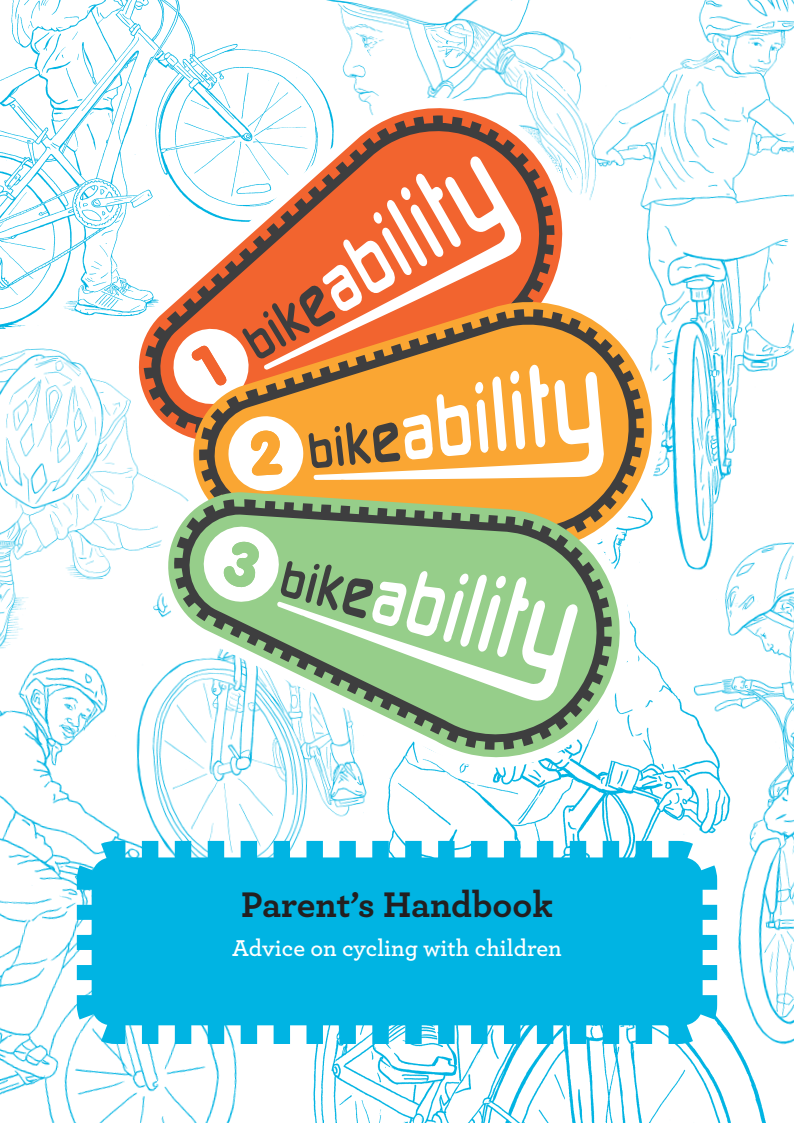


Parent's Handbook

Advice on cycling with children

This short handbook has been designed especially for parents, guardians or carers of young cyclists who have just completed their Bikeability training.

Its aim is to share with you what they have learnt and to give you the confidence to go cycling with them on roads or cycleways.

This Handbook will...

- Give you an idea of what your child covered at each Bikeability Level (for detailed information take a look a the Handbooks for Levels 1, 2 and 3.)
- Suggest things that you should consider before going on a ride with children.
- Give tips and suggestions on how to ride together or in a group.

Remember Bikeability has shown your child how to ride safely and well to the National Standard for Cycle Training.

This handbook highlights particularly important aspects such as road position, how to tackle turnings, junctions or obstacles. It also gives advice on how to ride as a group following the principles of Bikeability.

Introduction

Bikeability is based on the Government's National Standard for cycle training. It has been developed by over 20 expert bodies including national and local government and road safety and cycling organisations. The National Standard exists to help people of different ages and abilities make independent cycle journeys. Full details are available here:

https://gov.uk/government/publications/national-standard-for-cycle-training

Bikeability Level 1 assessment criteria are drawn from National Standard Roles 1 and 2 which focus on preparing for a journey and riding with control. Training is delivered in motor traffic-free environments.

At Bikeability Level 1 the following skills are practised in motor traffic free environments:

- Prepare myself for a journey
- Check the cycle is ready for a journey
- Set off, slow down and stop
- Pedal

Bikeability Level 2 assessment criteria are drawn from National Standard Roles 1 to 4, which focus on riding with control and in accordance with the highway code as well as riding safely and responsibly. Training is delivered on single-lane roads and simple junctions with mostly moderate motor traffic flows.

At Bikeability Level 2 the following skills are practiced on single-lane roads and simple junctions with mostly moderate traffic flows:

- Identify and respond to hazards
- Start and stop on-road journeys
- Maintain suitable riding positions
- Comply with signals, signs and road markings
- Communicate with other road users
- Negotiate junctions

Bikeability Level 3 assessment criteria are drawn from National Standard Roles 1 to 4, training is delivered on more complex, often busier or faster roads and junctions and prepares riders for cycling assertively in diverse road environments.

At Bikeability Level 3 the following skills are practised on complex, busy or fast roads and junctions sometimes with heavy traffic:

- Plan a journey
- Ride assertively
- Pass queuing traffic*
- Use junctions controlled by traffic lights*
- Use multi-lane roads and roundabouts*
- Use cycle infrastructure*
- Use bus lanes*
- Avoid driver blind spots*
- Negotiate vehicles that pull in ahead*
- Ride with other cyclists*
- Ride on roads with a speed limit above 30 mph*

* if present

Planning

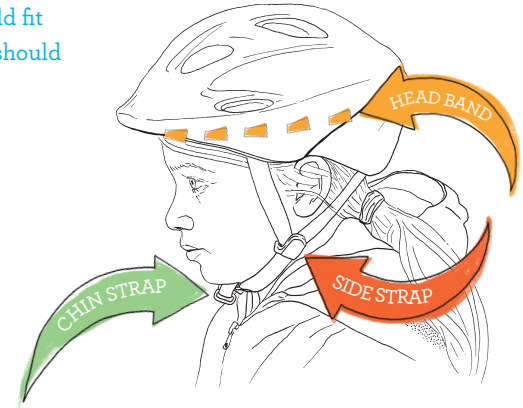
- You should plan where you are going, and how long it will take. Make sure all the family, or group, can cope with the distance, terrain and hills.
- Check all equipment and make sure you have food and drink if necessary.
- Make sure everyone has suitable clothing and be prepared for changes in weather.
- Make sure everyone is clear on the order you will be cycling in and how you will tackle turnings, junctions or obstacles.

Ensure everyone's shoelaces are tied and that there is nothing hanging down that could get caught in the chain or brakes.

Equipment check

Ensure helmets fit tightly around the circumference of the head and the strap is secure below the chin, with enough room to fit two fingers between the strap and the chin.

Helmets should fit properly and should look like this:

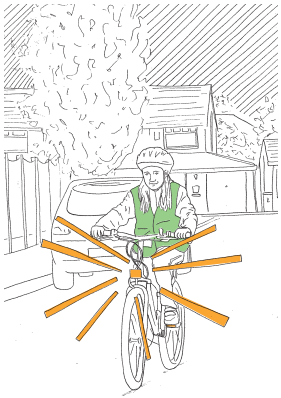


Cycling in the dark

Only Bikeability Level 3 teaches night riding skills.

Cycling in the dark

At night you must have good front and rear lights and reflectors on your bike. A white front light, red rear light, amber pedal reflectors and red rear reflector is the minimum. It's a good idea to wear reflective clothing so that you are more visible.



Bike check

Before you set off on any ride, check all bikes in the group are in good working order.

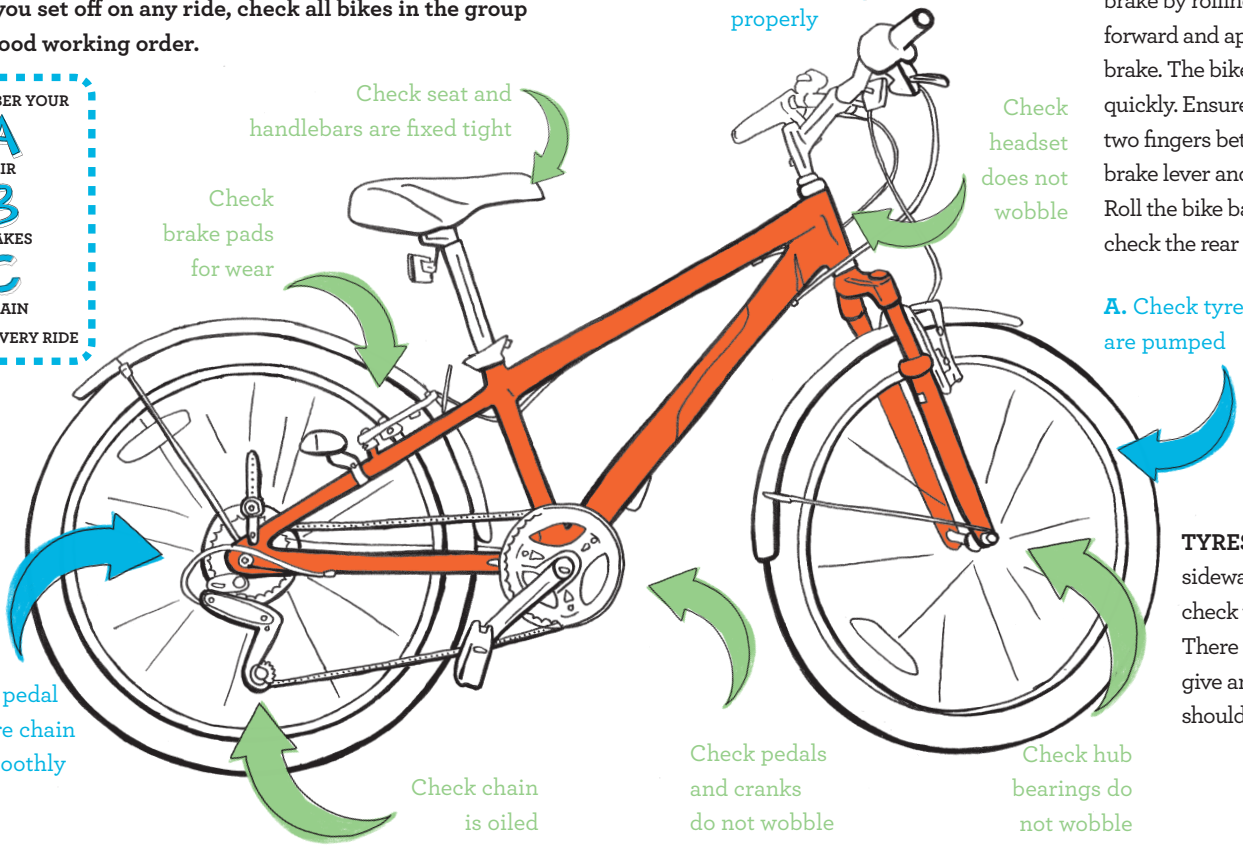
REMEMBER YOUR

A
AIR

B
BRAKES

C
CHAIN

BEFORE EVERY RIDE



BRAKES Check the front brake by rolling the bike forward and applying the brake. The bike should stop quickly. Ensure you can fit two fingers between the brake lever and handlebar. Roll the bike backwards to check the rear brake.

TYRES Squeeze the sidewall of the tyre to check the air pressure. There should be no give and the tyre should feel solid.

Road position

One of the most important things children learn as part of Bikeability is where to position themselves on the road.

Primary position

Is the middle of the lane. This is the default road position for cycling on busy roads and complex junctions. It gives you the greatest control of your road space. It offers most options for avoiding hazards and makes you more visible to other road users.

Secondary position

Giving up some of the lane. This position provides sufficient space and visibility when you need to share the road, riding to the left of the traffic stream. It should be used when there is plenty of space for you to be overtaken.

Position in traffic stream

Ensure that you and your children ride in the traffic stream when you need to. This should prevent a driver from passing too close.

This is especially relevant when passing parked cars and junctions and on narrow roads. Always avoid riding in the gutter to miss drain covers and debris as well as to be more visible.

Cycling with children

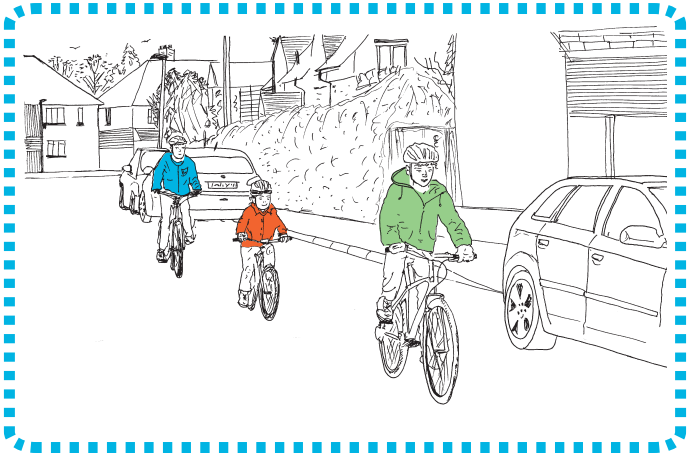
Ride confidently and position yourself where you are most visible.

Riding behind your children

Riding behind your children will often be the most practical option. Ride behind and slightly to the right to where you can see your children and ride at their pace. This will create more space between them and the passing traffic. Ensure that you are close enough to hear each other. Encourage your children to check behind regularly to check you are still close.

Riding as a group

It is a good idea to position the children that are most proficient at cycling (eg. trained to Bikeability Level 2) at the front. If there are two adults in the group then the best option is to have one adult in front and one at the back. If there is only one adult, make a considered decision about whether it is safe enough to have more than two children in the group.



Riding side by side

You may ride side by side with your children, positioning yourself on their right. (The Highway Code advises you not to ride more than two abreast).

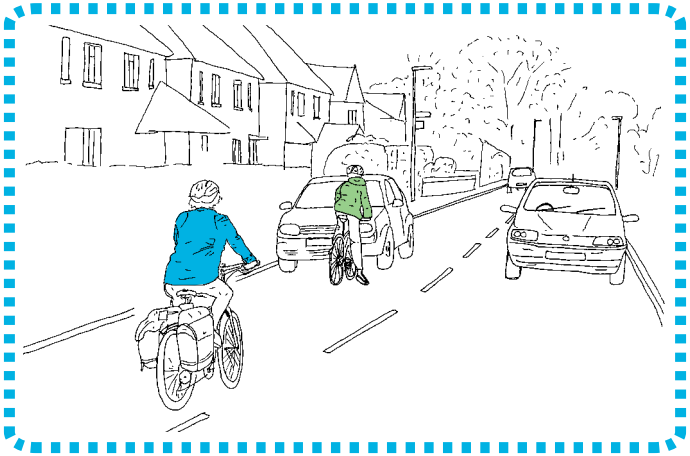
Passing

Bikeability teaches your child how to cycle past side roads, pass parked vehicles and overtake slower traffic. To pass correctly, this means looking behind and ahead, understanding who has right of way and moving out when there is time and space to do so.

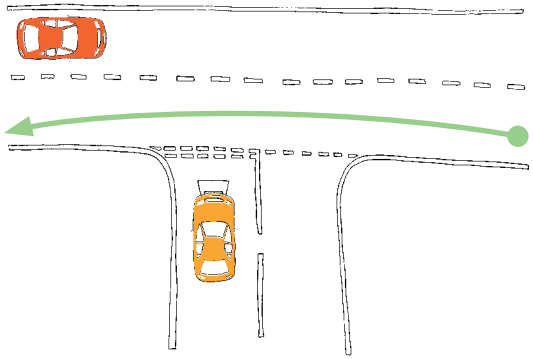
Anticipate the manoeuvre before your children reach a side road or pass parked cars.

- As you approach ensure that there are no cars close behind and move into the primary position.
- Move into primary position before your children so that drivers are prevented from passing on the approach to the junction.

You can use the same process when approaching traffic islands, 'pinch points' or when riding on narrow streets where there is not enough room for a cyclist and a driver to safely pass each other.



Passing a side road, the cyclist has right of way over the traffic coming out of the side road.



Junctions

Bikeability teaches your child what to do at junctions.

T-junctions, side roads, crossroads and roundabouts are all negotiated using the same basic sequence.

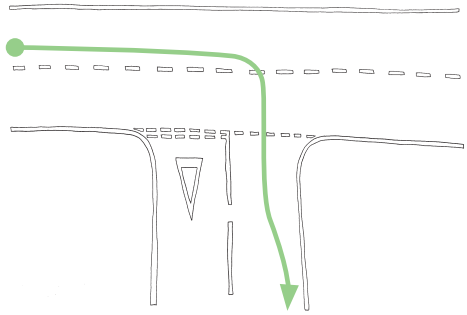
1. **look** behind and ahead, note rights of way, judge time and space
2. **communicate** by signalling your intentions if other road users are present
3. **position** – when time and space permit:
   - approach the junction in primary position
   - hold primary position though to the junction exit
   - select primary or secondary position to continue the journey

Multi-lane roads and junctions

Only Bikeability Level 3 teaches multi-lane and major road skills. Be sure you are confident in your group's abilities before cycling on these roads.

When turning right

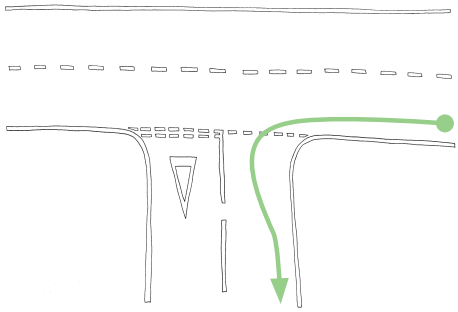
You must check over your right shoulder for overtaking traffic, including people on bicycles, before completing the turn.



Turning right into a minor road, oncoming traffic on the major road has right of way

When turning left

You must check over your left shoulder for undertaking traffic, including people on bicycles, before completing the turn.

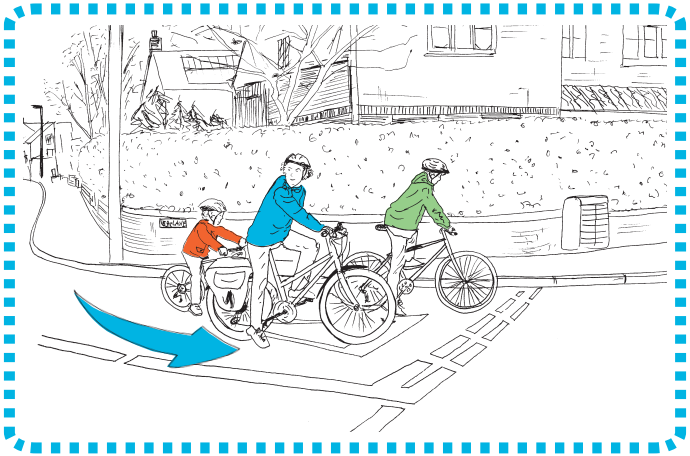


Turing left onto a minor road, the cyclist has right of way

Give Way Line

When approaching a 'give way' line

Approach the give way line alongside your children to ensure that they stop. They can then ride next to you when making the turn.



Where can we go now?

Bikeability Level 1

Riders can safely cycle anywhere without traffic where cycling is allowed.

Bikeability Level 2

Riders can cycle on single lane roads and use simple junctions.

Bikeability Level 3

Riders can cycle on multi-lane roads and use complex junctions.

Want to know more?

If you are not already a confident cyclist, you might wish to sign up for a training session yourself please see www.bikeability.org.uk to find a local provider.

You can also register your children on the Bikeability Hub to access discount vouchers and learning resources that will help you and your family continue cycling to the National Standard:
https://bikeability.org.uk/participants-hub/

www.bikeability.org.uk

Department for Transport

www.bikeability.org.uk