

# How 1,100 more Year 7s could easily cycle to school instead of being driven.

MK Schools Travel Survey Report, March 2024 -

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Cycling CitizensMK City Celebration Cycle Ride through CMK, July 2023

With thanks for insights and recommendations for improvements on earlier drafts from Craig Broadbent & Deborah Cooper of MK Cycle Forum, Daniel Haslam of The Open University, and Dr Jonathan Flower of [Centre for Transport & Society](#), University of West England.

## 1. Summary

Milton Keynes (MK) was designed from the outset to have excellent pedestrian and cycling routes away from busy roads and schools were designed into this network. Despite this MK has more children being driven to school than the average for England and fewer students walking. The Council has set an ambitious target to become carbon-neutral by 2030 and active travel should play a key role in achieving it.

A survey questionnaire was completed by Year 7 students across 12 MK secondary schools, with 1,173 respondents representing approximately one-third of the total Year 7 cohort. This report confirms the findings of a similar survey last year, reveals more about travel habits and attitudes to cycling to school, and highlights new opportunities for action to encourage cycling.

While 51% of all respondents are driven to school, only 13% cycle. Although this is above the average for England, cycling still seems to be undervalued as an effective way of getting to school and back. Among those living within a 15-minute cycle ride from school, 37% are driven and only 14% cycle. Extrapolating across all Year 7 students in MK, approximately 1,100 could be cycling to school.

There are several barriers, including concerns about safety, distance perceptions, and strong peer influences. However, there is significant interest in cycling among students, particularly for health and environmental reasons. The survey underlines the importance and practicality of removing barriers to cycling, enabling active travel.

### Recommendations for Schools:

- Integrate active travel into student wellbeing strategies.
- Promote initiatives fostering cycling with friends and providing cycle safety training.
- Improve cycle parking facilities and offer support for families to access suitable bikes.

### Recommendations for MK City Council:

- Implement measures to make roads and Redways safer.
- Establish ambitious targets for cycling to school and allocate sufficient resources to achieve them.
- Provide quality information about safe routes and promote clean transport initiatives.

Addressing barriers to cycling requires a concerted effort from both schools and MK City Council to prioritize children's health and well-being over convenience. By implementing the recommended actions, MK schools and City Council can make significant strides towards promoting active travel, achieving its carbon-neutrality goals and improving public health.

Cycling Citizens MK has a vision of 7% MK journeys by cycle, and 50% by women, by 2030. This report aims to grow momentum for that vision by encouraging school and Council leaders to take action now.



Bicycle parking at [Watling Academy](#)



MK Bikeability Olympics, July 2023

## 2. Introduction

Milton Keynes (MK) has a rich history of innovation in personal transport, boasting a comprehensive grid road system and 200 miles of off-road 'Redway' routes for walking and cycling. Despite this, transport remains the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in MK at 41% (and above the England average of 36%) and 40% of children from deprived areas are not meeting recommended exercise levels<sup>1</sup>. With the city aiming for carbon-neutrality by 2030<sup>2</sup> and facing health challenges, there is a call to innovate further by promoting active travel options, particularly cycling.

We know from a Cycling UK report<sup>2</sup> that: in the Netherlands, with similar weather, most children cycle to school; 10-16 year-old boys who cycle regularly to school are 30% more likely and girls seven times more likely to meet recommended fitness levels; Danish studies show that cycling to school lowers young people's risk of cardiovascular disease; children who walk or cycle to school concentrate better than those who are driven there. We also know from a Danish study of 30,000 people over 15 years that those who regularly cycle 15 minutes to work and back are 40% less likely to die than those who do not<sup>3</sup>.

Last year, research was initiated by [Cycling CitizensMK](#), an alliance of pro-cycling civil society and business institutions whose goal is to increase cycling in Milton Keynes<sup>4</sup>. It found that 51% of 11-16-year-old students are driven to school (car or bus), 35% walk and 12% cycle. This compares with 42%, 41% and 6% nationally<sup>5</sup>. So in MK, it appears that more students are driven and less walk to school than the national average. Our Bike Counts in schools in May, November and March, found an average of about 5 bikes per 100 students, which is similar to the average for England<sup>6</sup>. We do not know the average for Year 7s only. There may be some over-reporting by students.

Last year's report concluded '1000 more Year 7s could cycle to school'<sup>7</sup> and had the impact of encouraging MK City Council to increase its Active Travel England rating from 1 to 2<sup>8</sup>. This year's research set out to find out more about the reasons why some students and families are not cycling, and present stronger recommendations to help school and Council leaders remove the barriers and share best practice in doing so.

This report aims to inform the active travel policies of MK schools and MK City Council. Its intended readership is MK school headteachers and governors, council cabinet members and officers; also local and regional news providers, to raise awareness beyond those audiences.

*In Twenty times more English children could cycle to school with better transport planning (2019)<sup>9</sup>, Rachel Aldred writes. 'We've got a long way to go before cycling to school is normalised. If we get there, the benefits are great: improved health and well-being, cars off the road, greater child (and parental) mobility and independence.'*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk/vital-signs-mk>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2017/12/schools-and-colleges\\_7c\\_brf.pdf](https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2017/12/schools-and-colleges_7c_brf.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> L Andersen et al (2000) in Peter Walker, *The Miracle Pill* (2021) p7.

<sup>4</sup> [www.citizensmk.org.uk/campaigns/cycling-citizensmk](http://www.citizensmk.org.uk/campaigns/cycling-citizensmk)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2022>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.citizensmk.org.uk/campaigns/cycling-citizensmk/schools-cycling-challenge-2023-24/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.citizensmk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/MK-Schools-Travel-Survey-Report-March-2023.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.citizensmk.org.uk/2023/06/03/council-leader-listens-to-cycling-citizensmk-leaders/>

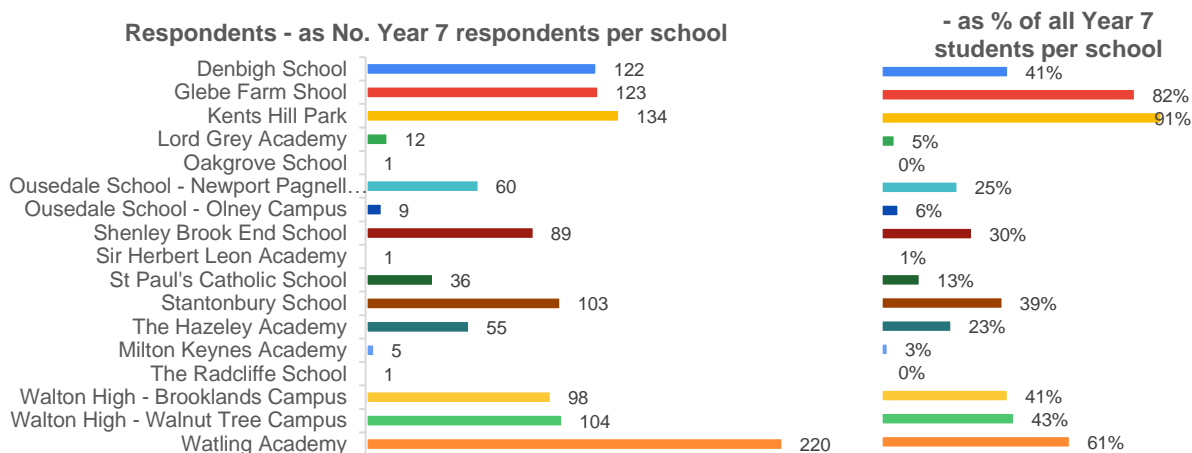
<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mrc-epid.cam.ac.uk/blog/2019/03/18/twenty-times-more-english-children-could-cycle-to-school-with-better-transport-planning/>

### 3. Method

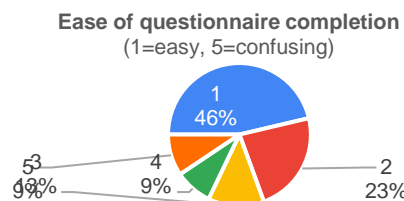
The [survey questionnaire](#)<sup>10</sup> was designed by Tim Coffey of Ousedale School and shared with all MK secondary schools by Tom Bulman, Cycling CitizensMK Organiser, through email, phone calls and meetings. It was completed by students during November and December 2023. Some schools shared the survey link with class tutors for students to complete the questionnaire in class, while others used Parent mail or other methods encouraging students to complete it in their own time.

The survey focused on Year 7 students, rather than older cohorts, because they were the largest group of respondents last year, will be in school longer and are more likely to respond to interventions.

Although the method was a little ad hoc, 1,173 Year 7 students from 12 schools responded, representing 30% of the city's Year 7 student population.



We are not experts at designing surveys, but 82% of participants found the survey easy to complete. This was 12 percentage points lower than last year's survey, maybe reflecting the focus on younger students. An important difference between this survey and last year's is the categorisation of students by distance between school and home. Last year, students were asked to estimate the distance in terms of minutes' walking time. This year, for greater accuracy, students were asked to look up and input the figure supplied by Google.



An important assumption we made is that a 45-minute walk by an 11-12-year-old is approximately equal in distance to a 15-minute cycle ride. We based this on an average walking speed for 11-year-olds of 3.3 miles per hour<sup>11</sup>, so 2.5 miles in 45 minutes; and our estimate of cycling at 10 miles per hour, reduced for age from Google Map's 11.5mph estimate for adults, so 7.5 miles in 45 minutes.

For most of the questions, students were presented with a range of answers to select from. In some cases they could tick any that applied and in others, only one answer, but generally they were given the opportunity to type in their own answer under 'Other'.

We are confident we have analysed the data correctly, but we would caution that it is based only on the students' responses. There were a handful of questionable responses, such as references to travelling by helicopter, but we do not think that these will affect the overall conclusions.

We didn't collect information about respondents' gender, and this is something we should do in future to better understand the 1:3 female:male disparity among MK cyclists observed in more recent research by Cycling CitizensMK<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1bsJugS8lFHSPHa7BsIOkXc4iYF-uzhLSEOsYrDrNmMk/edit?pli=1>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8456543/>

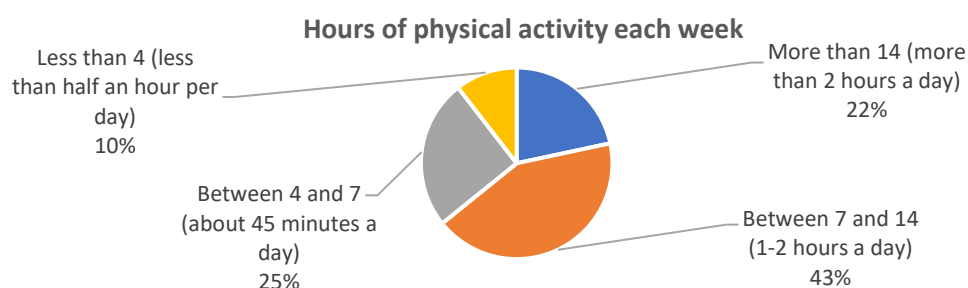
## 4. Results

The 1,173 Year 7 student respondents represent nearly one-third of the whole Year 7 cohort across MK, which is approximately one-third greater than last year’s survey. The respondents were to some extent self-selected, so while it is hard to draw general conclusions across a whole school age range, we have done some extrapolation of the data, as explained below.

The survey was undertaken in November and December. Results would probably be different in Summer.

### 4.1. Physical Activity

According to their own responses, 35% of Year 7 students do less than the government recommended daily average 60 minutes of physical activity for 5–18-year-olds<sup>12</sup>.

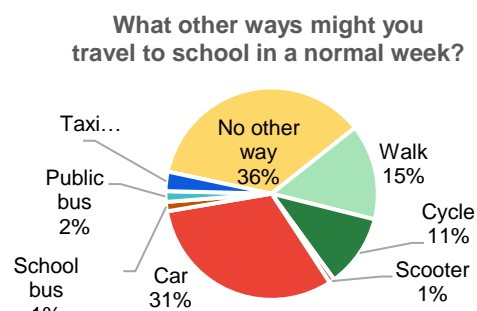
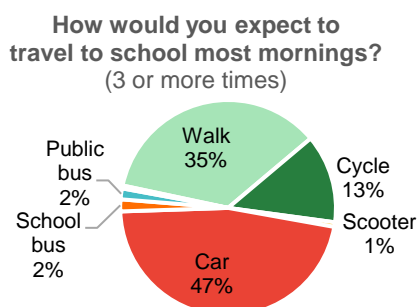


This is a risk to their long-term health and should cause concern for parents, schools and public health authorities. On the other side, 65% should be physically fit enough to easily cycle 15 minutes to school and back each day.

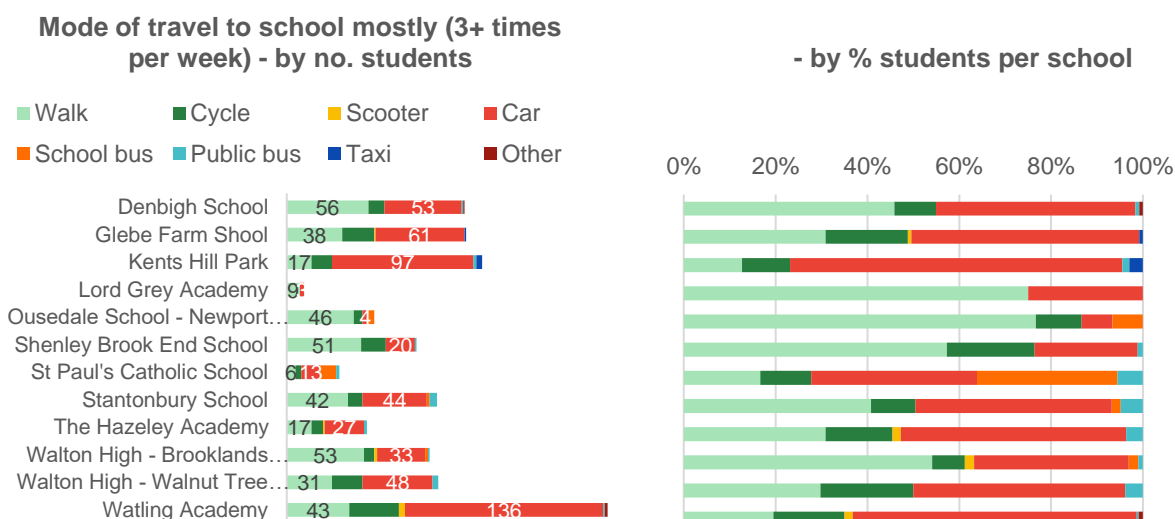
<sup>12</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-children-and-young-people-5-to-18-years](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-children-and-young-people-5-to-18-years)

## 4.2. Travel Mode

In the survey we asked students how they mostly travelled and defined mostly as 3 or more days per week. 51% of all respondents are mostly driven to school by car, which is nearly twice the national average for 11-16-year-olds (26%)<sup>13</sup>. 35% walk and 13% cycle. 36% say that there is no other way to travel to school in a normal week and 56% say they expect no change in their travel habits over winter.



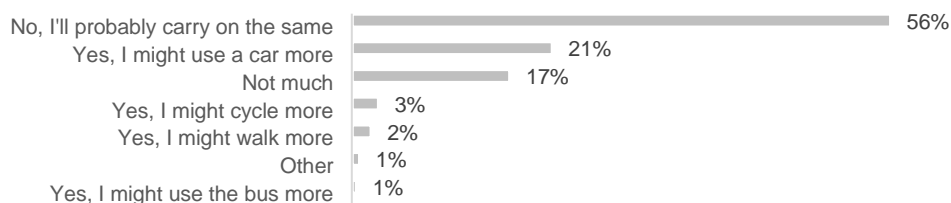
### Comparison by school



It is interesting to note that two of the oldest campuses, (Ousedale School in Newport Pagnell and Lord Grey Academy in Bletchley) have the highest proportion of Year 7 students walking to school (20%), whilst the city's newest schools (Kents Hill Park and Watling Academy) have the highest proportion of students travelling by car<sup>14</sup>. These results agree with last year's.

More than half (56%) say they expect no change in travel habits over the winter, but 21% said they may use the car more.

#### Everyone. Do you expect your journeys to and from school to change over the winter?



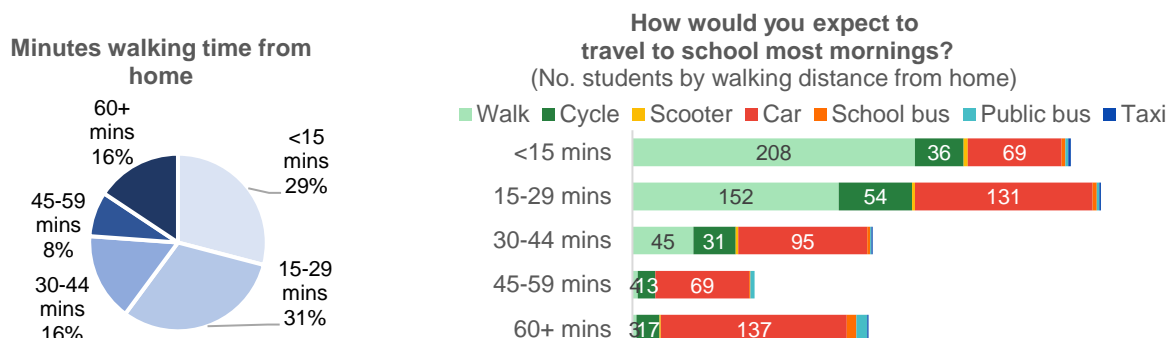
<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2022/national-travel-survey-2022-factsheet-accessible#trips-to-and-from-school>

<sup>14</sup> St. Paul's Catholic School is a special case, with students coming from a city-wide catchment area.

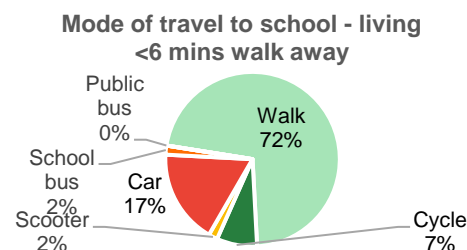


### 4.3. Travel Time

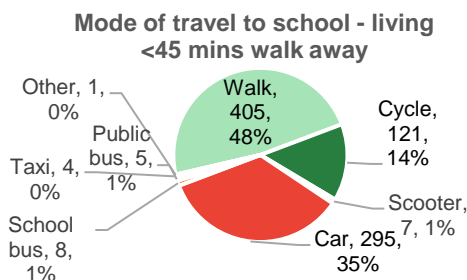
60% of students live less than 30 minutes' walk from school and as expected, most of those walk or cycle to school. Nevertheless, a substantial 32% are regularly driven this short distance to and from school.



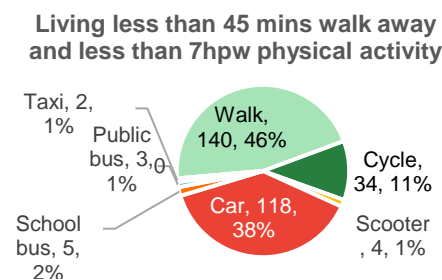
Of those who live less than 6 minutes' walk away, a shocking 17% still travel by car.



76% of respondents live less than 45 minutes from school. As stated in section 3 above, a 45-minute walk equates to about 2.5 miles distance, or a very manageable 15-minute cycle ride (including locking up the cycle). Yet 37% of the 846 respondents who live less than a 45-minute walk away (330 respondents) are driven to school (by car or bus) and only 14% cycle.



Among those who live less than a 45-minute walk away and also have less than the minimum recommended 7 hours per week of physical activity (306 students, 26% of all respondents), 42% are driven by car, bus or taxi.



Extrapolating to the total population of MK Year 7 students (approximately 3,900), these results suggest:

- Nearly 1,100 *more* Year 7 students could be cycling instead of being driven to school<sup>15</sup>. This would represent a three-fold increase from the current number who are currently cycling (14%). That's approximately 70 more cyclists on average per school and up to 70 more vehicles not congesting the roads around each school. If this could be replicated in subsequent year groups, there would be several hundred fewer cars per school when the first cohort leaves sixth form.
- More than 400 Year 7 students who are at risk of ill-health through insufficient physical activity could receive approximately half of the required activity by cycling to school<sup>16</sup>.

So why don't more students cycle?

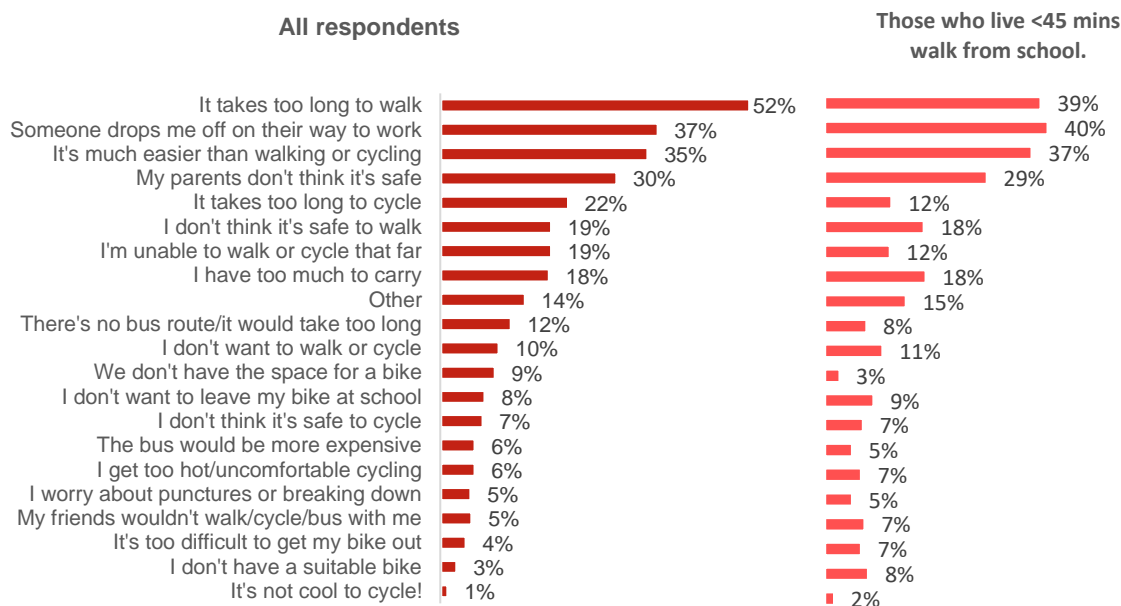
<sup>15</sup> 3900 x 76% (those living a 45-min walk) x 37% (those being driven) = 1097 students

<sup>16</sup> 3900 x 26% (those living a 45-min walk and having 7hpw or less physical activity each day) x 42% (those being driven) = 425 students

#### 4.4. Why students are driven to school.

For Year 7 students who are mostly driven to school (501), the 'key reasons' they gave are shown below.

**Why do you prefer to travel to school by car, bus or taxi? (Choose the key reasons, max. 5)**



More than half of all respondents to this question (52%) say 'It takes too long to walk' and 22% say 'It takes too long to cycle'. Among those who live less than 45 minutes' walk away, these figures are 39% and 12% respectively. So 12% of this group over-estimate the cycle travel time.

37% of all respondents to this question say 'Someone drops me off on their way to work'.

30% say 'My parents don't think it's safe', 19% say 'I don't think it's safe to walk' and 7% say 'I don't think it's safe to cycle'.

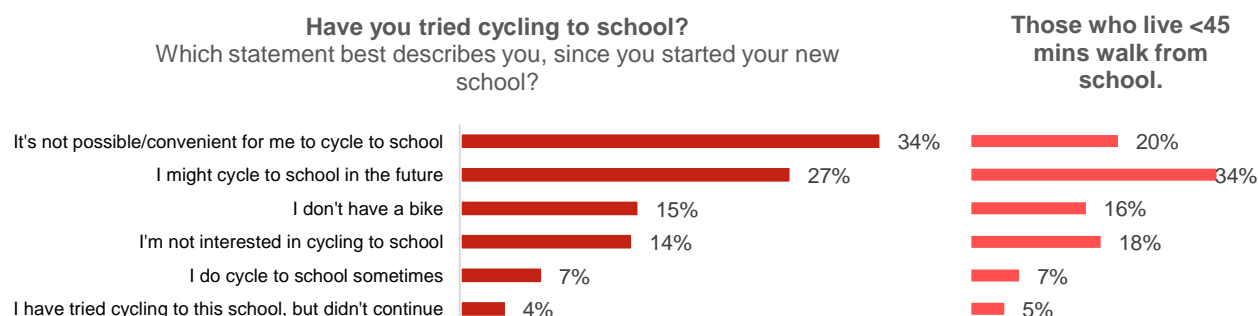
14% say 'Other', of which more than half of the comments relate to the distance being too far or the journey too long.

Of those living less than 45 minutes' walk away, 12% say 'I'm unable to walk or cycle that far' and 8% say 'I don't have a suitable bike'.

8% of all respondents say 'I don't want to leave my bike at school' and 7% say 'I don't think it's safe to cycle'. How could parking security at schools be improved and how could the redways and roads be changed to make them feel safer?

Change may not be easy. In a different question, for students who are mostly driven to school, 34% say 'it is not possible/convenient for me to cycle to school'. How much of this is perception and how much can this view be shifted? Could 'try it' rides be organised during the first month of secondary schooling?

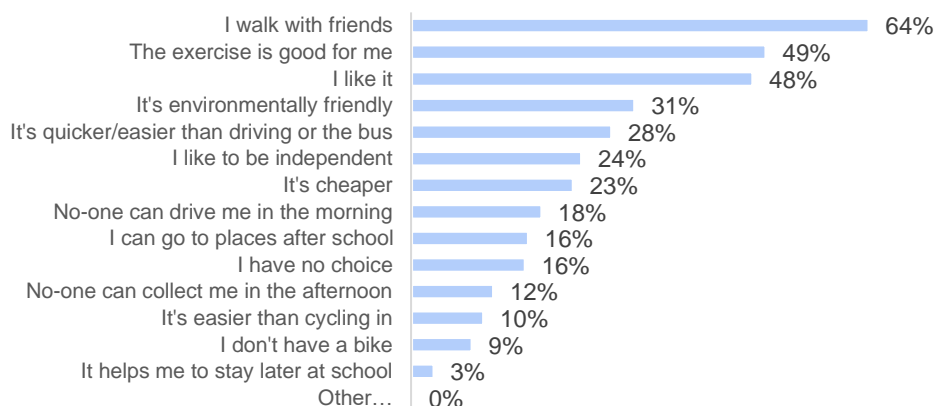
Also, 15% say they do not have a bike, which suggests that 85% do.





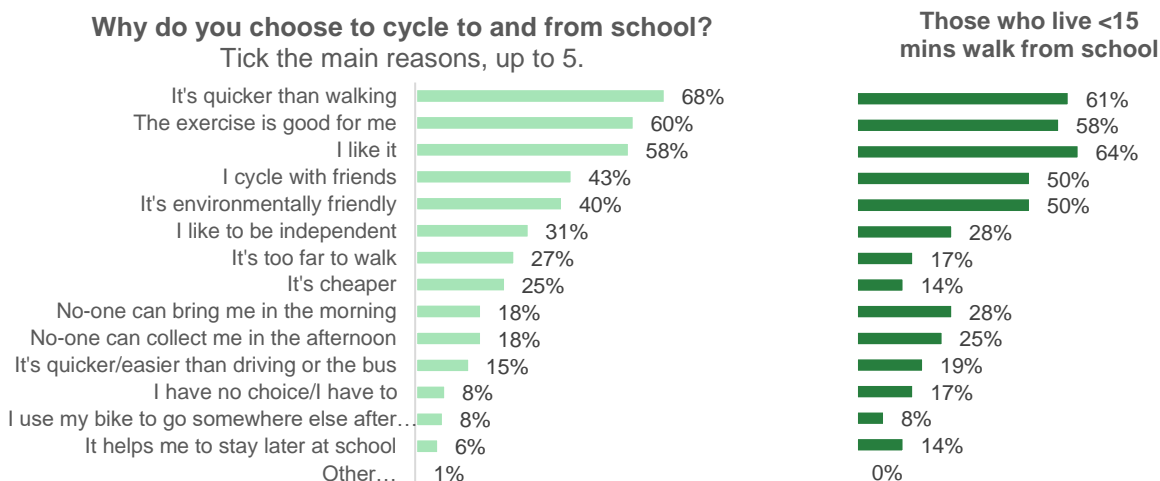
#### 4.5. Why students walk or cycle.

**Why students walk.** Students who walk or scoot to school were asked ‘Why do you choose to walk or scoot?’ (main reasons up to 5).



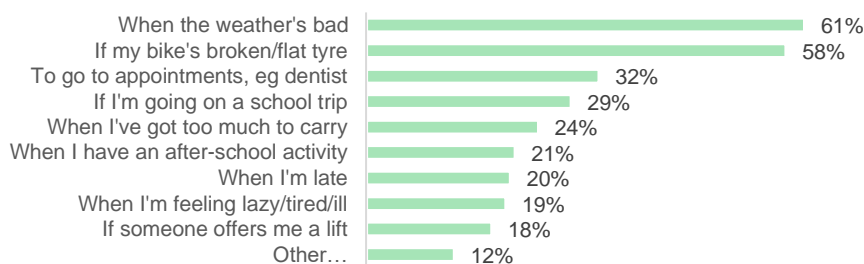
64% said being ‘with friends’ is a main reason. This underlines the importance to students of socialising during their travel to school.

**Why students cycle.** Students who cycle to school were asked why. Their responses were very consistent regardless of distance travelled, i.e. whether living close or far from school.



60% of all respondents to this question said ‘The exercise is good for me’ (up from 55% last year) and 40% ‘It’s environmentally friendly’ (no change from last year overall, but relatively high for those living closer to school). This shows a high proportion are aware and willing to choose a travel mode based on health and environmental options. 31% enjoy the independence that cycling can bring. Can the experience of independence be a factor in positive wellbeing?

The same group was asked **If there are days when you don’t cycle, why is this?** (main reasons up to 5).

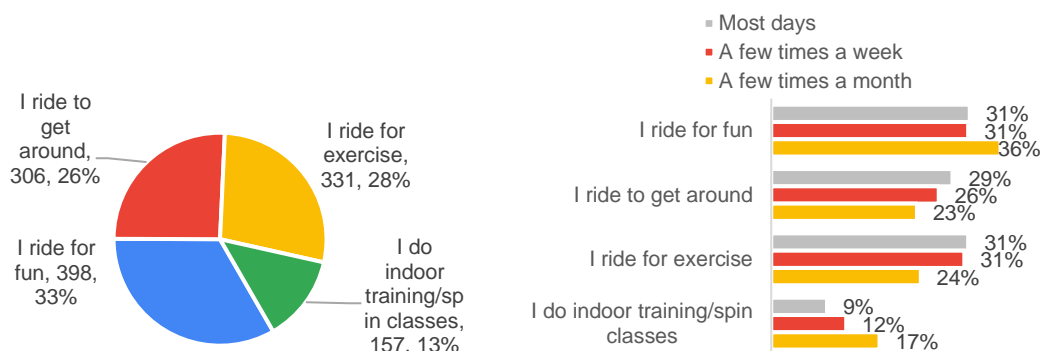


61% said ‘when the weather’s bad (61%), 58% ‘If my bike’s broken/flat tyre’. We cannot change the weather, but could students be equipped with the right gear, plus an arrival setting where they can deal with and store wet clothes, and be trained to do basic bike repairs?

## 4.6. Cycling out of school & cycling confidence

### Cycling out of school

Respondents who regularly ride a bike out of school (35%) were asked why 'which of these apply?').

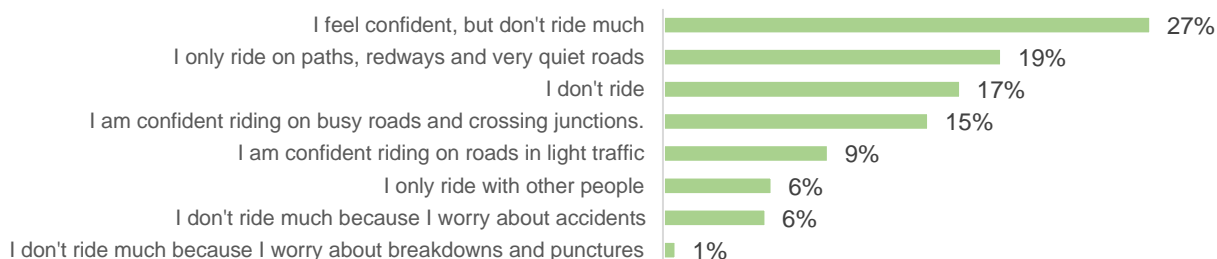


33% of those who cycle out of school 'for fun' and 28% 'for exercise'. 26% cycle 'to get around', so realise the value of cycling for utility. This is nearly double the proportion who cycle to school (14%), showing that the barriers preventing them from cycling to school are substantial. This should be explored in next further research.

### Cycling confidence

All survey respondents were asked how confident they are on a bike.

#### Everyone. Which statement best describes how confident you on a bike?

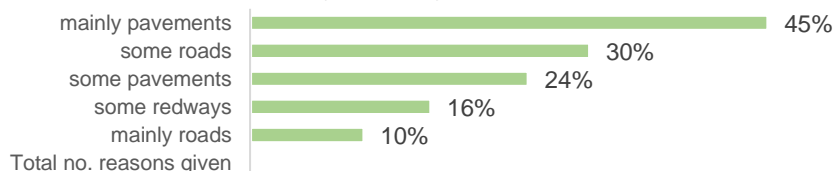


51% said they were 'confident' (27%, 15%, 9%). Only 6% said 'I don't ride much because I worry about accidents', showing that fear of collision is not a big factor affecting students' confidence.

### Redways, roads and pavements

Respondents who mostly cycle to school were asked what infrastructure they use to cycle on.

When I do cycle to school, I ride on: Tick any that apply.

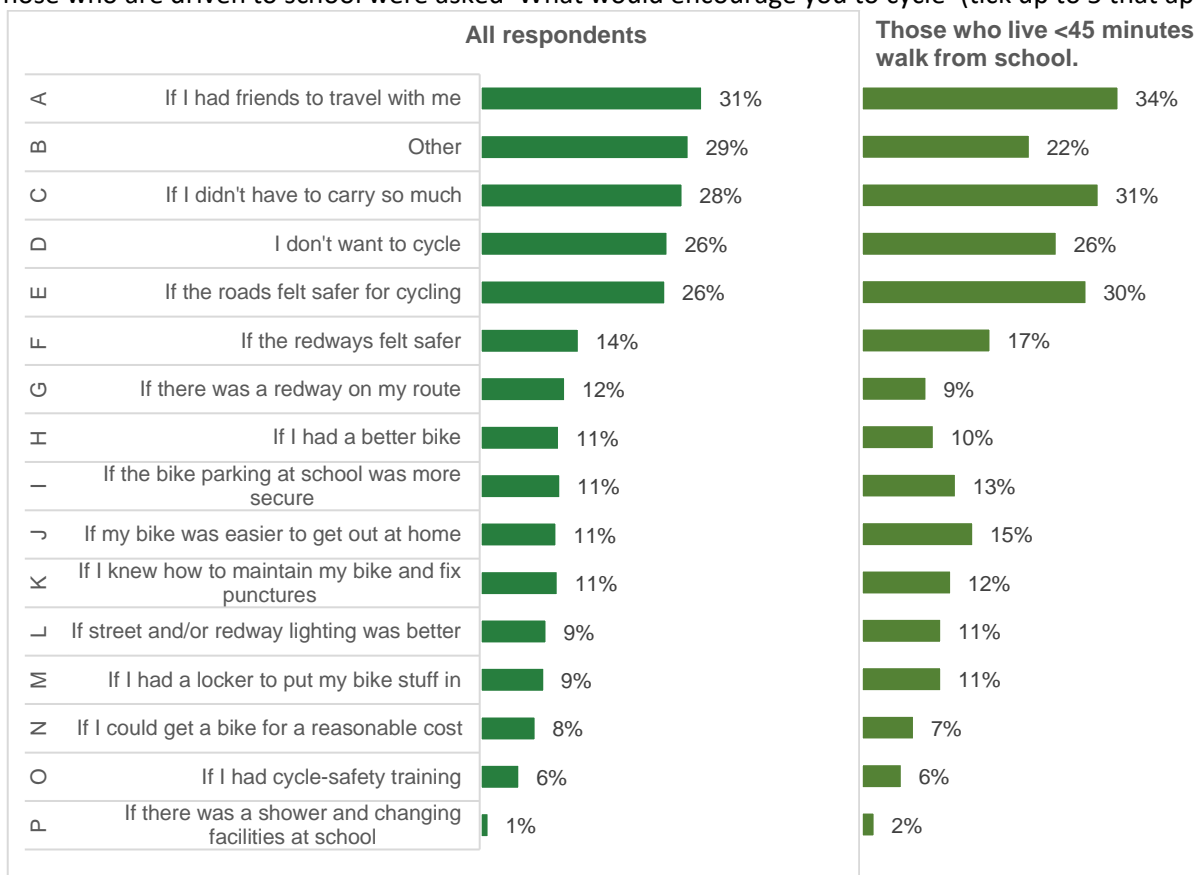


69% (45% and 24%) said they ride on pavements, which is illegal. It may be that feeling unsafe on Redways and roads is causing children to break the law. Could this be addressed by improved Redway and road infrastructure and education?

It can be suggested that fear of being unsafe on Redways and roads is causing children to break the law. This behaviour might be understandable, but is it ok for a local authority to overlook it, or should it give cause to address the perceived lack of safety, through improved infrastructure and education?

### 4.7. What would encourage students to cycle instead of being driven?

Those who are driven to school were asked ‘What would encourage you to cycle’ (tick up to 5 that apply).



31% of all respondents, and 34% of those who live less than 45 minutes’ walk from school, said ‘If I had friends to travel with’. What could be done to enable cycling with friends? Could ‘cycle buses’ help?

28% said ‘If I didn’t have to carry so much’. Having too much to carry scored highly in both ‘Why do you prefer to be driven’ (4.5) and ‘What would encourage you to cycle rather than be driven’ (this section), so is clearly something to address. Can personal storage be improved at schools?

22% ticked ‘Other’ and most of the reasons they gave related to the distance from home to school being too far to cycle (all reasons in appendices). We know (from 4.4) that 12% of those living less than 45 minutes’ walk away say ‘I’m unable to walk or cycle that far’. Yet many students do comfortably walk or cycle these distances already, so maybe this is more an issue of habit and/or perception that could be addressed, e.g. by sharing accurate comparisons of journey time for cars and bicycles over common routes. Or is the distance used as a code for other things, like feeling unsafe, or getting uncomfortable. Could schools try to sell better the positive aspects of exercise, speed and independence? How could training make a difference, what support could be given to help families get suitable bikes?

Maybe the distance barrier is more about fitting in and negotiating with friends to ride with them. Only 7% said their reason for being driven was that ‘Friends wouldn’t walk/cycle/bus with me’ (4.4), but 34% said they would be more inclined to cycle if they had friends to travel with them.

Feeling safer on roads and Redways features strongly in the table above (26% and 14% respectively), and we know (from 4.4) that parents’ concerns about safety weigh heavily. What exactly are the parents’ safety concerns in relation to cycling: fear of collision, bullying, theft, ‘stranger danger’ or something else? This needs to be researched more thoroughly. When asked why they are driven, 19% said they don’t feel safe walking, whilst only 7% say they don’t feel safe cycling. Is this an argument for cycling?

These answers to ‘what would help you to cycle’ can be categorised according to which agency – school or City Council - might take action to provide the incentive (see Conclusions below).

## 5. Conclusion

Our survey questionnaire was not perfect but, compared with last year's, the Year 7 sample was one-third greater, the questions dug deeper into why those who could cycle do not, and some important conclusions can be drawn (with reference in brackets to the relevant section of 'Results').

Generally this year's survey results confirm last year's in terms of travel habits based on our definition of 'mostly' as 3 or more times per week. (We did not analyse the data for those who cycle sometimes.)

51% of Year 7 students say they are driven to school by car, bus or taxi (4.2). Of these, 85% say they can access a bike and 27% 'might cycle to school in future' (4.4). 65% of all respondents appear to be fit enough to cycle (4.1), 51% are confident cyclists (4.6), and 35% regularly ride a bike out of school (4.6). But only 13% of all respondents say they mostly cycle to school (4.2). And a shocking 19% who live less than 6 minutes' walk away are driven to school (4.3).

Among the 76% who live within a 15-minute cycle ride of school (4.3), only 14% cycle and 42% are driven. Extrapolating to all Year 7 students across Milton Keynes, if those who are being driven were to cycle instead, there would be an additional 1,100 Year 7 students cycling. This would triple the number cycling to school to approximately two-fifths of all Year 7 students, approaching a majority, as in the Netherlands.

**Why do 13% cycle?** Of the 13% who mostly cycle to school (4.2), 60% said the main reason is because they 'like the exercise' and 58% said 'I like it' (4.5). 43% said 'cycle with friends', suggesting that peer influence is powerful. It is worth noting that 64% of those who walk to school say being 'with friends' is one of the main reasons why they walk (4.5).

**Why are 1,100 Year 7s who could easily cycle instead driven?** To understand the reasons why so many are driven instead of cycling, we need to focus on those who live within a 45-minute walk, a 15-minute cycle, and are driven to school. Their main reasons indicate the main barriers that need to be removed.

- 40% said 'Someone drops me off on their way to work' (4.4). How much are parents detouring to drop them off and how would they travel if someone did not drop them off? What are the reasons why they are being dropped off? Could parents be encouraged to not drop them off?
- 30% said 'my parents don't think it is safe to cycle' (4.4). What kind of safety are they concerned about – collision, stranger danger bullying from other students? How could they be better informed of the actual risks and benefits of cycling to school?
- 12% said 'it is too far to cycle' and slightly more than half of the 15% 'Other reason' said it was too far or too long (4.4), so approximately 20% cited distance or time from home as their reason. Would they travel differently if better informed?

**What would encourage them to cycle?** When asked what would encourage them to cycle (4.7), the main reasons given by those who are driven to school were: 'if I had friends with me' (31%), 'if roads felt safer' (26%) and 'if redways felt safer' (14%). These are areas on which schools and the local authority can take action to affect positively so that more students are encouraged to cycle to school (see Recommendations below). Helping schools to develop and deliver School Travel Plans will generate vital monitoring data.

It should cause concern that 69% who mostly cycle to school do so on pavements (4.6), since it is illegal.

We know schools must focus on academic performance and other aspects of child safety and, given the constraints of tight budgets and teacher workload, it is hard to find the resources to address these issues. Could the issue of active travel be treated more holistically as part of a strategy to improve physical and mental health and engender a personal responsibility towards the planet. Could the Council work with schools to promote learning about exemplary active travel cities, e.g. student delegates visit a city in the Netherlands or closer to home, and report back to the Council.

## 6. Removing the barriers to cycling

Removing the barriers to cycling involves both enabling people who want to cycle (infrastructure) and promoting the benefits (education). The primary powerholders are schools and MK City Council.

### 6.1. Recommendations for Secondary schools

- i. Include active travel as part of student wellbeing strategy.
- ii. Deliver a range of initiatives which encourage students to cycle to school (see Appendices), especially with their friends (A).
- iii. Review and reduce where possible the weight of schoolbooks and equipment which students need to carry for their studies (C).
- iv. Improve cycle parking facilities at school (I) in line with Bicycle Association standards<sup>17</sup> and set targets for having more than enough quality parking spaces for the number of students targeted for cycling to school - perhaps including tool stations in bike compounds (K).
- v. Offer lockers or larger lockers to students who cycle (M) and/or a lockable bike storage area where helmets and accessories can be stored, possibly with surveillance cameras.
- vi. Collect and share bike count data<sup>18</sup> to inform and motivate increased cycling to school.
- vii. Provide cycle safety training (O), enabling the Council's Bikeability training up to Level 3.
- viii. Connect with Council scheme to provide free bikes to families which cannot afford them (N).
- ix. Provide information to help parents provide suitable bikes for the children (H) including information about the Council's free bike scheme (N), bike storage at home (J) and help with bicycle maintenance (K). Audit safe and legal routes to school through Modeshift Stars<sup>19</sup> and inform Year 6 parents at Parents evenings, clarifying actual cycle travel time, addressing safety concerns and outlining environmental issues related to driving/dropping children off. Make sure that drop off and parking is further away from the entrance than the cycle provision. Encourage family rides to parent evenings. Encourage staff cycling.
- x. Organise 'try it' cycle rides to school for all Year 7s. Maybe set a target of 80% trying it?
- xi. Review policies which might inadvertently encourage driving to school, e.g. allowing parents, staff, visitors to drive through the school gates and drop off or park for free, so it is easier to cycle than to drive.
- xii. Set and share publicly targets for the number of individuals who ride daily, weekly, monthly, termly; also for the school as a whole, the number of secure cycle spaces, and cyclists by term, monitoring by day of week, time of the year and by weather.

### 6.2. Recommendations for Primary schools

- i. Deliver a range of initiatives which encourage students to cycle to school (see Appendices)
- ii. Attend a Council-led workshop to outline the benefits of joining the Modeshift STARS scheme, including development and delivery of a School Travel Plan.
- iii. Promote Bikeability training, and publicly celebrate achievement, to help the Council achieve its target of 80% Years 5-6 participation by March 2025. Consider offering special credit to children who participate. Distribute to parents clear and positive information about Bikeability.
- iv. Provide a 'Dr. Bike' service for children and families before the Bikeability course.
- v. Pilot 'Cycle Bus' and, if successful, provide volunteer training and child safety checks where needed. Consider creating a cycling club led by a teacher or parent volunteers.
- vi. Welcome the Mayor to give talk at a school assembly about the benefits of cycling to school.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.bicycleassociation.org.uk/parkingstandard/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.citizensmk.org.uk/campaigns/cycling-citizensmk/schools-cycling-challenge-2023-24/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://modeshiftstars.org>

### 6.3. Recommendations for MK City Council

#### Short term

- i. Formally adopt '7% MK journeys by cycle and 50% by women by 2030' as a Council target. Prioritise gathering the monitoring data, report annually. Continue to part-fund the Cycling CitizensMK alliance of private and voluntary sector organisations working to achieve this goal.
- ii. Ensure bold targets for cycling to school are set in proportion to Bikeability training targets, specifying an equal number of girls and boys, and allocate sufficient Highways budget to improve the safety of roads and Redways around school. Share publicly the targets and regular reports.
- iii. Create a transparent schedule of Redway maintenance, including leaf clearance in Autumn end and identify Redways as key school routes included in the gritting plan. Pay attention to feedback from female staff and girls on their perceptions of Redway safety (given that women are under-represented among adults cycling in MK<sup>20</sup>).
- iv. Review and/or develop cycle parking standards for all building types including schools, with lockable cycle hubs you can see into with Sheffield stands for different types and sizes of cycles.
- v. Provide quality information about safe routes for schools to distribute to parents at transition to secondary school, similar to that produced by Jim Parker for parents at Lord Grey and Stantonbury, including a map showing concentric circles of actual cycling travel time from school.
- vi. Ensure a survey like this is repeated and reported to full Council annually, with more detailed information about why so many children are driven to school, including feelings of safety. To understand better the issue of gender disparity among adult cyclists, include gender information. Use Sustrans' cycling index is an example of what data to collect<sup>21</sup>.
- vii. Promote clean transport by providing the MK Mayor with a pedal car for travel to events.
- viii. Organise a trip for a group of MK young people to visit a city which has made substantial progress with active travel policies and report back to MK Council.

#### Medium term

- ix. Make more Redway routes from homes to school (G). Find out which residential areas are least well served with Redways to school. Ensure all new Redways meet Redway Design Standards.
- x. Improve lighting on Redways/roads (L). Establish, monitor and report on targets for lighting repair on Redways as well as underpasses.

#### Long term

- xi. Make roads safer (E) Continue to develop 'School Streets'<sup>22</sup> and 20mph restrictions around schools with cameras to monitor speed and illegal parking. Reduce maximum speeds on city roads to 50mph.
- xii. Make Redways safer (F), especially at road junctions. Review Redway crossing points in terms of national Cycling Infrastructure Design standard LTN 1/20<sup>23</sup> and install appropriate crossing points to prioritise people walking, wheeling and cycling, in line with the new Highway Code<sup>24</sup>.

'This will involve a shift in mindset, prioritising children's health over adults' car-driving convenience.' - Rachel Aldred in *Twenty times more English children could cycle to school with better transport planning*.

<sup>20</sup> Given the gender disparity among MK cyclists observed in recent research, <http://www.citizensmk.org.uk/2024/03/04/why-only-23-mk-cycle-journeys-by-women/>.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/the-walking-and-cycling-index>

<sup>22</sup> School Streets is an approach to transforming road safety and air quality outside schools, where streets are closed to motor traffic at the start and end of the school day so that pedestrians and cyclists are prioritised at school start and finish times. <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/school-streets>

<sup>23</sup> <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ffa1f96d3bf7f65d9e35825/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>



## 7. Appendices

### OTHER REASONS GIVEN FOR 'WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO CYCLE' (4.5):

- If I lived closer to the school
- If the weather is good
- i don't know the way from my house to school
- If the weather was better
- if i knew how to ride a bike
- If I learned the rough and if it felt more safer when walking even when two of us
- I can't cycle during cold weather
- Better weather conditions. During Summer we cycle to school.
- If I lived closer to the school
- If I didn't live far away from my school
- Live too far
- It is too far and not convenient.
- i live in a different county (Bedfordshire) so there's no possible way for me to cycle.
- School starting later. It is hard as it is a rush in the morning
- I can't ride a bike
- Cycling isn't better
- Take too long
- I don't live close to Glebe Farm school
- If i lived closer
- I live too far away and that isn't an option so I had to click other
- It would take 20 minutes but I have to go through places i don't know
- Because I don't want to.
- If bus stops were going to my school
- If i was closer to the school.
- If i lived closer
- Personal safety- Strangers
- Because I live 15 minutes away from school with car
- If i moved.
- Because I live too far
- If it didn't take so long
- If i lived closer to my school.
- If i had a bike
- if i lived closer
- i live far away
- If the school was closer
- My bike isn't at home and I don't know the route
- My mum does not have time to get my bike out and it is freezing cold
- if it did not take long
- nothing it's not safe
- If I had a bike and knew how to ride it
- because I live quite far from here
- If there was a way for it to be quicker
- I lived closer to the school
- I would cycle but my back is at my caravan
- if it was closer as at the time i would have to wake up and leave it would still be too dark especially going into the winter.
- i cannot ride a bike
- If I lived nearer to school.
- if it was so long
- if i didn't have to live so far
- i live too far away
- If my house wasn't too far
- if i knew the way
- i don't know the way
- My parents prefer to drop us and pick us up by car
- my mum drops me off
- It is not safe whatsoever to bike in anyway to school.
- "It depends how far your school is
- if I didn't have to travel that far.
- If possible to cycle shorter distance like 15 minutes, it can be suitable.
- It's not safe sometimes, especially winter when it's dark in the morning & evening & lots of strangers
- if the school wasn't so far
- I pray the rosary on my walk to and from the bus stop, and I read on the bus. If you can give me an extra half an hour every day to pray my rosary another time, I might consider it. Also I really don't want to get sweaty before school starts, and I don't want to have to cycle if I've had a bad day and feel tired and terrible.
- If it didn't rain I would bike
- If I was closer to the school
- Too far
- If I lived closer to school
- if there weren't so many crimes
- "time i would have to leave
- I Ride already i even do BMX nothing really i just love riding my bike it's one of my hobbies
- if i had more time to cycle
- there wasn't as much rude and inconsiderate students
- it is too far and then i would have to wake up early and be sleepy every day
- i use car
- if i could ride a bike
- my sister's tire is broken
- if i cycle to school it would take 1 and a half minutes to 2 hours
- because my house is not that close to the school
- Nothing, as I am unable to walk/cycle to school as the distance is too far, and I'd most likely get late.
- my house being closer (i know that isn't possible but you get the idea)
- not comfortable
- if my house was closer to the school
- it's too far to bike
- Because i lived really far away so i can't but i would like to
- If I even got a Bike
- My parents wouldn't allow me either way
- The distance is way too long to drive. I drive on the motorway.

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- If my parents allowed me
- Because I don't know how to cycling.
- When I am older
- If I lived near the school.
- If I lived closer to the school.
- i would get sweaty on the ride which would make me uncomfortable at school
- because I live far
- "to far from house to cycle
- if it didnt take so long
- If it was closer
- If my house wasn't very far away.
- It would take almost 2hours to bike to school which is not possible for me.
- It just wouldn't be convenient at all to bike to the school from my home.
- if i was more closer to walton high i would but i just cant
- it is way to cold
- cold weather
- My parents doesn't want me to cycle during winter
- If I didn't live so far away.
- If it wasn't as cold.
- Medical reasons.
- because i don't cycle to school
- if it would be quicker than driving
- it was a short walk or cycle
- If I had lived closer to the school
- If I lived closer to school
- because my mum doesn't think I'm old enough
- if i lived closer
- i don't have a bike
- Because there wouldn't be any space to put my bike any where as the bike slots get filled up so quickly.
- If I had a bike.
- if my house was closer to school.
- if it wasn't too long away
- if my house was closer to the school
- I have to cross a busy road
- if I lived closer then I would cycle or walk
- If I was closer to school I would walk or cycle
- if school wasn't far away.
- i do not have a bike
- if the route was shorter
- its not safe and i might fall of the bike and no one will know
- Its not safe and i might fall off the bike and no one will know and then ill be lying on the floor next to a main road .
- I live almost an hour and a half from school so it would take a much longer time to cycle to school than it would for other people
- if it took less time to cycle
- To far to cycle
- i dont want to cycle to school because i dont know how to cycle and i live far away from Watling Academy so i would probably be late for school if i cycled
- It's way too cold to cycle
- because im not biking 30 minutes
- If it were warmer in the mornings.
- if the weather is good (eg. really sunny)
- no as its to far
- If I lived closer to the school.
- it takes 26 min to bike to school
- if it was shorter journey
- because I don't know how to properly use a bike
- Because I would love to cycle to school already, it's just to far to cycle and I couldn't wake up early enough.
- it takes a long time around 45 minutes for me to cycle to school.
- if there wasn't so many hills on the way

**POTENTIAL SCHOOL CYCLING INITIATIVES**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Initiative name</b>	<b>Example</b>
SC0	Student Cycling Survey	At least one whole year group complete online survey
SC1a	Cycle parking for students	Cyclepods, Minipods, Sheffield stands or bike shelters installed.
SC1b	Cycle parking for visitors	
SC2	<a href="#">Bikeability Training</a>	Qualified Bikeability trainers from MK Council deliver 1.5 day training for Level 1, 2 and 3 certification
SC3	<a href="#">Dr Bike/cycle maintenance sessions</a>	Qualified or experienced bike mechanic visits school to perform safety checks/minor repairs to pupil, staff or parents' bikes.
SC4	<a href="#">Cycle to School Week</a>	School participates in National Bike Week or Sustrans Cycle to School Week
SC5	<a href="#">Cycle competitions/ schools cycle challenge</a>	Inter school cycling competitions/events
SC6	Cycle reward scheme	Lunch Queue Jump tokens, Golden padlock, COW (cycle once weekly) or other rewards set up by the school, e.g. Bikers Breakfast for pupils who cycle to school
SC7	Cycle rides/excursions	A visit to Willen Lake, MK Dons, the museum. Organised cycle tours such as Coast2Coast.
SC8	Bling Your Bike Day	Fancy dress event for bikes, either at school or in CMK, e.g. <a href="#">Cycling Santas</a>
SC9	School cycle club	British Cycling Go Ride; After school cycling club; lunchtime cycling club
SC10	Pool bike system in place	School loans or hires bikes to pupils/families to use for the journey to and from school, or for trial
SC11	Cycle purchase scheme for staff	Cycle to Work Scheme, e.g. Cyclescheme, Bike2Work, Bicycle Benefits, Cycleplus, NHS Bikes for Work.
SC12	Bicycle Security Marking	Police bike marking scheme. Datatags, ImmoTags or similar electronic tagging.
SC13	School Assembly	Interactive assembly (any year group) dedicated to cycling information and inspiration
SC14	School Travel Plan	Modeshift STARS, <a href="https://modeshiftstars.org/education/">https://modeshiftstars.org/education/</a>
SC**	<i>Other cycling initiative</i>	<i>Any cycling action not covered elsewhere.</i>

## **CASE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL INITIATIVE: TWO MILE ASH**

(with thanks to Jake Saville, Head of PE & Enrichment Coordinator)

### **What was TMA's starting point?**

Through observations, discussions and surveys we recognised issues with local traffic congestion at the start and end of the school day together with a desire for our children to cycle/scoot/walk to school. Signing up to Modeshift STARS and devising a Travel Plan, started our journey to tackle the issues we faced.

### **What has been achieved so far?**

We are proud to have achieved both the 'Green' and most recently the 'Good' Modeshift STARS status. This has come as a result of our engagement in initiatives to encourage and promote walking/cycling/scooting to school. Initiatives include: purchasing new cycle stands (up to 48 bikes) and scooter racks; increased number of Bikeability Courses and children taking part (as well as representation at Bikeability Olympics); involvement in Sustrans Big Walk & Wheel, Living Streets Walk to School Week and Cycle to School Week; Pedal for Prizes incentive (rewards for finding a padlock on bike at school); and appointing Year 6 Cycling Ambassadors to undertake roles such as daily bike counts.

### **What is the goal?**

One goal is to increase the number of pupils that regularly walk/cycle/scoot to school. Another is to reach a target of at least 80% of our Year 5/6 cohort Bikeability Level 2 trained by 2025.

### **What are the challenges?**

With a large cohort of Year 5/6s (340 pupils), providing opportunity (number of courses) for at least 80% to complete their Bikeability is a challenge. Whilst the cost for Bikeability is low, for some of our parents this cost may be seen as something that puts them off enrolling their child. Some of our children do not have access to a bike or cannot easily get their bike to school (distance between home and school). Some of our Year 5/6 pupils cannot ride a bike.