council's Bikeability Cycle Training programme.
3. Set up a walking bus or biking bus group even if it starts with just one day per week!
4. Carpool with other families if possible.
5. Staggered start times for different year groups
6. If the school is a longer distance away, try using the bus. There are concession rates for children in education or training. You can also look at the GetAroundMK site for more information and advice.
7. Refer children in your school to the Access to Bikes scheme - free bikes for pupil premium funded children.
8. There may be possible drop off zones nearby or consider talking to a local pub or other facility with a car park that is not used at school drop off times.
9. Introduce cycling in the local area to PE lessons to familiarise children to the routes and encourage cycling.
10. Why not include a cycle event in your school sports day?



What the Council can do

We can consider measures to manage parking outside school gates, but only if the school has already tried engaging pupils and parents/carers through proactive initiatives (some of which are suggested in this guide). Additionally, there must be suitable road space for implementation.



1. School Streets

School Streets close roads to most traffic for 30–60 minutes at the start and end of the school day, Monday to Friday during term time. Times and locations are shown on signs. The scheme is camera-enforced, with fines for violations. We will prioritise schools actively engaged with Modeshift STARS, as road closures alone do not change behaviour.



2. School Crossing Patroller

A school crossing patroller (“lollipop person”) helps children and pedestrians cross the road safely at designated, visible points near schools. The Council offers a grant for schools to employ their own SCP for up to three years; details are on our website.



3. Engineering Solutions

We can consider physical road changes outside school gates, such as speed humps, crossings, or bollards.

While these won't solve parking issues, they can improve road safety. As they can be costly, a strong safety case is required.

What the Council can do



4. Child Bollards

We offer every MK school the option to borrow five child bollards to place outside their school for a whole term.

The bollards help to raise awareness to drivers that children are in the area and they need to be more aware, especially during busy school drop-off and pick-up times.



5. 20mph zone

Most roads outside schools are already 20mph but residents can approach their local parish if they want to request a 20mph zone for an area. Information on how to do this is available on our [website](#).



6. Travel Maps

The Transport team can help schools to create a travel map to give to pupils and parents/carers to show the routes and times for journeys to the school from the local area.

They will be able to show walking and cycling routes plus journey times to school.



Please note, schools will need to have shown that they have engaged with Modeshift STARS and made attempts to change behaviours at their school before the council will look at implementing the above measures.

Behaviour change is the only real long-term solution to most parking and congestion issues outside schools.

Road safety tips

If you and your children are planning to walk, cycle or scoot to school, here's some road safety tips:

1. Plan your route so you know exactly where to go and how to get back home.
2. If you are walking at a time when it is still dark, make sure you stick to well lit areas.
3. Keep your personal belongings safe and don't be distracted by phones or using earbuds.
4. Only cross the road at a safe crossing point e.g. zebra or toucan, underpass or footbridge
5. If using a carpool, make sure you wear a seatbelt - it's the law!
6. During winter, wear either pale or high viz clothing so you are visible to road users.

Further information and useful websites

There's lots of information on our website, go to www.milton-keynes.gov.uk and search for Road Safety or go to our Transport website, www.getaroundmk.org

There's also Hazard Alley located in Kiln Farm in Milton Keynes which is a great facility to teach all ages about road safety, knife crime, safety around railway lines and in the home.

<https://www.safetycentre.co.uk/>

THINK! (think.gov.uk)

The government's official road safety website offers resources, games, and information for children, parents, and teachers from ages 3 to 16.

Bikeability (bikeability.org.uk):

This is the national cycling award scheme that many children participate in at school. Information about the Bikeability cycle training course can be found on the Council's website.

Brake (brake.org.uk):

This road safety charity has resources specifically for children (like the Zebras website) and provides advice for parents and families.

Streetwise Child Safety (streetwisechildsafety.co.uk):

Features games, quizzes, and activities for children, along with a section to test parents' own road safety knowledge.

Children's Traffic Club (childrenstrafficclub.com):

This website provides free activities to encourage safer journeys for children