

Traffic Management and Safety: A Practical Guide for Schools





Published by

ACT Government -
Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (Roads ACT)
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**Cover photo: Children using the school crossing outside Ainslie Primary School.
Photo opposite page: ACT school children cycling and scooting to school with accompanying adults.**



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Photo 1: School speed zone sign assembly, Kambah.



Photo 2: Pedestrian crossing adjacent to a primary school in Lyneham.

1 How to use this guide

This guide to traffic management and road safety resources was prepared by the ACT Government - Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (Roads ACT) for use by school communities to help them manage traffic issues and road safety around school precincts.

While this guide is intended for all types of schools from preschools through to colleges (year 11 and 12), it is a guide. There is no *solution* that fits every school in the same way. Each school is different and is surrounded by roads that operate in subtly different ways from others in a different place. For that reason, each school must take into account the particular circumstances that affect that school when applying the principles and resources in this guide.

Some useful clipart information sheets are provided at the end of this publication (Section 6 Appendix). Schools are encouraged to use these sheets when providing information on traffic management and road safety issues to the school community, including parents and students.

Reference sources used in this document are the Austroads *Guide to Road Design*, Austroads *Guide to Traffic Management*, Australian Standard 1742 and the *ACT Supplements to the Austroads guides and Australian Standards*. These are listed in Section 6 Appendix.

LEARN TO **SLOW DOWN** IN SCHOOL ZONES



It's the law!

School is back and that means 40KM/H zones are again in force between 8AM and 4PM. The ACT has a good safety record in school zones. Let's keep it that way.



A road safety message from the ACT Government.

6894_couchcreative.com.au

Figure 1: Regular JACS-ACT Policing targeted campaigns are run at the beginning of every school term. Police enforcement is supported by print, radio and television advertising.

2 Traffic management and safety issues around schools

Managing traffic and road safety at schools is a matter for everyone in our community. Children and young people are at risk in road environments around schools and colleges because they are smaller and less visible to drivers. Their behaviour can be less predictable than adults and they may have errors of judgement when dealing with traffic.

In particular, younger children (generally children under 10) do not have well developed peripheral vision. Their cognitive and perceptual abilities combined with their active behaviour may put them in higher risk situations in a road environment, particularly at busy times when traffic volumes are high.

The shared responsibility for road safety means that the solutions for road safety problems are varied, and sometimes a combination of approaches or solutions will give the best results.

The Four Es approach to road safety

Different schools may need different solutions to the same road safety issue. The most appropriate solution for a particular school may involve a combination of engineering, education, enforcement and encouragement measures (the Four Es to achieve the desired result).

- **Engineering** – the implementation of treatments such as pedestrian crossings, refuge islands, bus stops, and other measures.
- **Education** – in addition to the normal road safety education curriculum, an example would include taking children on-site after the completion of engineering treatments for on-road practice in the use of the new treatments.
- **Enforcement** – this could involve campaigns by the police to reduce speeding and/or action by parking officers to reduce illegal and dangerous parking activities. These measures should ideally be supported with appropriate education through school newsletters.
- **Encouragement** – this is aimed at changing the behaviour of both parents and children (e.g. crossing at the designated crossing points).

The starting point for each school community is to identify its traffic management and road safety issues, and then to use the resources in this guide to identify how best to pursue possible solutions for those issues.

Photo 3: Walking to school. Safety around schools is a shared responsibility between the ACT Government and the school community.



Table 1. Factors and Responsibilities affecting traffic around schools

Factors contributing to road safety around schools	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road infrastructure (including kerb and gutter, street lighting, etc) • Footpaths and shared paths • Traffic lights • Signs and pavement markings 	<p>Roads ACT has responsibility for the management and maintenance of all ACT roads, bridges, footpaths, traffic lights, street lighting and the stormwater infrastructure asset base.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement of traffic regulations 	<p>ACT Policing is responsible for the enforcement of traffic regulations on ACT roads.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road safety education and public awareness campaigns 	<p>Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) is responsible for road safety awareness in the ACT.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of parking around schools 	<p>Office of Regulatory Services (Access Canberra) and ACT Policing are the regulatory and enforcement authorities for all on-street parking issues in the ACT. School administrations have the responsibility of managing their own on-site parking including on-site drop-off/pick-up areas.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus travel to school • Bus stops • Bus operations (timetabling and routes) 	<p>ACTION is the major provider of public transport in the ACT and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures the safety of all students on school buses, including safe pick up and drop off. • oversees the behaviour of students on buses and contacts schools in cases of student misbehaviour. • promotes bus safety education in conjunction with the school. • identifies the most suitable locations of bus stops. <p>Roads ACT has responsibility for the construction and maintenance of bus stops.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking, cycling and scooting to school 	<p>This is a shared responsibility between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads ACT which provides the walking, cycling paths and road infrastructure. • Parents who ensure that their child is competent to walk, cycle or scoot to school; who drive their children to schools or who permit their child to drive to school. • The child who should be trained to the level of competency needed to undertake the journey. • The school which supports the parent/child's travel choice by providing appropriate learning programs and infrastructure (secure bicycle/scooter parking, pick-up and drop-off areas, access etc). • ACT Health and Education and Training Directorate who promotes a supportive environment for riding and walking to school including the development of 'Walking and riding to school route maps' for individual schools in the 'Ride or walk to school program'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being driven to school 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving oneself to school 	

Photo 4: Signalised crossing near North Ainslie Primary School.



3 Improving traffic management and safety at schools

The safety issues that arise for many schools can be caused by road users (e.g. excessive speeds, poor parking behaviour, risky crossing behaviour) or by problems in the road environment (e.g. poor sightlines, inadequate parking, inadequate crossings). Maximising safety around schools depends on both addressing road infrastructure as well as the behaviour of the people who use it.

Identifying Issues of Concern

The first step is for the school community to identify the traffic safety issues of concern. The school community in this context includes staff, parents and carers of students, local residents in the area and the children themselves. Once a traffic management or safety issue has been identified, the next step is for the community to collect as much information as possible about that issue before seeking the assistance of the appropriate ACT Government agency. This will enable the agency to work better with the school community to develop an effective solution.

ACT Government agencies may also identify problems at schools through site inspections (including road safety audits) and conducting analyses of traffic (speed, volume and crash) data.

Finding Solutions/Improvements

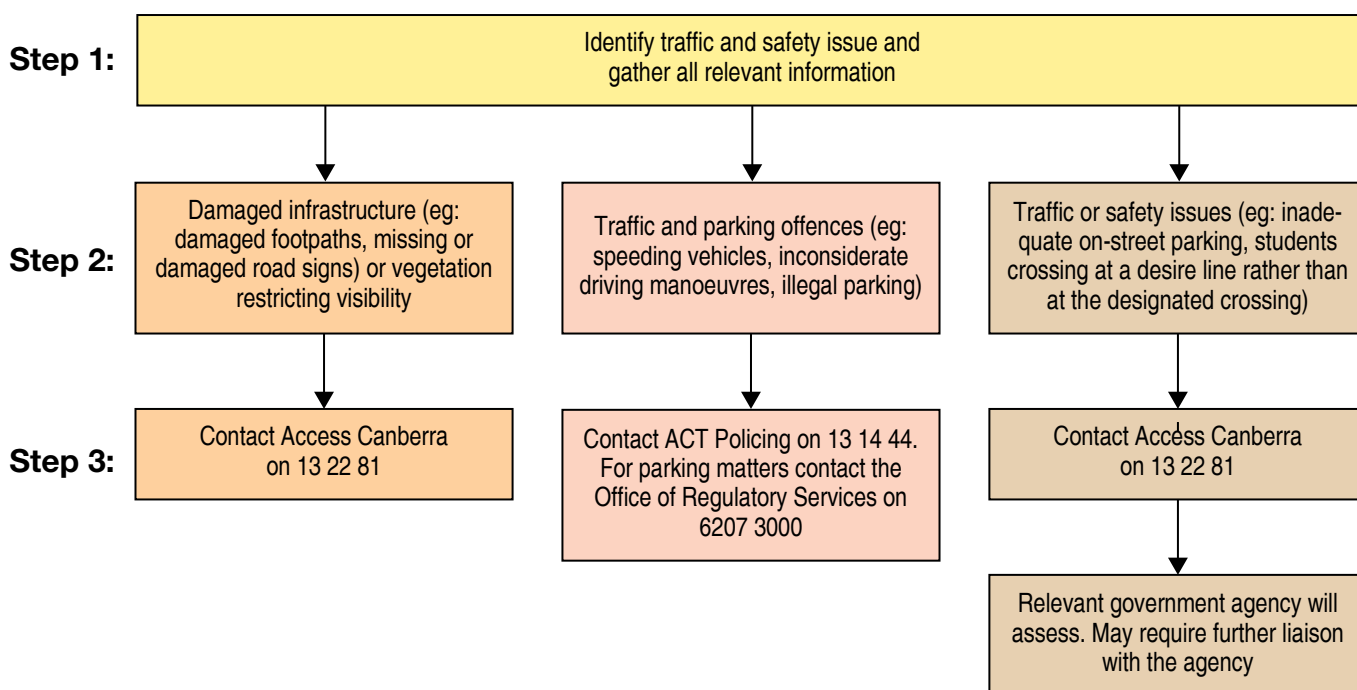
Every school is different and produces a unique set of traffic management and safety issues due to the age, experience and concentration of their students and due to the specific road environment in the vicinity of the school. For this reason, it is not possible to develop set-formula solutions to suit all schools.

For example, simple issues such as damaged footpaths, missing or damaged road signs or trees restricting visibility can be addressed easily by logging the issue with Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

If a more complex traffic or safety issue is identified, the school should contact Access Canberra on 13 22 81 and the issues will be recorded and directed to the appropriate ACT Government agency. Finding the most effective solution to a particular issue will require expertise in traffic management, road safety, education and enforcement. The type and extent of road safety measures to resolve the problem will be determined by careful assessment and discussion with the agencies concerned.

Once the school contacts the appropriate agency, ACT Government officers will co-ordinate any assessment, analysis and remedial work in close co-operation with the school community.

Figure 2: Resolving traffic and safety issues



4 Educational and encouragement measures

Traffic congestion around schools may occur during the peak period at the beginning and end of the school day. By strongly promoting and encouraging students and staff to ride, walk or use public transport, schools can positively contribute to a reduction in school-based road congestion. There are also community-wide benefits from changing to active travel such as improvements to the health and fitness of parents and children.

4.1 Active travel to and from schools

Promoting and supporting active travel (walking, cycling and using public transport) is a key element of the Government's Transport for Canberra initiative. It aims to create a city where active travel is an easy choice. The ACT Government encourages and supports active travel. Some of its initiatives are directly relevant to schools and are intended to slow or reverse the decline rate of children in walking and driving to school.

ACT Health and its partner organisations have developed the 'Ride or Walk to School' program which seeks to encourage more active ways of travelling to school. Information on this program can be found on the ACT Health website (search Active Travel to School). If you are interested in becoming involved in the program or would like more information about how schools can promote riding and walking to school visit www.paf.org.au

A school active travel plan is an action plan developed by teachers and students (with support from the Ride or Walk to School program) to support families to change their behaviour towards more sustainable methods of travel to and from school (see general plan outline below). Any active travel plan undertaken by a school would also encompass road safety and infrastructure issues as identified in the previous sections of these guidelines.

4.2 How to develop a school active travel program?

As a guide, an active travel plan for a school would usually include the following elements:

1. **An assessment of the existing situation**, for example:
 - A brief description of the location, size and type of school.
 - Information about the ways that children currently travel to/from school, the reasons why they travel this way and how they would like to travel.
 - A brief description of the barriers to changing to active travel.
 - Alternatives faced by the school/cluster of schools (e.g. journeys to attend pre-and after-school events,

journeys made during the school day to attend activities at other locations).

2. **A plan for action**, which usually includes:
 - Results of surveys to identify the current travel patterns and the issues to be addressed.
 - Clearly defined targets and objectives to provide focus and directions.
 - Details of proposed measures on how to address and meet the objectives and targets set.
 - Costing and sourcing of any funding required.
3. **A plan for implementation**, which usually includes:
 - A timetable for implementation.
 - Clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
 - How the plan and its actions will be communicated to the school community.
4. **A plan for monitoring, reviewing and reporting progress.**

4.3 Other active travel resources for schools

Pedal Power ACT is the ACT's membership organisation for people who cycle for transport and recreation. They have developed and run a number of different initiatives to encourage active transport and cycling to and from schools. They work closely with the ACT Government on the development of the Ride or Walk to School program and can provide practical advice to schools looking to get more pupils walking and cycling. Contact Pedal Power at www.pedalpower.org.au

Bicycle skills training. The AustCycle organisation through its network of accredited trainers runs a wide range of cycling proficiency and skills courses for children up to adults. School groups along with adults can be catered for. These courses are run in a number of Australian cities and are available in the ACT. Contact AustCycle: www.austcycle.com.au

Kidsafe is a part of the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia. This charity has been helping save children's lives for over 30 years by helping the community to prevent unintentional injury, and provides a range of services and information for parents and the community. www.kidsafeact.com.au

5 Traffic and safety measures for schools

The way roads are designed, constructed and used in the area around schools has a strong impact on the road safety outcomes at and around those schools.

The key factors contributing to traffic safety in school precincts are:

- traffic speeds should be kept low – the maximum speed limit of 40 km/h during school hours must be enforced.
- road crossing facilities for children should be safely located and clearly signed.
- there should be paths situated on the school side of the road for students who walk or cycle to school either from home or from bus stops or places where they are picked up or dropped off.
- there should be adequate parking that allows children to be dropped off and collected safely.
- schools need sufficient on-site parking for staff, parents and visitors to meet the requirements of the Territory Plan and to ensure there is no overflow impact on drop-off/ pick-up requirements.
- levels of congestion around schools should be well managed - traffic circulation should be ordered so vehicles travel in a direction that enables dropping-off and picking-up on the school side of the road.
- visibility should be adequate for all road users entering and leaving parking areas, so that students and vehicles can clearly see each other at entrances, intersections and crossings near parking areas.

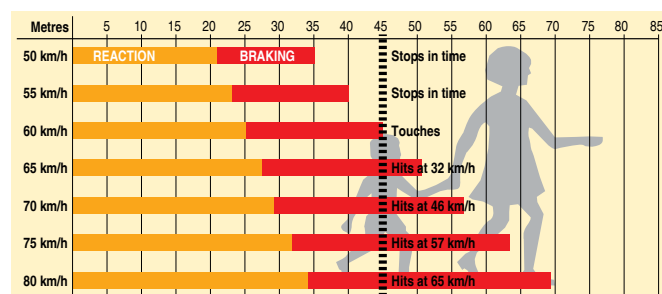


Figure 3: The effect of speed on a driver's stopping distance when reacting and braking upon seeing a child on the road 45 metres ahead (in dry conditions). Source: ACT Policing website.

5.1 Speed reduction

Speed is a critical issue around schools where some children may have poorly developed road awareness skills. The moderation of vehicle speeds on roads adjacent to schools is a primary safety measure to protect children of all ages.

Speed zones are enforced by ACT Policing. Fines and other penalties including demerit points apply to drivers who are detected driving in excess of the speed limit.

5.2 School zones

A school zone has a posted speed limit of 40 km/h. In the ACT, this speed limit applies from 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday during school terms, and is regulated by signage at the start of the zone.

When school zone signs are in the open position, the speed limit displayed applies to the length of road between the signs for the period that the signs are displayed and it is an offence to drive a vehicle at a speed in excess of that limit. School zone signs are locked shut during school holidays. Special permission must be obtained from Roads ACT to display these signs during school holidays.

School zones are provided for all primary schools, secondary schools and colleges. They are displayed on a section of road with direct school frontages where pedestrian, vehicle, cycling and public transport activities are concentrated. They can also be provided at pre-schools where these centres have a frontage to a major road (any road classified as a collector road in the hierarchy of ACT roads).

School zones are not provided on arterial roads adjoining schools, although in practice there are very few schools in the ACT located on arterial roads. In these instances, if there are safety issues, a 60 km/h speed zone may be introduced. Pedestrian signals and grade separated crossings (bridges or underpasses) provide the safest crossing mechanism for arterial roads.

The school zone needs to be set at an appropriate length and should reflect the length of the school boundaries. Generally the speed limit sign is placed at the start and end of the school boundaries. School zones that significantly exceed school boundaries tend to have poor driver compliance.

Figure 4: The standard school zone sign shown in the open position with school zone operating hours displayed.

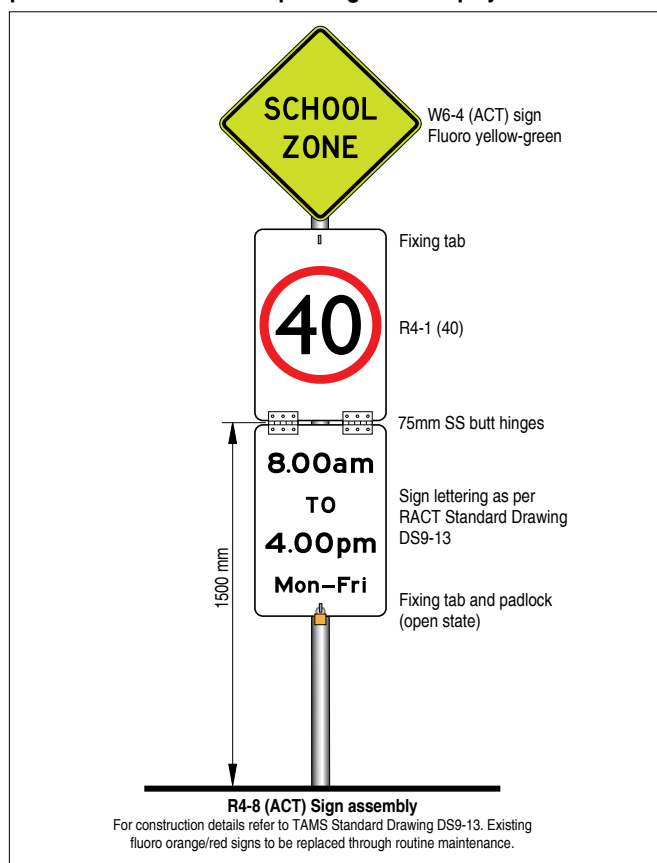




Photo 5: Children's Crossing at Campbell.

5.3 Road crossings

There are several pedestrian crossing types at ACT schools. The selection of the most appropriate crossing for a particular situation is detailed in *Austrroads Guide to Road Design*, *Austrroads Guide to Traffic Management, AS1742.10* and the ACT supplements to *Austrroads Guides* and *Australian Standards*. These national guidelines and standards are based on extensive research and best practice both in Australia and overseas. TAMS implements road crossings in accordance with these guidelines and standards to ensure the consistency of application across the ACT road network and also to be consistent with other jurisdictions. A short discussion of the various types is provided below.

5.3.1 Children's crossings

Application: A children's crossing is a part-time crossing that operates only when one or more children crossing flags are displayed. Schools or the operators of children's crossings must remove these flags when crossings are not in use. The children's crossing gives all pedestrians including adults priority over vehicles. This type of crossing is only appropriate along desire lines or where pedestrian activity is concentrated, for example at school playground entrances.

Children's crossings are

- usually used within 40 km/h speed zones.
- never used where the measured operating speed of the road is greater than 60 km/h or where the width of the road to be crossed in one movement exceeds 15 metres.
- not appropriate at pre-schools as these children are required to be accompanied to the centre door by a responsible adult.
- not usually used at colleges as these students are able to use other types of crossing facilities intended for adult use - e.g. pedestrian crossings (zebras).

Use at primary schools: Children's crossings are appropriate when the minimum number of students crossing per peak half hour is 20 and the minimum number of vehicles passing in the same half hour is 50. Crossing movements should be contained within a 30m section of road.

Use at secondary schools (years 7-10): Children's crossings are appropriate when the minimum number of students crossing per peak half hour is 40 and the minimum number of vehicles passing in the same half hour is 100. Crossing movements should be contained within a 30m section of road.

5.3.2 Signalised pedestrian crossings (marked foot crossings)

Application: Signalised pedestrian crossings can be located either at mid-block locations or at intersections. This type of crossing has signals that can give priority alternately to pedestrians and vehicles on a timed basis. They are usually considered for installation at locations where:

- the operating speed of the road is greater than 60 km/h (for example, a crossing on an arterial road adjacent to a school), and/or
- the volume of students and passing vehicles is high and a pedestrian (zebra) or children's crossing is likely to cause delays in traffic flow.

Signalised pedestrian crossings are not appropriate on roads where the actual crossing distance exceeds 15 metres.

On dual carriageway roads with a large central median, a signalised pedestrian crossing may be divided into two crossings to keep crossing distances of each roadway section to a minimum.

Use at primary schools: Signalised pedestrian crossings are appropriate where in each of two separate one hour periods of a typical school day, the number of students crossing is more than 50 per hour and the traffic flow exceeds 600 vehicles per hour in each direction.

Use at secondary schools (years 7-10): Signalised pedestrian crossings are appropriate where in each of two separate one hour periods of a typical school day the number of students crossing is more than 50 per hour and the traffic flow exceeds 800 vehicles per hour in each direction.

Use at colleges (years 11-12): Signalised pedestrian crossings are considered at colleges at a level consistent



Photo 6: Signalised pedestrian crossing near Rosary Primary School on Antill Street, Watson

with adult needs. This type of crossing is appropriate where in each of three separate one hour periods of a typical school day the number of students crossing is more than 350 per hour and the number of vehicles passing is more than 600 per hour (total for both directions), or 1,000 per hour (total for both directions) if there is a central pedestrian refuge.

5.3.3 Pedestrian crossings (zebras)

Application: Pedestrian crossings (zebras) are full-time facilities which give priority to pedestrians over vehicles. Once implemented, they apply all day every day, so consideration should be given to whether the demand for crossing the road exist outside school hours.

This type of crossing is usually considered appropriate at schools with older students (years 11-12) and where there is a strong concentration along a pedestrian desire line.

Use at schools: Pedestrian crossings are appropriate where the minimum number of students crossing within a peak hour is more than 50 and the number of vehicles passing is more than 500 in each direction. Crossing movements should be contained within a 30m length of road.

Pedestrian crossings are not considered at locations where:

- the operating speed of the road is greater than 60 km/h
- or the actual crossing distance exceeds 15 metres.

Photo 7: Pedestrian crossing, Dickson College, North Canberra.



Pedestrian crossings are also not used on multi-lane roads due to visibility and sightline issues. Other types of crossing should be used instead.

5.3.4 Refuge islands

Application: A refuge island is not a formal crossing. It provides crossing assistance to pedestrians and cyclists by splitting the crossing distance into two shorter crossing segments. A two-stage crossing allows pedestrians and cyclists to scan each opposing traffic flow in turn and to make their crossing with minimal delay.

Photo 8: Refuge islands at Lyneham High School on Goodwin Street, Lyneham



Refuge islands are not appropriate where

- the operating speed of the road is greater than 60 km/h
- the actual crossing width for each leg is greater than 15m, or
- the width of the road is less than 10m.

Sufficient lane widths past the refuge islands should be provided in each direction (minimum 3.7m) to avoid narrowing the road to an extent that creates a cycling hazard.

Use at primary schools: Refuge islands are appropriate when the number of students crossing per peak half hour is more than 5 and the number of vehicles passing in the same half hour is more than 50. Crossing movements should be contained within a 30m length of road.

Use at secondary schools (years 7-10): Refuge islands are appropriate when the number of students crossing per peak half hour is more than 15 and the number of vehicles passing in the same half hour is more than 100. Crossing movements should be contained within a 30m length of road.

Use at colleges (years 11-12): Refuge islands are considered at colleges at a level consistent with adult needs.

5.3.5 Other crossings and safety measures

Offset crossings should be considered as a way of handling large crossing volumes of school children at busy refuge crossings or traffic signals located on dual carriageway roads with a wide central median.

Pedestrian fencing may be used in high-risk locations where there is a need to restrict the pedestrian desire lines to the crossing facility provided for pedestrians. Fencing should always be used with great care as poorly designed structures and fences can make it difficult for drivers to see small children.

5.4 Bus facilities

ACTION is the major provider of public transport in the ACT. ACTION should be the school's first point of contact (on 131710) regarding issues about buses and bus facilities.

Wherever possible, bus stops should be located away from, and on the downstream side of, crossings or other sightline-critical facilities. Bus stops on both sides of the road near to a school should be similarly located. There should be good visibility to the bus stop and places where children cross the street to and from the bus stops.

The Australian Road Rules prohibit vehicles stopping within 20m of the approach side and 10m of the departure side of a bus stop post. This rule applies to a stop for a single rigid chassis bus. However, if more than one bus or an articulated bus is required to stop at a bus stop, bus zone signs and appropriate pavement markings must be installed to define the length of the bus stop zone.

On local roads with less traffic, a short stop by a bus to drop off or pick up a few passengers rarely causes a safety or traffic management issue. However, where buses stop for more than a few seconds and hold up following traffic, this may cause safety problems. Indented bus bays may be needed on narrow streets where buses stop in or across the travel lane, where multiple buses may be required to stop and wait or where there may be refuge islands. An assessment by RoadsACT is required to determine if an indented bus stop is required. A school-times bus zone parking sign may also be considered.

5.5 Parking measures

Parking is a significant traffic issue for many schools. The amount of parking available at schools should satisfy the minimum requirements specified in the Territory Plan. However, in practice more spaces may be needed to meet the actual operational requirements of a school.

Photo 9: Children board a school bus at Campbell Secondary School.



Satisfying the demand for parking near the school needs to be balanced against other traffic safety and management issues. In particular:

- short-term parking, usually for the purpose of dropping-off children in the morning and collecting them in the afternoon, should ideally be located away from the main entrances used by students who walk, cycle or travel by bus in order to minimise traffic congestion and reduce safety risks.
- long-term parking should only be provided on school grounds as often there is competition with surrounding land uses for parking spaces on public roads.

Poor driver behaviour can be discouraged/ minimised through a well laid-out street environment and an effective enforcement regime.

Where persistent illegal parking in No Stopping zones or other restricted parking areas is a continuing safety problem, kerb build-outs and kerb extensions could be considered.

However, costly infrastructure interventions can usually be avoided by educating parents and the local community about unacceptable parking practices and with adequate enforcement levels.

5.6 Walking and cycling facilities

Walking and cycling infrastructure is provided for in the ACT by means of the residential footpath system which is in turn connected to the Main Community Route Network.

As a general principle, paths along the main frontages of schools and shared paths approaching schools should generally be wider to accommodate the large number of students using this area at peak drop-off/pick-up times. The design of paths, kerb ramps and crossing points should take account of the direction in which pedestrians and cyclists

Photo 10: Short term drop-off area near St Mary Mackillop College, Wanniasa.



actually tend to travel. Adequate provision should be made for bicycle storage, and safety principles in line with the ACT Crime Prevention and Urban Design Resource Manual should also be applied to these areas, particularly areas intended for use by vulnerable people such as children.

5.7 Drop-off and pick-up areas

Drop-off and pick-up areas utilise existing 'No Parking' and regulated parking areas at schools. The area, always on the school side of the road, provides a facility that is convenient for drivers and safe for children. Parents and carers are able to drop-off or pick-up their children within a two minute timeframe while a suitably trained adult assists the children into or out of the car.

Drop off and pick up areas allow:

- parents/carers to drop-off or pick-up students during the peak period at the beginning and end of the school day without breaching the traffic law.
- a driver to pull into the drop-off-pick-up zone and remain in control of the vehicle while the student is assisted to get into or out of the vehicle.

5.8 Part-way drop-off

Identifying drop off points 500m – 1km away from the school is a good way to reduce traffic around the school gate and enable children to have a short walk before school.

Schools can identify safe drop off points a short distance from school and encourage parents to drop their children off to walk the rest of the way on their own or walk with them.

Ideally schools can nominate a time that families can meet at the drop off points so students can walk together in a group.

Schools in the 'Ride or Walk to School' program will have these points identified on their 'Riding and Walking Route map'.

6 Appendix

References

ACT primary road design guidelines

- Austroads Guide to Road Design – various parts.
- Austroads Guide to Traffic Management – various parts (Part 8 - Local Area Traffic Management is particularly relevant).
- Australian Standard AS1742 – various parts (Part 10 – Pedestrian Control and Protection is particularly relevant).
- ACT Supplements to Austroads Guides includes appropriate ACT Design Standards and Standard Drawings which provide detailed guidance on parking requirements, pedestrian/cycling facilities and direction signage for ACT roads and paths.
- ACT Supplements to Australian Standards includes Standard Drawings which provide detailed guidance on linemarking, crossing types and signage for ACT roads and paths.
- ACT Territory Plan. ACT Planning and Land Authority
- Bicycle Parking Guidelines. 2006. ACT Planning and Land Authority
- ACT Parking and Vehicular Access Guidelines. ACT Planning and Land Authority
- ACT Crime Prevention and Urban Design Resource Manual. ACT Government.

Other useful Australian planning and facilities guidelines

- Planning for Safe Transport Infrastructure at Schools. 2011. Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads. A useful guide to planning for traffic management at schools, particularly new schools. Available on the Department's website: www.tmr.qld.gov.au
- Guidelines for Road Safety Around Schools. (Local Government and Schools Editions). 2007. WA Local Government Association. Available at WALGA's RoadWise website: www.roadwise.asn.au
- Road Safety Issues Around Schools Factsheets. 2011. RMS NSW. A series of 12 factsheets produced for schools, parents and students. Available on the RMS website (search road safety; schools): www.rms.nsw.gov.au

School travel plans

- Developing a School Travel Planning Guide. Hughes, Di Pietro. 28th Australian Transport Research Forum proceedings.
- Developing a School Travel Plan – Information for Parents and Schools. Sustrans UK. www.sustrans.org.uk/schooltravel

Other useful resources

- ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate website: www.justice.act.gov.au Search for 'Safe Speeds'.
- Australian Cycling Resource Centre. This web-based resource centre is a repository for data, information and best practice relating to cycling planning, policy, programs and projects. www.cyclingresourcecentre.org.au/
- Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative – ACT (AuSSI) website: www.sustainableschools.act.gov.au/home

6.1 Safe school travel in the ACT clipart information sheets

The following ten information sheets have been produced for use by schools to assist with their ongoing active travel and school road safety educational campaigns. The text has been modified from a similar series of information sheets produced for NSW schools by the NSW Roads and Maritime Services.

Schools are encouraged to cut and paste these information sheets into school newsletters or to reproduce them as handouts for parents and students.

An electronic version of this manual, including these information sheets, is available on the Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) section of the ACT Government website www.tams.act.gov.au. Separate mono versions of the information sheets, in formats suitable for reproduction, can also be found on the TAMS website (search under 'Traffic Management at Schools').

General advice to parents

Tips to improve children's safety around your school

If your child walks or cycles to school

- Child pedestrians and cyclists are at greater risk of injury than adults.
- Teach your child the 'STOP! LOOK! LISTEN! THINK!' routine every time you cross the road together:
 - STOP! One step back from the kerb.
 - LOOK! For traffic to your right, left and right again.
 - LISTEN! For the sounds of approaching traffic.
 - THINK! Whether it is safe to cross.
- Always look and listen for traffic as you cross the road.
- After school, meet your child at the school gate. If riding, park your bicycle safely and legally, and walk to the school gate.
- If you are unable to meet your child, arrange for another trusted adult to meet them.
- Until they are at least eight years old, hold your child's hand on the footpath and when crossing the road. Until they are at least ten years old, hold your child's hand when crossing the road.
- Reward your children with lots of attention and praise for good road safety behaviour.

If your child travels to school by bus

Until they are at least ten years old, children have not developed the maturity required to cross the road safely without holding an adult's hand.

- Hold your child's hand and walk together to the bus stop in the morning. If you cannot be with your child, organise for another trusted adult to accompany them.
- If your child comes home on the school bus, meet your child **at** the bus stop, before choosing the safest place to cross.
- Meet your child **at** the bus stop after school. **Never** wait on the opposite side of the road.
- Talk with your child about what they should do if you are delayed and cannot meet them as usual.
- Discuss what they should do if they accidentally get on the wrong bus or miss their regular bus stop.

If you drive your child to school

- Child pedestrians around cars are at greater risk of injury than adults.
- Children aged four years to under seven years must be secured in a forward facing restraint or booster seat.
- Children aged four years to under seven years cannot travel in the front

seat of a vehicle with two or more rows, unless all other back seats are occupied by children younger than seven years in a child restraint or booster seat.

- Children should always get in and out of the car through the rear kerb side or 'safety door'.
- Always drop your children on the school side of the road.
- Meet your children on the school side of the road, preferably at the school gate – particularly in wet weather.
- NEVER call to your children from across the road. Teach them to wait until you come to them. Talk with them about what they should do if you are not there on time.
- Children up to at least eight years old should hold an adult's hand in the car park, on the footpath and when crossing the road. Children between eight and at least ten years old should be closely supervised by an adult in the traffic environment and should hold an adult's hand when crossing the road.
- Always slow to less than 40km/h when travelling in an operating school zone. Children cannot survive collisions with fast moving vehicles. You may not be able to stop in time at speeds above 30 km/h.
- Always obey parking signs as these signs help save children's lives.
- NEVER leave a child of any age in a vehicle without adult supervision. A small child may rapidly suffer dehydration, heat exhaustion and consequent organ failure. Older children could play games that may lead to tragedy.
- Always drop-off and pick-up your children from your school's designated area, following your school's road safety procedures with care and courtesy.
- Some schools in other parts of Australia have adopted a school 'Drop-off and Pick-up' zone – a facility that is convenient for drivers while enhancing the safety of children.



40 km/h school zones

The 40km/h school zone slows traffic in the vicinity of the school. 40km/h school zones in the ACT operate between 8am to 4pm. The 40km/h school zone speed limit must be observed even if school children cannot be seen.

A 40km/h school zone operates on all gazetted school days including staff development days (pupil free days).

While some schools may operate on different term dates, school zone speed limits **MUST** be adhered to during advertised ACT school terms. Gazetted school term dates can be found on the ACT Education and Training Directorate website <http://www.det.act.gov.au> (School Education pages).

During school holiday times roadside speed limit signs are usually folded up when zones are not in use. Drivers



should be particularly alert for periods when the signs are folded down as there is a legal requirement to obey any speed regulation sign within the operating hours specified on the sign.



Safety around buses

Advice for parents

Until they are at least ten years old, children have not developed the maturity required to cross the road safely without holding an adult's hand.

- Hold your child's hand and walk together to the bus stop in the morning. If you cannot be with your child, organise for another trusted adult to accompany them.
- Meet your child **at** the bus stop after school. **Never** wait on the opposite side of the road.
- Talk with your child about what they should do if you are delayed and cannot meet them as usual.
- Discuss what they should do if they accidentally get on the wrong bus or miss their regular bus stop.
- When driving past standing buses near schools always be on the lookout for children. Always observe the 40km/h school speed zone limit.



Advice for children

- When getting off the bus, wait on the footpath until the bus has been driven away. Then together choose the safest place to cross the road, remember the 'Stop ! Look! Listen! Think!' routine as you cross.
- While waiting at the bus stop, stand as far away from the passing traffic as possible. Never wait right at the kerb.

- Discuss with your parents what you should do if you accidentally get on the wrong bus or miss your regular bus stop.



Travelling to school by car

Buckle-up front and back

New national child restraint laws for 0–7 year olds now apply. Find the right child restraint for your child:

- 0–6 months Approved rearward facing restraint.
- 6 months – 4 years Approved rearward or forward-facing restraint.
- 4–7 years Approved forward-facing restraint or booster seat.

Make a rule that every child passenger must be securely buckled into a seatbelt or child restraint before you start the car.

- A sleeping child must remain firmly buckled up while the car is in motion.
- Reward your child with lots of praise for good road safety behaviour.
- Assist your young child to buckle up – always check the buckle.
- There are penalties for a driver not wearing a seatbelt and for driving with an unrestrained passenger.

Teach your child to use the 'safety door'

Teach your children to get in and out of the car by the 'safety door.' The rear kerb side door of the car is the 'safety door'.

- Never allow children to get out of the car on the traffic side.
- When possible, children should remain in the car until an adult opens the 'safety door'. This helps ensure that children get out of the car safely.
- Children aged four years to under seven years must be secured in a forward facing child restraint or booster seat.
- Children aged four years to under seven years cannot travel in the front seat of a vehicle with two or more rows, unless all other back seats are occupied by children younger than seven years in a child restraint or booster seat.

- A child that is properly secured in an approved child restraint is less likely to be killed or injured in a car crash than one who is not.



School drop-off/pick-up zones

A school 'drop-off and pick-up' zone is a kerbside area always on the school side of the road which is designated by 'NO PARKING' signs. It provides an appropriate environment for parents and carers when dropping off and collecting their children from school by car. Drivers may drop-off and pick-up passengers legally within a two minute timeframe.

Safety tips for drivers using a 'Drop-off and Pick-up' area

- Always drop-off or pick-up your child from the designated area, following the school's procedures.
- Drivers should remain in their vehicles at all times in the 'Drop-off and Pick-up' area.
- Make sure children use the footpath-side door when getting in and out of a car.
- Make sure the hand brake is applied when the vehicle is stationary.
- Never double park.

- Never park across a pedestrian crossing.
- Never undertake a U-turn in close proximity to the school.

Safety tips for students

- Stay buckled up until the vehicle has stopped in the 'Drop-off and Pick-up' area.
- Make sure your school bag and other items are in a safe position, eg on the floor.
- Be ready to get out of the car with your belongings when the car has stopped and you have unbuckled your seatbelt.
- Always get in and out of the backseat of the vehicle through the safety door – the rear footpath-side door.

Safety tips for volunteer supervisors

- Wear a conspicuous, identifying safety item such as a fluoro vest, sash and/or hat.

- Assist students to exit and enter each vehicle in turn in the 'Drop-off and Pick-up' area, while remaining on the footpath.
- Do not attempt to direct traffic and do not enter the road environment



Parking safely near schools

Illegal and unsafe parking can put children's lives at risk. High penalties apply for illegal or unsafe parking in an operating school zone.

A high penalty applies for stopping or parking a vehicle on or near:

- A pedestrian crossing.
- A children's crossing.
- Any marked foot crossing (Zebra).

The following behaviours put children at risk outside the school

- Calling children across the road.
- Dropping children on the wrong side of the road.
- Leaving children in a vehicle without adult supervision.
- Double parking.
- Parking in a bus zone or driveway.
- Making an illegal U-turn.
- Illegally parking on the verge.



Driving safely around schools

School opening and closing times are busy times for pedestrian and vehicular traffic outside the school. Drivers have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all children.

- Always take extra care in 40km/h school zones, which operate on each gazetted school day.
- Park safely even if it means walking further to the school gate.
- Observe all parking signs – they are planned with children's safety in mind.
- NEVER double park – it puts children at risk.
- Model safe and considerate behaviour for your child – they will learn from you.
- Slow down near the school crossing.
- Allocate enough time to get your child to the school gate safely and without rushing.



Never park illegally:

- In the school driveway.
- On or near the school crossing.
- In the school bus bay.
- In the 'No parking' zone.

Never double park:

- It blocks the vision of other drivers.
- It forces children onto the road.
- It obstructs the flow of traffic.



Safety and children's crossings

Ensure that your child always uses the children's crossing – it is the safest point of entry to the school.

Where there is a Children's Crossing:

- Drivers must stop at the white line if pedestrians are waiting to cross or are crossing, when the 'CHILDREN CROSSING' flags are displayed. Drivers must remain stationary until the crossing is completely clear of pedestrians.
- Drivers need to know that a children's crossing is a part-time crossing which is in operation at any time the crossing flags are in place. It operates whenever any pedestrians are using the crossing. This could be the start and finish of school days, during lunchtimes, or for excursions.
- Schools or the operators of these crossings should ensure that flags are always removed when the crossing is not in use to reduce confusion for, or disrespect by, motorists.



Cycling to school

Cycling is an ideal form of transport for young people, providing a healthy, cheap and environmentally friendly way to get about, together with a degree of freedom and independence. As cycling is about three times faster than walking, it is perfect for journeys to school which are too far to walk, and is an easy way to keep fit.

Australian governments recommend that young people should have a minimum of sixty minutes of moderate physical activity each day, to keep healthy and help prevent serious illness in later life.

Cycling to school is a simple way for children to incorporate physical activity into their everyday lives. When this replaces car journeys to school the extra physical activity can improve health outcomes. Additional benefits include easing traffic congestion,

reducing greenhouse gas emissions, creating safer environments and improving social cohesion.

It is vital that children can handle their bikes competently, and that they know how to ride safely and with consideration for others. A national cycle training organisation, AustCycle, offers cycling proficiency and skills training for adults and children in all major cities including Canberra. Cycle training is also useful for adults who want to share the enjoyment of cycling with their children.

Pedal Power ACT is an organisation for adults and children who cycle for transport and recreation in the ACT. They work closely with ACT Government on Ride and Walk to School programs and can provide practical advice to schools who want to encourage more cycling to school. Contact: www.pedalpower.org.au



Walking to school

Walking is a fantastic way to get around Canberra, be it for health, recreation or getting to school. Australian governments recommend that young people should have a minimum of sixty minutes of moderate physical activity each day, to keep healthy and help prevent serious illness in later life.

Walking to school gives children opportunities to practice independent decision making. This teaches responsibility and empowers them to make good decisions in future. Walking also helps children to develop their spatial awareness and road sense, making them 'street smart' and better able to negotiate traffic.

Experts agree that by reducing the number of cars around school gates we can help reduce the risk of injury to child pedestrians. By parking the car a few blocks away and walking part of the way to school with their children, parents or carers can greatly help school areas to become less congested with traffic and therefore safer for young children.

Apart from the health and safety benefits of walking by not using cars to get to school children and parents can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Our cars and the way we use them are responsible for nearly a fifth of all household greenhouse gas emissions. This represents a whopping 16% of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions. And despite our green efforts in other aspects of living, car usage is increasing. Some would argue, not out of necessity.

Despite common excuses like "I have to drive because public transport is unreliable", half of car journeys are less than 3 kilometres. The best transport for that length of journey is not a car or a bus, for most people, a three kilometre round trip is a very walkable distance. Walking just half a kilometre to school each day instead of driving saves about 500kg of greenhouse pollution each year. It is a way parents, teachers, carers and students can help ease global warming and climate change, as they reduce car-dependency.

The ACT Government Ride or Walk to School initiative aims to increase walking, cycling and use of public transport among school students in the ACT. Launched in September 2012, eleven schools are participating in the first round of the three year program. Participating schools receive bikes, helmets, maintenance support, personal safety sessions, road safety education, BMX skills development workshops and a range of other activities as part of the initiative. If you would like to

participate in future years, please contact Kym Wojcik on 02 6205 0702.

To find out more download the plan brochure from www.health.act.gov.au (search for "Ride or Walk to School").

CANwalk is an organisation set up to help Canberrans to find a walking activity or event that suits their needs. To find out what's happening in the Canberra walking community, check out the CANwalk website: www.canwalk.org.au





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