# THE EFFECTS OF HOW WE TRAVEL TO SCHOOL -ACTIVE TRAVEL VS. THE CAR



Schools enjoy cleaner air quality. & safer access when more students are walking & cycling to school

## Independence

By reducing cars at school gates children can travel actively, safely & independently



#### Exercise

Through exercise, active travel increases fitness. energy & alertness levels

## **Healthy mind**

Active travel & exercise can release 'feel good' endorphins





#### Healthy heart

An active childhood has a protective effect on cardiovascular health as children age

### Social well-being

Traveling to school actively builds memories & fosters relationships



THE CAR



## Bone density

Bone density increases through weight -bearing exercise, like walking & running



## Sedentary life

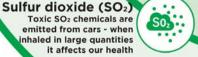
The amount of time children spend in cars contributes to sedentary lifestyles

## **Particulate** matter (PM)

PM from vehicles creates significant negative impacts on human health



## Disadvantage<sup>5</sup>





## Vehicular traffic

Traffic blocks access to school & makes it difficult to see children crossing the road

## Nitrogen oxides (NOx)

Transport is the main source of NOx in Ireland & is associated with asthma & chronic obstructive pulmonary disease



CO emitted from engines at high levels is toxic to humans & can lead to flu-like symptoms

## IMPORTANT? Active travel to school is important for your children's health and for the health of the environment. Less children are using active ways to travel to school, with more being driven than ever before. More cars at the front of school creates a safety hazard for children and the emissions created from car engines are

harmful to your children's health. This Safe Routes to

Why active travel is important

School (SRTS) brochure explains:

- How SRTS aims to support active travel
- The health benefits of active travel to school







If we look at the shifting trends of how students travel to school, Central Statistics Office (CSO) statistics will show that active travel rates to school have been rapidly decreasing in the last 30 years. Active travel, such as walking and cycling, has decreased by half, from 49.5% of primary school students in 1986 to just 25% in 2016. Walking and cycling has been substituted for primary school students, with the majority of journeys to school being made by car. This period saw a 24% increase of children being driven to school between 1986 to 59.8% in 2016, almost triple what it was a generation ago. SRTS aims to reverse the declining trends of active travel to school.

## **Secondary Students**

 Some people might ask: "why is it so important to increase active travel to school?" By engendering active travel, students and communities have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of better air quality, improved health and well-being, and a safer environment around the school. Vehicular traffic at the front of school during drop-off and pick-up times presents a safety hazard for school children and contributes to poor air quality. By developing safer routes, the SRTS programme will be tackling the multiple issues facing young school goers.

## **Primary Students**



## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The SRTS Programme launched in March 2021 and was open to all schools in Ireland to apply for front of school upgrades which provide walking, cycling and safer access to school. The programme is an initiative of the Department of Transport and supported by the Department of Education. It is operated by the Green-Schools Programme in partnership with the NTA and local authorities. A dedicated SRTS Infrastructure Officer works with schools and local authorities during the process.

S: @SRTS Ire

W: www.greenschoolsireland.org/saferoutestoschool/

E: srts@eeu.antaisce.org

T: +353 1 400 2222

A: EEU An Taisce Unit 5a

Swift's Alley, Francis Street
Dublin, D08TN88

Ireland

