

Need and significance of traffic education to students

Business



As young people begin to mature and become more independent, they are exposed to increasing risks. Teenagers are an important group of road users as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and newly-qualified drivers.

Many are unaware that road incidents are the biggest cause of accidental deaths and serious injuries amongst young people. There is a need for all those involved with young people to help teach clear road safety messages to equip them to understand and manage the risks they encounter as road users. Need & Significance Road safety is a high priority for parents of younger children and there is a focus on pedestrian and cycle safety education in primary schools. However, when young people move up to and through secondary school, road safety becomes even more important. Students can expect longer journeys to school, and they will be much more likely to make these journeys on their own. Their journey times may vary if they join activities before and after school hours.

They will start going elsewhere on their own - or with friends - including in the evening. They may be walking, cycling, using public transport or a passenger in cars driven by adults or young people over 17. Learning to cope with the risks they will face on the roads will allow our young people - and their parents - the confidence that they can enjoy the freedom to get out and about. However, other aspects of their health, safety and wellbeing can appear more pressing. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programmes reflect parents' and students' concerns about bullying and drug and alcohol misuse.

In some areas there are concerns about violent crime. As a result, road safety can slip down the agenda. So something positive has to be done to keep a broad range of road safety activity where it belongs high up the agenda. Although tragic, deaths from drug misuse and violent crime for young people are rare, while road traffic incidents cause most of the deaths due to injury and in 2008 caused 26% of all deaths among young people aged 10–19 in England and Wales¹. Sadly, many teachers can recall students who have been involved in serious road traffic incidents, leading to death or serious injury. We know that some road users are more vulnerable than others: the pedestrian casualty rate for casualties aged under 17 is approximately four times greater in the 10% most deprived areas than the 10% least deprived².

Boys are more likely to be injured on the roads than girls, and young, inexperienced drivers are more likely to be killed or seriously injured than older, more experienced drivers. Why is road safety so important for 11–16 year olds? By 2009, the number of children and young people (all those under 16) killed or seriously injured (KSI) on Great Britain's roads had fallen by 69% compared with the 1994–1998 average. In 2009 there was a 15% increase in traffic compared with the 1994–1998 average. These reductions have been achieved by focusing on the three E's: | Engineering of vehicles and roads. | Enforcing laws which encourage safer driving.

| Educating adults and children about staying safer on the roads. Some of the reductions may also have come about because slightly fewer children and young people are walking or cycling on their way to school, or on other

journeys. This has had some unintended consequences: young people are less active, and may be less aware of their responsibility for keeping themselves safer on the road than they were twenty years ago. Road safety strategies for 11–16 year olds have to balance the desire for young people to be active and to travel where they want, when they want, with the need to help them to stay safer as passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and ultimately, as drivers in the communities where they live. What makes road safety education effective? is part of a whole school, whole community, approach Your Road Safety Officer will be able to help you plan your work to coincide with local campaigns and activities.

The Road Safety GB website will help you to find the best contact for your area: [www. roadsafetygb.](http://www.roadsafetygb.org)

[org. uk/contacts/](http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/contacts/) • is part of a comprehensive curriculum for PSHE Many of the skills students learn in road safety education relate to other aspects of PSHE education. For example, recognising hazards and assessing and managing risk is a key process in the curriculum for personal wellbeing. involves children and young people in real decisions to help them to stay safer The more young people are involved in making decisions to help them to stay safer, the more likely they are to act on their decisions. • is based on an understanding of young people's needs and concerns Some well intentioned safety education can add nothing to young people's understanding or skills, while others may be too advanced or too early for them to put into practice. • is realistic and relevant to young people's

lives Some activities and resources may seem irrelevant to young people, and their parents, if they do not reflect their neighbourhood and lifestyles.

- recognises what might make young people particularly at risk, whether as an individual or as part of a particular community or peer group Young people from the most deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to be injured than others. They may be more exposed to traffic on a day-to-day basis. If their first language, or their parents' first language, is not English, it can be more difficult for them to understand safety rules. Games which involve risk taking often contribute to the development of identity and friendship groups and can influence the kinds of activities young people choose.
- is a partnership Schools should work with other agencies, such as local authority road safety teams, the police, Fire and Rescue Services and local and national charities, as well as parents and carers, by seeking their views, providing information and guidance and involving them in developing and implementing your shared plans.

develops personal strengths, such as self esteem and resilience Building young people's confidence and competence in one aspect of staying safer will help them to use those strengths in other situations, for example, at home or when out with friends.

- is positive and rewards safer behaviour. Modelling, praising and rewarding safer behaviour not only reinforces safety messages, but encourages young people to ask adults for help when they feel unsafe. Criticism and indifference may make them uncertain or afraid to ask for adult help.