



## Healthy Schools – Transporting schools into a healthier place

### Introduction

Healthy Schools Partnership aims to improve the education, health and well-being of school aged children and young people by supporting schools to become healthy learning communities. It is a national programme which is delivered locally, hence, the ‘**Manchester Healthy Schools Partnership**’. Schools work at the **Bronze**, **Silver** and **Gold** level and have targets to implement at each stage. These targets are selected from the ‘*Gold Criteria*’, which consists of three themes, *Ethos*, *Learning* and the *Environment*.

### Set-up in school

Healthy Schools aims to enable whole school change by working with the ‘Healthy Schools’ team, which consists of various people representing the school. This includes a ‘healthy schools co-ordinator’, some pupils, staff, parents and governor initially. It is this team that runs the project in the school. This involves consulting with the ‘school community’ to identify targets, action planning and monitoring of activities. The targets can be identified from surveying the ‘healthy school’s *Gold Criteria*, or may be a matter of concern to that school in particular. Each school team has a Link Worker who guides and supports them through the programme.

### Healthy Schools and School Travel

It is understood that to enable a population to be healthy, it is not only what the individual does that keeps them healthy, but also the environment they live in. Is the area safe? Are there places for children to play safely? Are there local facilities? Therefore, by having less traffic on roads, and more parents, staff and pupils walking or cycling to school, we can improve the populations health by increasing their physical activity, but also by reducing the congestion and pollution caused by cars and other vehicles. School travel plans are not just about transport, they are also about improving health, broadening education and combating social exclusion. In addition they contribute to strategies on ‘sustainable development’ in our communities. This fits in with the aims of healthy schools.



To develop school travel plans and related initiatives in a ‘Healthy School’, it is important that agencies know where their work fits in within the *Healthy Schools ‘Gold criteria*’. Below is a list of *specific* criteria, relating to school travel.

The ‘Healthy Schools’ Gold Criteria states that schools

- should have a ‘safety’ policy and learn about it, and other environmental issues within the National Curriculum
- should be involved in local community issues e.g. promoting safer routes to schools, safe parking, road safety etc;
- should encourage alternative methods of transport to school
- have travel plans drawn up
- have adequate facilities for bicycle storage

Initiatives such as walking buses, cycle and road safety training, school-bus travel agreements, are all areas that agencies can develop with schools through the Healthy Schools programme, backed up by providing education.

### **Healthy Schools and Eco-schools**

The Healthy Schools 'Gold criteria' now covers '*Eco-school's*', therefore, it is possible for schools to go for joint badging, and receive awards for both projects at the same time. Therefore, if a school is working on an eco-schools target, it can also be a Healthy Schools targets, and vice-versa.

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