

# North East Sustrans Active School Travel Programme Spring Term 2020 Newsletter

## I'd love to hear from you...

I'm Johnny McCrystal, Sustrans' schools officer for the North East of NI. Please get in touch if you have any great school stories or would like to find out more about our schools work.

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## Message from Sustrans...

The Active School Travel Programme is an exciting initiative for schools who wish to see more of their pupils choosing an **active and healthy** journey to school. The aim of the programme is to increase the number of pupils walking, cycling and scooting to school.

Sustrans is being funded by the **Public Health Agency** and the **Department for Infrastructure** to continue delivering the Active School Travel Programme across Northern Ireland until 2021.

Sustrans has been delivering this successful programme for the past three years. In 2018-19 within participating schools, the number of pupils travelling actively increased from 35% to 53%.

We are currently working with over 400 schools across Northern Ireland. Please visit our [website](https://www.sustrans.org.uk) where you can learn more about the programme and download newsletters from other areas.

## #StayHomeStayActive



The Spring Term was shorter than we all imagined but there were still loads of brilliant Active School Travel activities and events that happened this term that we want to celebrate in this newsletter. We hope this finds you well in these difficult times. Let's all do our part by staying home and staying active. And for those of you teachers, NHS staff and other keyworkers who are heading out each day, thank you for the important work that you are doing. We have some excellent resources to support parents and carers with home schooling and ideas for staying active —please read on!

~ Take care from everyone at Sustrans!



From School Mark Awards to Active Travel Days, we packed a lot in this term!

## Spring Term Highlights

A lot of great activities happened in the North East region during the first few months of the year including **Active Travel Champion workshops, road safety lessons, Ditch the Stabilisers sessions and cycling skills training.**

Congratulations to Bushvalley PS who received their School Mark Bronze Award & Doagh PS who scooped the much coveted Gold Award! (Bushvalley PS, Principal Mrs Irwin pictured above).

As a team we're stepping up to the challenge of these challenging times by taking our activities into homes through our Sustrans at Home virtual lessons! We're pleased to say that we've had huge uptake with families enjoying incorporating them into their home-learning! Full details Pg 3.

Sustrans is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. It's time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today. [www.sustrans.org.uk](https://www.sustrans.org.uk)

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# Harryville PS Bike to School Day

A big thank you to Mrs McDonald and Miss Godfrey for organising the Bike to School Day at Harryville PS in Ballymena. The pupils not only enjoyed pedalling and scooting to school but also got some free time during the day to have a pedal in the playground to celebrate.



Car parking spaces gave way to cycle parking on 13th March

## Champion Workshops

During February a total of twelve Active Travel Champion workshops took place throughout NI, two of which took place in the North East at Antrim Castle Gardens & Harpurs Hill PS, Coleraine.

Our theme for the sessions was '**Outdoor Space & Air Quality Around Schools**'. Thanks to the many schools represented at both sessions.



# Go, go, go at Gorran PS!

There was no stopping the pupils at Gorran PS, Garvagh in February as they ditched their stabilisers and set about learning how to ride their bikes with the help of Principal, Mr Cleland and Schools Officer, Johnny.



Kora learned to ride her bike without stabilisers! Look at her go!



Mark loved the session and the good news is there's no need for stabilisers any more, he learned to cycle without them!



## Want to get involved?



Would you like to see more families walking, cycling and scooting to your school?

A place on the Active School Travel Programme comes with hands-on support from a regional Sustrans Schools Officer. Activities range from **assemblies** and **lessons**; to on-road **cycle training** and **road safety** talks, all of which are **free** to schools as the programme is fully funded by the Department for Infrastructure & the Public Health Agency.

Please get in touch if you'd like to receive an application pack — [johnny.mccrystal@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:johnny.mccrystal@sustrans.org.uk)



# #StayHomeStayActive

The first **Sustrans at Home** activities are now up on YouTube! Using channels created especially for this project, the Schools Team hope that we can help bring variety to the remote learning provision for your pupils and families. Each week, I will post a short video to introduce a learning activity that focuses on being active, staying healthy or active travel. There will be an accompanying PDF that contains instructions for an at-home activity. Please consider adding this to your timetable for remote work or share to your colleagues so it can be sent to pupils and families through your normal parent communication apps. If you have any requests for specific topics or themes, please let me know.



ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL

BIKE FLOOR ART

Sustrans

30 MINS

RESOURCES—ITEMS FROM AROUND HOME

**Activity**

**Aim:** Create brilliant bike designs using everyday things from around your home!

**Instructions:** Search around your home for items of various shapes and sizes. Clear a space on the floor as your 'canvas'. Using the items you have collected shape these into the design of bicycles!

**Extension:** Research iconic bicycles through history such as the 'Penny Farthing', 'Boneshaker' & the 'Velocipede'. Find out what they looked like; what they were made of; who invented them and what year they were first made. See if you can recreate these historic bikes at home using floor art!

The Active School Travel Programme is an exciting initiative for schools who wish to see more of their pupils choosing an active and healthy journey to school. The programme provides schools with the skills and knowledge to get more children walking, cycling and scooting as their main mode of transport to school. Find out more at [www.sustrans.org.uk/nlschools](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/nlschools)

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ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL

JUNIOR BIKE DR'S

30 MINS

CHECKLIST (BELOW), BIKE PUMP, ALLEN KEY, BIKE OIL.

**ACTIVITY**

**Aim:** Pupils and parents aim to check over their bicycles together to ensure they are safe and working well.

**Instructions:** Use the checklist below to investigate the various parts of your bicycle. If you find any problems you might be able to fix them yourself! E.g. Pumping tyres, oiling the chain etc. More specialist repairs should be taken to a local bike mechanic, once it is safe to do so.

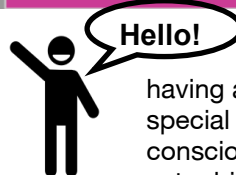
**Certificate:** Parents can award pupils a 'Junior Bike Doctor' certificate when completed! Feel free to share your photos to our social media profiles!

Bike Part	✓	Details
Brakes		Do your brakes stop your bike well? Look at the brake blocks, are they worn? Are the brake levers tight and level?
Wheels & Tyres		Check tyres are pumped up and feeling firm. Is the tyre tread on both wheels in good condition or worn?
Steering		Handlebars should be straight. Does the front tyre line up in the middle when you look down?
Saddle & Seatpost		Give your saddle a wiggle to ensure the seat clamp is tight and the saddle doesn't move.
Pedals & Chain		Spin your pedals, do they move smoothly? Take a look at your chain, it should be silver or grey not rusty brown! Make sure you add a little bike oil to the chain links regularly to help it work well.
Frame		Check over the frame for damage, dents and rust. It's important to keep your bike clean and dry after use to keep it in tip-top condition!
Other		

Enjoy this activity? Use #stayhomestayactive and tag us @SustransNI on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

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We all know how much pupils love having a visitor come in to school to take a special lesson or assembly, and so we were conscious that they might miss out on that extra bit of variety over the coming months so each Sustrans Officer will be a 'virtual visitor' popping up each week to add to the remote learning that's going on.

It's been super to see families sharing photos to our social media platforms. You'll be able to find us on Facebook and Twitter using @SustransNI

St Mals PS

@StMalsColeraine

Thank you to our @SustransNI Active Travel Officer @JohnnyMcCrystal for setting us a wonderful 'Bike Floor Art' home activity for the week. This super creation was made by a Primary 2 boy today using everyday things from around his home. 🚲 🛠️ 🌟 🌟 🌟

@sustrans @Eco\_SchoolsNI





Pupils at Elmgrove Primary enjoying Feet First Families day

## Feet First Families

On Friday 13 March, pupils from schools across Northern Ireland made their school a 'car-free zone', and encouraged families to use their feet first to walk, scoot or cycle to school.

With school car parks closed for the day, pupils reclaimed the space in all kinds of creative and fun ways, including parties in the parking lot. Some schools held 'bling your bike' events, coffee stands or simply turned their car parks into an extended play-ground. There were also led walks and walking buses to encourage children to travel actively to school.

Dr Hannah Dearie, from the Public Health Agency said: "We are delighted to support children and their families to actively travel to school to increase their physical activity and improve their overall health and wellbeing. Feet First Families is a fun day to highlight the benefits of actively travelling to school by showing children, parents and the wider community how easy it can be to walk, cycle or scoot to school."



## Follow the Leaders

Congratulations to the following schools across Northern Ireland who have achieved **School Mark Awards** in January, February and March!

### Bronze Awards

- ♦ Artigarvan PS
- ♦ Bushvalley PS
- ♦ Chapel Road PS
- ♦ Faughanvale PS
- ♦ Phoenix Integrated PS
- ♦ Sion Mills PS



### Gold Award

- ♦ **Doagh PS**— see pictured below.

Active Travel Champion Mr Dowds and pupils from the Eco Committee pictured with the Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey, Ald John Smyth and John Blair MLA.



## We *still* want you...

We don't know exactly what the 2020-21 school year will look like, but at this stage we are still intending to take on new schools in the Active School Travel Programme. If you would like your school to be a part of this inspiring initiative, please contact us or visit our [website](https://schoolsni@sustrans.org.uk) where you can download an application pack today.



If your school is already part of AST, please help us spread the news and encourage teachers at new schools to get on board with this exciting opportunity.

Currently, the deadline for applications has been waived. Please get in touch with any questions—  
[schoolsni@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:schoolsni@sustrans.org.uk) or 02890434569.

Sustrans is grateful for the continued support of our schools work in Northern Ireland from the following:



Department for  
**Infrastructure**

An Roinn  
**Bonneagair**