

The Safe Migration Project

Starting Secondary School

Make the physical journey to secondary school as safe as possible by following these these important tips.

Slow down when driving

Children and teens can be easily distracted and unpredictable when using the roads. This makes young people among our most vulnerable road users.

- To protect them, slow down and show the utmost care when driving to, from or around school neighbourhoods.
- Driving under the sign-posted speed limit makes children and school environments safer.

Plan the best route

Whether walking or riding to school, it is important to:

- spend time with your child planning a safe route to school - **the quickest way isn't necessarily the safest**
- practise the route a few times before school starts so both you and your child feel safe and comfortable
- help your child plan to avoid potential hazards such as busy high-speed roads and complex intersections
- plan to travel on streets and roads with lower speed limits (ideally 40 km/h speed limit or lower).

Encourage walking to school safely

Walking is a great form of active travel to school as it improves health and wellbeing and is better for the environment. If walking:

- remind your child to minimise distractions, such as using a mobile phone, especially when crossing roads
- encourage your child to always cross at pedestrian crossings, pedestrian lights, pedestrian refuges, and/or places where drivers can see them easily.

Smart public transport use

Travelling to secondary school often involves using public transport. To do so safely:

- prepare by planning and practising the journey together before school starts
- when waiting for trains, buses and trams, encourage your child to stand behind the yellow line on train platforms and away from the roads at bus and tram stops
- remind your child to exit trams and buses onto the closest footpath - and never walk behind the tram or bus to cross the road.

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Safe cycling to school

Cycling is another great form of active travel to school. To ensure your child cycles safely:

- help them plan the safest route to school, prioritising bike paths and shared-use paths where possible (some cycling apps can be helpful with this)
- where bike and shared-use paths are unavailable, and children feel comfortable, choose low-speed roads with dedicated cycle lanes or infrastructure
- bikes must have a bell, an effective brake, and a rear reflector
- ensure your child knows they must wear a helmet when riding - **helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 74%¹**
- helmets must meet Australian standards and fit correctly to provide the proper protection

It is also important that your child knows:

- the law requires that a helmet is worn (and done up) while cycling - **and failure to wear one incurs a fine of \$231**
- it is dangerous and illegal for children under 16 years to ride an e-scooter in Victoria - they can be fined \$296 if they do.

Drive and park safely if driving to school

If you need to drive your child to school, it is important to:

- ensure all passengers use a seatbelt - to be safe and comply with the law
- use the drop-off zone and park safely when dropping off and picking up. Better still, park safely further away from the school gate to reduce congestion and risks.

Additional resources

Public Transport tips:

www.ptv.vic.gov.au/more/travelling-on-the-network/travelling-safely

Cyclist safety:

www.transport.vic.gov.au/road-rules-and-safety/bicycles/cycling-with-children

Bike Ed Program for schools:

www.roadsafetyeducation.vic.gov.au/educational-resources/programs/bike-ed-new

Road Safety Education Victoria:

www.roadsafetyeducation.vic.gov.au

¹Bambach, M. R., Mitchell, R. J., Grzebieta, R. H., Olivier, J. The effectiveness of helmets in bicycle collisions with motor vehicles: A case-control study. Accident Analysis and Prevention, Issue 53, 2013.