

Sustrans Active Travel Programme - We Got Gold!

JMPS is delighted to have been awarded the Sustrans Active School Travel Gold Award! As a school, we see many positive benefits of increasing the number of children cycling, walking and scooting to and from school. Active school travel improves health through physical activity, promotes independence, improves safety awareness, and is good for the environment. As more children walk or cycle to school there will also be fewer cars around the school gates, making our school a safer place for everyone.

We have teamed up with Sustrans, the country's leading sustainable transport charity, to encourage more journeys to school by foot or wheels! The Active School Travel Programme is funded by the Department for Regional Development and the Public Health Agency and works with schools all across Northern Ireland. Over the years we have worked with our Sustrans Active Travel Officers, who helped us organise a programme of activities and events to promote active school travel in the following ways:

- By making sure the school has the facilities needed by pupils who want to cycle or scoot to school, including bike and scooter parking;
- By working with the school to provide cycle training to help pupils ride safely and feel more confident on their bikes;
- By organising promotional activities and events to encourage pupils to cycle, scoot and walk to school;
- By working with parents and carers so that they can help support the programme.

Now our Eco Council and Co-ordinators devise a range of events to maintain the school's uptake of these strategies.

Safety is very important to our school and we developed an Active Travel Policy to help encourage safe travel to school. The decision as to whether a child is competent to cycle, scoot or walk to and from school safely rests with the parents/carers. We would like to encourage parents/carers to accompany their children to and from school and to ensure children are wearing helmets and bright clothes to help them be seen by other road users. A copy of our Active Travel Policy is available upon request from the school office on the website link.

We understand cycling or walking to school is not possible for every family. There will still be opportunities for your children to participate in the programme. We were delighted to be able to introduce our Friday Walking Bus during academic year 2018/2019 and we further developed this over the past number of years. You can also support this initiative by taking extra caution of cyclists and pedestrians on your journey to school.

Throughout the year there will be lots of opportunities for parents and carers to get involved in the Active School Travel Programme. If you're interested in helping out or have any questions about the project, please get in touch. We look forward to seeing more children and parents/carers cycling, walking and scooting to school this year!