

How to Develop a Successful and Meaningful Campaign

What is a School Travel Plan campaign?

A campaign is an extended or annual activity, or a series of activities to promote a particular message or issue. The term campaign shouldn't be confused with 'initiative' which is used to describe the actions to enable people to make a change.

For example, a Walking Bus is an initiative, this because it is a physical measure or action which operates every day to enable people to make a change and walk to school. On the other hand, a campaign, like Walk to School Week which only happens twice a year provides information and raises awareness with the hope that people will join in because children all over the country are taking part.

Campaigns shouldn't be done in isolation from initiatives (i.e. Walking Buses, Park and Strides, Walking Zones, etc), however, they do have an important role and often operate at the same time. For example, a Walking Bus (initiative) may be launched during Walk to School Week (campaign); however, the Walking Bus continues after the Walk to School Week ends. Initiatives tend to run on a longer term than campaigns.

Examples of School Travel Plan campaigns

The majority of schools will be familiar with National Walk to School Week (May) and International Walk to School Month (October), but there are many other national campaigns which you could participate in to keep the school community aware of sustainable travel issues.

National Campaigns

It's great to celebrate national campaigns because it provides a sense of community as you are participating in something that thousands of other people are also doing; for some people they may feel that they are making more of an impact too. The specific dates of the national campaigns below are not provided because they change from year to year, however, they are easy to find from the internet. Each campaign has its own website enabling you to download promotional materials and resources.

- Bike to School Week (April)
- National Walk to School Week (May)
- Green Transport Week (June)
- Leave your Car at Home Day (September)
- International Walk to School Month (October)
- Change 4 Life / Walk 4 Life (ongoing)

Develop your own campaigns

You don't have to follow national campaigns, you could develop your own campaign which will operate over a set period, some examples are given below, although you may wish to think of more catchy titles!

- No idling outside school (turning the car engine off when the vehicle is stationary)
- Keep our School Keep Clears free

- Walking Bus Birthday (mark the anniversary of your Walking Bus every year)
- School Gate Clean Air campaign
- Walking and Talking (walking to school making a special effort to make friends with other children in your school)
- A Walk a day helps you work, rest and play

How to run a campaign

1. Decide what your campaign will be about, this will be preset if it's a national campaign i.e. Bike to School Week. It may also be predetermined by a particular issue at your school which you are trying to address. If you are developing your own campaign to raise awareness of a particular issue, decide with your School Travel Plan Working Group what the campaign will be called – it should reflect what you are trying to achieve, for example 'A Walk a Day Keeps the Doctor Away!', this may be about walking to school to stay fit and healthy. A campaign called 'Fuel Your Legs and Not your Car!' may be aimed at parents, encouraging them to walk to school with their children to reduce fuel costs.
2. Ensure that your campaign message is specific and easy to remember.
3. Decide with your School Travel Plan Working Group how long the campaign will run for a day, a week, or a month; agree the start date, ensuring there is plenty of time to get organised.
4. Collect some data before you launch your campaign, this will enable you to see if the campaign has been successful. For example, if you want to increase the number of children cycling, count the number of cycles in your cycle parking area before the campaign is launched. If you want to increase walking levels, complete class hands up surveys to calculate the number of children travelling on foot.
5. Decide what you want to achieve, for example, if you have 5 bicycles in your cycle shelter, through the campaign you may wish to try to increase it to 25. Alternatively if it's a walking campaign and you have 60% of children walking already, you may wish to increase it to 75%
6. Plan what your campaign will consist of and delegate tasks to the School Travel Plan Working Group and your School Council. Some general ideas of what the campaign could include are below, although it is very much dependent upon what your campaign is about and the list is not exhaustive.

Before

- ★ Countdown posters around school showing how many days are left to the start of the campaign.
- ★ Publicity in the school newsletter, parish magazine or local shop prior to the campaign.
- ★ Leaflet to give to parents highlighting the issues you want to address.
- ★ Flyers given out at parents' evening, or at the school gate.
- ★ School notice board dedicated to the campaign.
- ★ Assemblies informing parents and pupils of what will happen.
- ★ Advertise the campaign on your website.
- ★ Decide if and how you will reward participants, i.e. if it's a cycling campaign you could provide a free breakfast to those who take part. If it's a walking campaign, you could give participants 5 minutes extra break time. Maybe pupils have to collect stickers or tokens during the campaign which are then traded in for rewards and the end of the period.
- ★ Think about others who could help in the campaign, would they be able to provide freebies? The local supermarket may provide fruit for participants for

example. If you are asking parents to participate, consider what you could reward them with. You could issue them with free raffle tickets when they take part, at the end of the campaign, one ticket is drawn out at random for that parent to receive a prize.

- ★ Consider how you will launch your campaign, you could issue a press release, hold an assembly, inviting special guests to come and speak. You could launch a Walking Bus or Park and Stride at the beginning of the campaign, this will enable you to have a lasting impact from the campaign.

During

- ★ Reward those taking part as you had previously decided – this may encourage further participation by those not already engaged.
- ★ Maintain the momentum, keep talking about the campaign and mention it in assembly, in the newsletter, in class notices etc so pupils and parents don't forget about it.
- ★ Survey pupils to find out the level of engagement. For example, you may find that walking has increased from 60% to 70%, and now you need a final push of encouragement to reach the target of 75%
- ★ Keep your notice board up to date with current progress, stating the levels of walking and cycling, and how far there is left to go before you reach the target.
- ★ Give encouragement to parents, pupils and staff and tell them they are doing a great work!
- ★ Take photos showing pupils and parents engaging in the campaign, put them on your notice board.
- ★ Collect and recount stories of interesting things that occurred during the campaign, for example, a school visitor may be surprised to see the road outside school is empty one morning, or that the School Crossing Patrol noticed extra people walking to school during the campaign. These stories may encourage others to take part too.

After

- ★ Complete a final survey to find out if you reached the target you had set.
- ★ Say thanks to everyone who took part, particularly anyone who undertook specific duties throughout the campaign.
- ★ Let people know how the campaign went – inform pupils, parents, staff and governors and the Travel Plan Team of what you achieved.
- ★ Discuss with your School Travel Plan Working Group and School Council how you think the campaign went, what could you learn for future campaigns?

Golden Rules of Campaigning

- Stick to the message you are trying to convey. Walking to school has many benefits, but if your campaign is about health issues, stick to this and don't get sidelined by environmental issues or social benefits; you may want to look at these issues in a future campaign.
- Delegate tasks and ensure you are organised.
- Ensure everyone knows about the campaign and keep promoting it to maintain the momentum.
- Collect data before, during and after the campaign to evaluate your success.