

Cycling “As a Way of Life” Policy

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Approved by: College of Management
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Policy Statement

South Devon Steiner School is proud to be a cycling school. We take a positive approach to nurturing a cycling culture as this reflects our commitment to working with our rural school site, our limited financial means, supporting our staff’s and students’ mental and physical health, a low-carbon future and also our Waldorf Steiner curriculum which places an emphasis on experiential learning which includes use of the outdoors wherever possible.

Aims

To encourage cycling as a mode of transport and fulfilling our duties to engage in physical activity according to our facilities and premises, whilst ensuring that pupils are as safe as possible: protecting them from factors outside their own direct control.

Scope

This policy formally relates to all pupils at the school from Class 5 upwards when the Bikeability level 1 cycle training takes place at school. Informally, we support cycling for all ages, staff, parents and the wider community alike.

Background: Cycling “As A Way of Life”

Cycling is another way in which we can reflect our pedagogical principles, central to which is the belief that cognitive development cannot be separated from motor development: thinking and

moving are inseparable.

But there is more at stake: cycling is encouraged across all age groups and students regularly see teachers and parents making their way to and from school by bike as positive role models for our commitment to environmental awareness and a low-carbon future.

At the same time, placing an emphasis on cycling as an integrated way of life, we are able to teach valuable life skills such as navigating, orienteering, technical (bicycle) maintenance, enjoy the outdoors and address in a significant way some of the transport problems especially for older students which we encounter in our rural location. This way, students can travel to off-site trips, educational visits and activities wherever this is reasonably practical.

History

A long community campaign during which the school was actively involved extended the Totnes-to-Dartington cycle path directly to the school's front door transforming the possibilities of car-free commuting to and from school and demonstrated to pupils the possibilities of engagement with authorities, politicians and formal planning procedures.

The government introduced a National Standard for cycle training called Bikeability which aims to provide a nationwide cycle training in schools. Since 2008 when our school had three trained national standards instructors we have linked into this scheme to provide cycle training in classes 5, 7 and 9. We have been able to access local government funding to provide levels 2 and 3.

Formal Cycling Curriculum

Formally, we work with the government's Bikeability programme from Level 1 to Level 3 and employ National Standard Cycling Instructors who bring cycling skills to students from Class 5 and up.

Class 5

Students are introduced to cycling during Class 5 when they complete Bikeability Level I.

This programme is the precursor to road skills. The lessons develop bike handling skills, stability, control, use of gears and safety awareness. All rides take place in a controlled environment in the school's grounds and on the cycle path.

This equips the riders with the basic skills which they will later apply to road-riding and prepares them for the cycle to and from games in Dartington and Totnes which they will take up in later years.

Class 7

In Class 7, students complete Bikeability Level II which develops road sense and trains them for

safe on-road cycling.

They learn how to manoeuvre safely through traffic, perform turns, navigate roundabouts and further develop the skills they acquired at Level I. These rides are all conducted in realistic traffic environments.

Class 9

In Class 9, the focus turns to cycling as both a sporting activity and a means of independence.

Throughout the summer term games lessons are dedicated to extended cycle rides radiating outwards from school.

These rides develop not only road sense but also endurance, stamina and technique. Students also learn to map-read and navigate making sense of what they see on a map and how to apply it to their surroundings.

Technical cycle maintenance and roadside repair is also a component of this education.

This cycling term engenders a sense of independence and self-reliance which prepares students for their cycling trip to Brittany which follows in the second half of the summer term: the entire class cycles a formidable 220 miles around Brittany over two weeks during which they camp and visit a school where they present the findings of the research they carry out during the trip – practising their French along the way.

At the end of this odyssey students have earned their Bikeability Level III and are fully fledged, competent road-cyclists!

Hazards

Cycling (especially on the road) can entail significant risks: pupils may have collisions or falls which could lead to serious injury or death.

The school will therefore strike a balance: recognising the significant benefits of cycling whilst seeking to reduce or eliminate those risks that lie outside of the direct control of each child.

We especially recognise that the following factors could increase the hazards:

1. Lack of awareness among staff regarding safe cycling practices
2. Lack of education for children about cycling practices
3. Poor mechanical state of any bicycles and equipment
4. Lack of mechanical skill to address even simple bicycle maintenance requirements
5. Other road traffic participants
6. Environmental factors and weather conditions
7. The state of any roads, paths and other areas used for cycling

General Guidance

Overview

All cycling in school and off-site trips is under the guidance of teachers qualified to National Standards Cycling Instructor.

Overseas students, or any other pupils not having had training from class 5, are individually assessed and appropriately trained.

Discipline

Pupils have to follow instructions, to ensure the safety of all; if they don't follow instructions they will be returned to school, or another safe place.

Information

All off-site trips are notified to the school office, with times of departure and return.

Helmets

All pupils wear suitable helmets when cycling on school activities.

Clothing

Guidance is given. In particular, all pupils wear hi-vis when off school site. Anyone wearing anything significantly different from the guidance, will be made to change.

Mechanical

All bikes are checked by staff at the beginning of the block, to ensure safety. Prior to setting off, each pupil carries out a routine mechanical check, with the assistance of the teacher where required. Basic tools and repair kits carried on off-site trips.

First Aid

Appropriate kit carried by a member of staff. Teacher trainers are all First Aiders. Support can be obtained by contacting the school office.

Training

Starts in Class 5 and further training is given in higher classes according to the curriculum outlined above.

Pupils joining Classes 9 & 10 after the training sessions have been run, shall be assessed by one of the staff to ensure that they are competent.

All training is carried out in accordance with National Cycling Standards levels 1, 2 & 3.

Route Checking

Journeys taken by pupils will have been ridden and risk assessed by staff, except for major upper school trips which may consciously cover new ground.

Further information, advice and guidance

- The National Standard for Cycle Training
<https://bikeability.org.uk/>

Compliance

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents>
- Independent school standards, December 2014
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/pdfs/uksi_20143283_en.pdf

References:

- Health & Safety policy
- Risk assessment policy
- Cycling risk assessments