Active Travel

A Toolkit for Schools

North Yorkshire Sport

YORK & NORTH YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY

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Opportunities

Dr Bike

A Dr Bike session is a simple, school-friendly bike safety and maintenance event where a trained mechanic checks pupils' bikes for roadworthiness. They carry out basic repairs (like adjusting brakes, pumping tyres, tightening

bolts) and identify any issues that need further attention. Pupils receive feedback on their bike's condition, helping ensure safer and more confident cycling

Read a case study on Dr Bike

Bike Bus

A Bike Bus is a coordinated group ride where children travel to school together by bike along a planned route, supported by adults.

It works like a "cycling convoy": the group starts at a set point, follows a scheduled route, and picks up more riders as it goes. Adults act as marshals at the front and back to set the pace, manage safety, and keep the group together.

The aim is to make cycling to school safer, more visible, more social and more enjoyable, helping pupils gain confidence on the

See the bike bus in action

Bike Library

A school bike library is a system that allows pupils to borrow a bike in the same way they would borrow a book, removing cost and access barriers for families.

It provides a pool of school-owned (or donated) bikes that children can loan for a

term, a school year, or specific activities such as Bikeability, Bike Bus rides, or learning to ride. Key features of a school bike library

- Storage solutions
- Free bike loans so all pupils
- Simple loan agreements outlining care, safe use, and return expectations.
- Regular safety checks (e.g., M-checks) and annual servicing to ensure bikes are roadworthy. Supports wider school aims around active travel, inclusion, and equality of access.

Read a case study on Oatlands Infant School's bike library

Community Events

Community cycling days provide families with a free and/or subsidised, accessible way to experience the joy and benefits of cycling together.

These events can include balance bike activities for younger children, obstacle courses for confident riders, and hands-on opportunities to learn basic cycle maintenance. Beyond the fun, they help build confidence, strengthen community connections, and often lead to a noticeable increase in pupils choosing

to cycle to school afterwards. Parents value the inclusive, no-cost nature of these sessions, while

school staff frequently highlight the strong turnout and the positive impact such provision has on active travel habits and family engagement.

Read about examples from Braeburn Primary and Nursery Academy

Balance bike equipment and CPD

Benefits of Balance Bike Training for School Staff:

- **Supports inclusion by enabling every child to participate** - Training helps staff understand how to adapt activities for children with different needs, confidence levels and physical abilities—ensuring all pupils can access early cycling opportunities, not only those with prior experience.
- **Reduces barriers for families** - By delivering balance bike sessions internally: More children learn to ride earlier, families feel more supported & children without bikes gain access through school equipment
- **Supports wider school priorities** - Balance bike training aligns with: Personal development, Physical literacy, Motor skill development, Wellbeing and resilience and Early Years readiness

Park and Stride Agreements

A Park and Stride agreement is a formal or informal understanding between a school and a nearby location

Often a community centre, local business, sports club, supermarket, or public car park allowing families to park there for free at drop-off and/or pick-up times.

A park and Stride Agreement usually sets out:

- Agreed parking locations (e.g. a nearby car park within a 5-10 minute walk of school).
- Permitted simes for parking (e.g. 8:15-9:15 and 14:45-15:45).
- Other conditions (e.g. time limits, specific bays, signage or passes).

Read more about the Park and Stride scheme

Bike Maintenance Course for children and young people

A 6-week programme, led by a qualified Bike Mechanic could teach practical bike care through hands-on tasks and teamwork.

Children and/or young people learn simple checks, cleaning, puncture repair and basic adjustments along with how to help others safely develop their own skills.

Across a series of 6 x 1.5 hour sessions, a cohort could gradually build their knowledge and confidence in essential bike maintenance.

The programme design could include; sourcing of appropriate tools, core safety skills to ensure bikes are safe and ready to cycle, followed by a range of progressively more advanced maintenance tasks.

The Bike Mechanic could provide demonstrations, guided practice and technical input at key stages. Children could be encouraged to progress at their own pace and develop increasing independence as their skills grow.

Contact a local cycling provider to here

Creating the right conditions

Behaviour Change

Capability - Active Travel approaches in schools builds Physical & psychological capability through developing skills, confidence, knowledge or ability to walk, wheel or cycle for pupils and families.

Opportunity - Physical and social opportunities can change the environment or social context, making active travel easier, safer, or more socially (parent/carer forums and School Governing Body discussions).

Motivation - Active Travel approaches boost desire, intention, habit formation.

Family Engagement & Co-Design

Why? Families are more likely to change behaviour when they feel consulted, not instructed.

Examples:

- Short parent/carer surveys on barriers, safety concerns, and ideas
- Family workshops/community Active Travel Days
- Feedback loops where families comment on pilots (bike bus, cycle training etc)
- Communication & Messaging for Families - Social Media

Involving the community

Active travel succeeds when a school's neighbourhood is involved in shaping solutions

- Consider Community Co-Design & Decision-Making
- Involve local businesses by purchasing through trusted local providers, consulting with them, and seeking local sponsorship.
- Provide communication/forums where residents can contribute ideas/concerns.
- Invite parents/carers, residents' associations, local businesses, councillors, and PCSOs.
- Upskilling communities through cycling lessons, marshal training creating longer lasting impact

Identifying known and trusted partners

Different partners bring specialist skills that schools or organisations may not hold internally.

Suggested partners:

- Parent volunteers
- Local Active Travel Teams / Highways
- Bikeability providers
- Local cycling/walking groups
- Community cycle hubs / repair cafes
- Public Health teams / family hubs
- PCSOs / Road Safety Teams
- Local businesses (sponsorship, discounts, route access)

Inclusion, Equity and Cultural Sensitivity

The recent '***Every Child Achieving and Thriving'*** White Paper sets out that a broad enrichment offer is an entitlement for all, this includes physical activity and outdoor and adventure as core pillars of inclusion Communities are diverse, Active Travel approaches can support them through considering:

- **Cultural attitudes toward cycling** - Providing a range of options; walking, wheeling, scooting, cycling so pupils can participate in a way that suits them.
- **Safety perceptions in different groups** - Having staff trained to support children with anxiety, sensory needs or low confidence.
- **Barriers facing low-income households** - Ensures active travel reflects the needs and priorities of all pupils.
- **How to ensure SEND families are supported** - Involving pupils of all backgrounds, including SEND and disadvantaged pupils, in designing routes, travel plans and incentives and disadvantaged pupils, in designing routes, travel plans and incentives

School Compliance

FAQ examples produced by Yorkshire Causeway Schools Trust

Bike Library Compliance – School FAQ

1. Who should we speak to for detailed compliance requirements?
Schools should contact their Trust or Local Authority compliance team for full guidance on legal, insurance and procedural requirements for running a bike library.

2. Who is responsible for liability insurance for bike-library resources?
Liability insurance for any school-based bike library equipment sits with the school. Schools must ensure their policy explicitly covers bikes and related equipment.

3. Is annual maintenance required? Yes. All bikes and equipment must undergo annual maintenance to meet safety standards and keep insurance valid.

4. Who completes the risk assessment?
Risk assessments are typically completed in line with Local Authority (LA) requirements, or the school's own established procedures if not LA-maintained.

5. Do users need to see or acknowledge the risk assessment?
Yes. The risk assessment should be shared with all users, and users (or parents/carers) must sign to confirm they will follow the safety rules.

6. Can insurance be voided if bikes are not maintained properly?
Yes. Failure to maintain bikes correctly—including servicing, checks, or repairs—can invalidate insurance cover.

7. Are bikes covered under building and contents insurance?
Schools should check their building and contents policy to confirm whether bikes are included, need to be added, or require a separate equipment cover.

8. How does equipment compliance work (e.g., bikes, scooters, helmets)?

Schools must ensure:

- all equipment is safe, roadworthy, and regularly maintained
- annual servicing is completed (especially for bike libraries)
- bikes undergo regular M-checks
- any used/donated bikes are professionally serviced by a reputable bike shop before use

Failure to maintain equipment can void insurance

9. Should we consider new bikes instead of donated bikes?

New bikes may offer warranty protection and more predictable maintenance needs. Schools should weigh up:

- warranty length
- expected use
- servicing costs
- initial investment vs long-term reliability

Bike Bus Compliance – School FAQ

1. What is a "Bike Bus" and why is context important?

A Bike Bus is a supervised group ride where pupils cycle to school together along an agreed route. Context matters because each school's setting, route, pupil needs, and local infrastructure will influence how the Bike Bus should be planned and risk-managed.

2. Who is responsible for the risk assessment and how is it shared?

The organising school or lead organisation must complete a Bike Bus–specific risk assessment. It should be shared clearly with all riders and parents—ideally through a pre-ride briefing so everyone understands expectations and safety measures.

3. How does a Bike Bus normally start and operate?

Every Bike Bus should begin with a designated marshal at the front who sets the pace and leads safely. Additional marshals can support the group depending on numbers and route complexity.

4. Is the Bike Bus a school-led activity or a community-led activity?

This must be confirmed before starting. Some Bike Buses are fully school-led, while others are run by parent or community groups with minimal school involvement.

5. What insurance applies if the Bike Bus is school-led?

If the school leads and manages the Bike Bus, the activity is covered under the school's existing liability insurance, which typically meets required thresholds for organised group activities.

6. What if the Bike Bus is not school-led?

If a parent group, community organisation, or volunteers run the Bike Bus independently, they must seek their own insurance to ensure appropriate liability cover.

7. Why is school-led delivery recommended?

A school-led approach provides stronger safeguarding, clearer accountability, and automatic coverage through school insurance. It also ensures consistency with school policies and safer organisation of staff and volunteer roles.

8. What level of cycling competence should leaders or marshals have?

Anyone leading or marshalling should have a nationally recognised training qualification (e.g., Bikeability or equivalent) to guarantee consistent safety standards and rider support.

9. Who completes the risk assessment?

The lead organisation (school or group) must complete its own risk assessment tailored to the route, pupil cohort, weather conditions, and staffing.

10. What are the recommended supervision ratios?

Ratios should reflect pupil needs, road conditions, and group size. As a guide, more marshals are required for younger riders, complex routes, or larger groups. Schools should follow their usual off-site activity ratio principles.

11. What staff requirements apply if the Bike Bus is school-led?

If the school runs the Bike Bus, at least one trained member of staff must attend. Additional staff or marshals may also be required depending on numbers and risk

Ofsted

The updated 2025 Education Inspection Framework places stronger emphasis on wellbeing, inclusion, pupil development, safety and culture.

Personal Development & Wellbeing

Active travel (walking, scooting, cycling, Bike Bus, Bikeability, Bike Library) contributes directly to Ofsted's expectations for physical health, mental wellbeing, resilience, independence and readiness to learn.

Inclusion (new dedicated evaluation area)

Ofsted now evaluates inclusion separately, examining how schools remove barriers for SEND, disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.

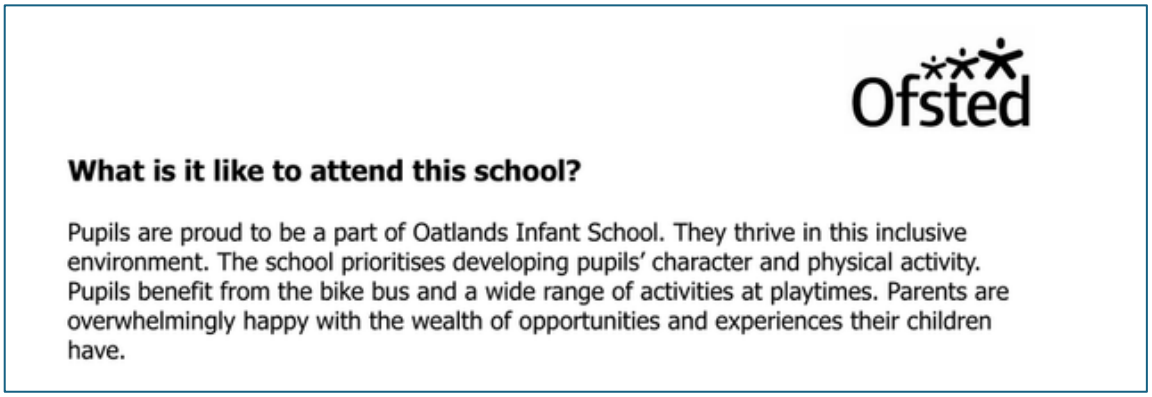
Behaviour, Attitudes & Attendance

Active travel supports positive behaviour patterns and reduces morning stress. Evidence shows active journeys improve mood and reduce anxiety at arrival.

Leadership & Management

Inspectors look for coherent whole-school strategies that promote wellbeing, safety, strategies that promote wellbeing, safety, inclusion and community engagement.

Influencing Inspection Outcomes



Ofsted

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be a part of Oatlands Infant School. They thrive in this inclusive environment. The school prioritises developing pupils' character and physical activity. Pupils benefit from the bike bus and a wide range of activities at playtimes. Parents are overwhelmingly happy with the wealth of opportunities and experiences their children have.

Inspection of Oatlands Infant School

Hookstone Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 8BT

Inspection dates:	17 and 18 December 2024
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Christopher Harrison. The school is part of the Yorkshire Causeway Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jane Goodwin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alison Glover.

North Yorkshire Sport's Bike Bus Helps Oatlands Infant School Achieve 'Outstanding' Ofsted Report

Oatlands Infant School is celebrating a fantastic outcome following its latest Ofsted inspection, and North Yorkshire Sport is proud to have played a role in this success. Thanks to funding from the Opening Schools Facilities (OSF) fund, we were able t...

North Yorkshire Sport · Feb 13, 2025

Evidence Informed Decision Making

A	P	E	A	S	E
Acceptability	Practicability	Effectiveness & Cost	Affordability	Side-effects / Safety	Equity

The APEASE model is a behaviour-change decision-making framework used to assess whether an intervention is suitable, realistic and effective before implementing it.

It is widely used in public health, education, transport planning, and active travel work to ensure decisions are evidence-informed, safe, proportionate and equitable.

Below are two examples of an APEASE model to support conversations with senior leaders, governors, parents and carers.

Bike Bus

Acceptability

Highly acceptable to pupils and parents when clear safety steps (marshals, risk assessment, briefing) are in place. Acceptability increases when the school leads the activity, as families trust school processes and insurance cover.

Practicability	Practicable if the school can provide: Trained staff or marshals/ A clear, shared risk assessment/ A consistent route and timetable. Works best when school-led, ensuring insurance, safeguarding and staff competencies are reviewed and compliant.
Effectiveness & Cost	Effective in increasing cycling confidence, reducing car use, and supporting physical activity. Works best when: Marshals are trained/Ratios are appropriate/ A pre-ride briefing reinforces safe behaviour
Affordability	Low-cost if school-led (already covered by school insurance). Training for staff/marshals may require small investment but leads to long-term safe operation.
Side-effects / Safety	Positive: safer routes, improved confidence, community building. Risks: poor route planning, untrained marshals, or unclear risk assessments. Insurance can be void if the Bike Bus is not led correctly or roles are unclear.
Equity	Supports pupils who may not have safe routes or parents who can accompany them. School-led delivery ensures inclusive access for all pupils, not only confident or well-equipped riders.

Bike Library

Acceptability	Acceptable when equipment is safe, easy to access, and maintained annually. Parents value clear user agreements and reassurance that bikes have been safety checked
Practicability	Practicable with: Annual servicing arrangements/Storage space/Simple loan processes/Trust/LA compliance sign-off. Donated bikes must be professionally serviced before being loaned.
Effectiveness & Cost	Effective at removing cost as a barrier. Annual servicing and user agreements ensure bikes stay safe and usable throughout the year.

Affordability	Costs include maintenance, servicing, and possible insurance adjustments. Donated bikes reduce purchase costs but require upfront servicing.
Side-effects / Safety	Positive: more active pupils, reduced inequalities. Risks: insurance invalidation if bikes are not maintained; unsafe donated bikes without professional servicing; unclear user expectations.
Equity	Active travel must reduce inequalities, not widen them. Bike Libraries give access to pupils who do not own a bike. Adapted cycling or walking alternatives support SEND pupils. Park & Stride supports families who live further away.

Example of Best Practice

Click here to watch a video of Oatlands Infant School talking about their Active Travel work.

Useful Contacts and Links

Contact at North Yorkshire Sport

Niall O'Brian, Education Manager

T: 01423 226303

E: Niall@northyorkshiresport.co.uk

Links

Active Travel Fund information and guidance

Pupil-led Active Travel audit

North Yorkshire Council Active Travel support for schools

Bikeability

Sharing best practice with Leeds University

WOW – Walking to school challenge

Balanceability

Dr Bike repair workshops

Walk Bike Scoot Trust

Braeburn Primary School Scarborough Case Study

North Yorkshire Sport.

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