

## FAIRFIELD LOWER SCHOOL INTERIM SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

### Aim

Over recent years the 'school run' has been identified as a key contributor to traffic congestion with one in five cars in the morning peak taking a child to school. The increases in car use over the last 20 years have far reaching impacts beyond the environmental consequences and includes health related issues such as childhood obesity, lack of road and personal safety skills in young people as well as specific safety concerns outside nearly every school gate.

The school run has therefore been identified as a key area for action and the focus of much government policy over the last 5 years.

One way of combating the increase in car journeys for the journey to school is through the development of school travel plans. A school travel plan is a document that examines the factors which influence travel choice and makes recommendations which can improve the safety of the school journey through the implementation of measures which will encourage more children to walk, cycle or use the bus for school.

The measures introduced by a school travel plan have benefits for both the school and the local community. These can include:

- reduced congestion and pollution,
- safer, quieter and more pleasant streets
- improvements to children's health and fitness
- improved road safety skills

The work involved in producing the school travel plan can also bring benefits, which might include:

- involving children in changing their own environment,
- strengthening links with the local community,
- providing opportunities for children to take part in decision making and to learn about citizenship,
- opportunities for classroom work within the national curriculum.

The aim of the interim travel plan is to provide and inform the school of the local infrastructure/ environment provided which is conducive to a safe a sustainable journey to school for both pupils and staff. The interim plan also provides recommendations for the school to further develop their school travel plan, in line with the current DfES standards, see appendix 1.

## **Background**

The new lower school is planned to serve the new housing development to avoid the need for lower school children to travel to schools in Stotfold or Arlesey if they had capacity.

The design has 150 places for pupils between the ages of 5 - 9 and a 40 place nursery unit attended in morning and afternoon sessions.

The school's catchment area covers the new housing development and flats on the former Fairfield Hospital site although there may be a small percentage of children from Stotfold and Arlesey.

The school's start and finish times will be decided nearer the opening, but it is suggested a typical school day will be start at 9.00 a.m. and finish at 3.35 p.m.

The nursery unit will have similar hours to the school but may chose to operate longer hours, for example it could open 7.30 a.m. or 8am – and close about 6.00 p.m.

Schools are being encouraged to offer after school activities and wrap- around care but the extent of any such activities is not known at the present time.

Staff numbers are estimated at 30, including midday supervisors and support staff, who tend to be local. Home location of staff will need further clarification when staff are in post.

## **Site location**

The site is centrally located within the new development. The Urban Design Strategy's Movement Strategy for the new development area recognised the need for direct pedestrian linkages along radial routes from the south and footpath/cycle linkages from the flats in the listed building and housing to the north.

## **Travelling to School**

### **Overview**

#### **Pedestrian routes**

How the school operates in terms of pupil arrival and collection will be a matter for the school governing body but as shown on the planning application submission it is being designed with

- The main school gate on the southern boundary.
- Pedestrian access and cycles from the public footpath/cycleway on the eastern boundary adjacent to the hard play.
- Vehicle access for deliveries and car parking via a separate entrance on the eastern boundary.
- Potential pedestrian access on the western boundary

The area around the school is not a through route, and is designed for low vehicular speeds with raised junctions and 90% bends. The precise speed limits are not known. It is intended that raised platforms etc. will indicate where pupils are to cross and liaison is

underway with the developers so that crossing points for the community centre and school are considered in a comprehensive manner.

### **Cycling to school**

Provision of (*insert how many*) cycle racks is made on the school site for children and staff who wish to cycle and the siting of these are close to pedestrian routes.

### **Bus routes**

Currently buses pass along Hitchin Road site running from Stotfold to Letchworth. However in due course this bus services will divert into the site and a route through the site to Arlesey is also envisaged.

### **Car parking**

Provision for staff car parking has been based on the Bedfordshire Standards within the School site – 1 space for each member of teaching staff and 1 space for each 4 support staff.

There will be no on-site provision for parent drop off. The lay-by and community centre car park will enable parents who bring children to school by car to utilise these as drop-off points which from then on are designed to offer safe pedestrian routes to complete journeys. The lay by will also be available for school trips by bus.

### **Travel Patterns**

As part of the School Travel Plan the school is required to undertake a parent travel survey, see appendix 2. This identifies parents current mode of travel to school as well as their desired mode of travel to school. The survey also looks at identifying any potential barriers to a sustainable journey to school

The School is also required to take part in the County Council's annual school travel survey which takes place in September, see appendix 3. The 'hands up' survey will provide a snap shot on how all pupils get to school. This will provide the school with a baseline data of the different mode of travel to school.

Average percentages in lower schools can be in the order of:

Walking	44%
Car sharing	8%
Car	48%
Buses	0%

However as the school is predominantly to serve the new housing area and the vast majority of the housing is within half a mile of the new school a higher percentage of walking trips would be expected.

## **Action Plan**

Below are the objectives of the interim travel plan. These are in line with the Travelling to School Initiative and Bedfordshire County Councils School Travel Strategy.

With each objective are a set of actions already in place which relate to the design of the school and the local environment. This is followed by a set of recommended actions for the school to work towards when submitting a formal travel plan, which meets the current DfES criteria. The school travel plan team can provide assistance to the school developing school travel plans as well as resources, see appendix 4.

The school once on site can individualise and take ownership of these objectives when developing the school travel plan. It is recommended in line with DFES guidance that the school should set SMART (Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time related) targets in relation to the travel plans objectives.

**Objective 1:** To monitor the congestion and effects of the school run in the vicinity of the school.

### **Actions in place**

- The School has been designed with the main school gate on the southern boundary for visitor access, and pedestrian access for parent and pupils on the eastern boundary (and potentially the western boundary) for maximum accessibility.

### **Recommended actions**

- Agree and monitor the drop off and pick up procedure at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Monitor the use of the community centre car park by parents at drop off and pick up times.

**Objective 2:** To ensure the safety of all pupils walking and cycling to school

### **Actions**

- The area around the school is not a through route and is designed for low vehicular speeds.
- Raised platforms or other features indicating where parents and pupils should cross in the vicinity of the school.

### **Recommended actions**

- Raise the awareness of the local environment, identifying safe routes to school to both parents and pupils, including crossing facilities.
- Implement a comprehensive educational programme of Road Safety Education, For example Pedestrian Training Skills, Off Road Cycle Training.

### **Objective 3: To promote walking and cycling and public transport as a viable means of travelling to school**

#### **Actions**

- Central location of the site within the development for ease of accessibility.
- Direct pedestrian linkages along radial routes from the south.
- Footpath/cycle linkages from the flats and the listed building and housing to the north.
- Cycle storage.
- Adequate cloakroom storage.

#### **Recommended Actions**

- Provide information on safe walking routes to school to parents, including a plan showing the routes and safe crossing points.
- Provide pupils with pedestrian training skills.
- Promotion of the health and environmental benefits of walking to school within the curriculum.
- Participation in Walk to School Week.
- Promotional/ incentive walking reward schemes.
- Walking bus/ park and walk scheme.
- Provide information on local cycle routes to parents, perhaps in the schools prospectus to encourage accompanied cycling.
- Develop a cycle policy in line with guidance from Bedfordshire County Council.
- Provide pupils with off road cycle training skills.
- Provide staff/parents with information on local public transport services.

#### **Monitoring Assessment & Review**

Once the school has revised the interim travel plan the school should appoint a travel plan co-ordinator who is responsible for ensuring the school undertakes the annual school travel survey. The travel plan co-ordinator is also responsible for ensuring the revised travel plan and its targets are reviewed annually by the school travel plan working group.

The school travel plan will consider pupils travel needs arising from developments in education and transport provision and that the STP will be revised as necessary to take account of these.

#### **Conclusion**

This is only an Interim travel plan which the school needs to develop further after the school becomes operational in September 2007. Therefore it will be important to make sure the Headteacher is aware of the need to prepare and implement the school travel plan within 12 months of first occupation.

## **Appendix 1**

School travel plan quality assurance advice note can be downloaded at the teachernet website

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=8951](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=8951)

## **Appendix 2**

The school travel plan parent /pupil survey can be downloaded at

[www.bedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk) transport > school travel plans > what's involved

## **Appendix 3**

See next page

## **Appendix 4**

Contact details

School Travel Plan Team  
Bedfordshire County Council  
Environmental Strategy  
County Hall, Cauldwell Street  
Bedford, MK42 9AP

Tel: 01234 408328

Email: [schooltravelplans@bedscc.gov.uk](mailto:schooltravelplans@bedscc.gov.uk)

# ANNUAL SCHOOL TRAVEL SURVEY



Bedfordshire  
county council

**PLEASE COMPLETE FOR EACH CLASS BY A SHOW OF HANDS**

SCHOOL NAME:

DfES ESTABLISHMENT N°:

**Q1.** CLASS NAME:.....

YEAR GROUP:.....

**Q2.** DATE ON WHICH SURVEY CARRIED OUT:.....

**Q3.** BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WEATHER ON DAY OF SURVEY:

.....

**Q4.** NUMBER OF PUPILS PRESENT:   NUMBER OF PUPILS ABSENT:

**Q5.** HOW DO PUPILS USUALLY **TRAVEL TO SCHOOL** FOR THE MAIN PART OF JOURNEY? (Please fill in numbers of reach mode)

WALK

BIKE

CAR

CAR SHARE

SCHOOL BUS

OTHER BUS

TRAIN

**Q6.** HOW DO PUPILS USUALLY **TRAVEL FROM SCHOOL** FOR THE MAIN PART OF THE JOURNEY? (please fill in numbers of reach mode)

WALK

BIKE

CAR

CAR SHARE

SCHOOL BUS

OTHER BUS

TRAIN