

# A FAMILY GUIDE TO

# Bike Ed

A stylized bicycle logo where the front wheel is a blue arch, the frame is green, and the rear wheel is a blue arch. The text 'Bike Ed' is positioned below the logo.

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## Introduction

### What is Bike Ed?

The aim of the Department of Transport Bike Ed program is to enable primary school students: Grades one to six; and secondary school students: Grades seven and eight; to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to ride a bicycle safely and independently.

Visit [Vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://Vicroads.vic.gov.au) and search 'Bike Ed'

This guide provides information for parents and carers to help support their children as safe bicycle riders.

### How can parents/carers support their child's learning in Bike Ed?

- Ensure your child has plenty of time, under adult supervision, to practice the skills they are learning at school
- Spend time helping your child to develop and practice their skills. When parents/carers ride with their children and show them safe behaviours, they turn an enjoyable activity into a valuable learning opportunity
- Assist in running a Bike Ed program in your child's school.

It is important that parents/carers ensure that everyone:



- wears an Australian Standard bicycle helmet when riding



- wears appropriate footwear and bright, light coloured clothing



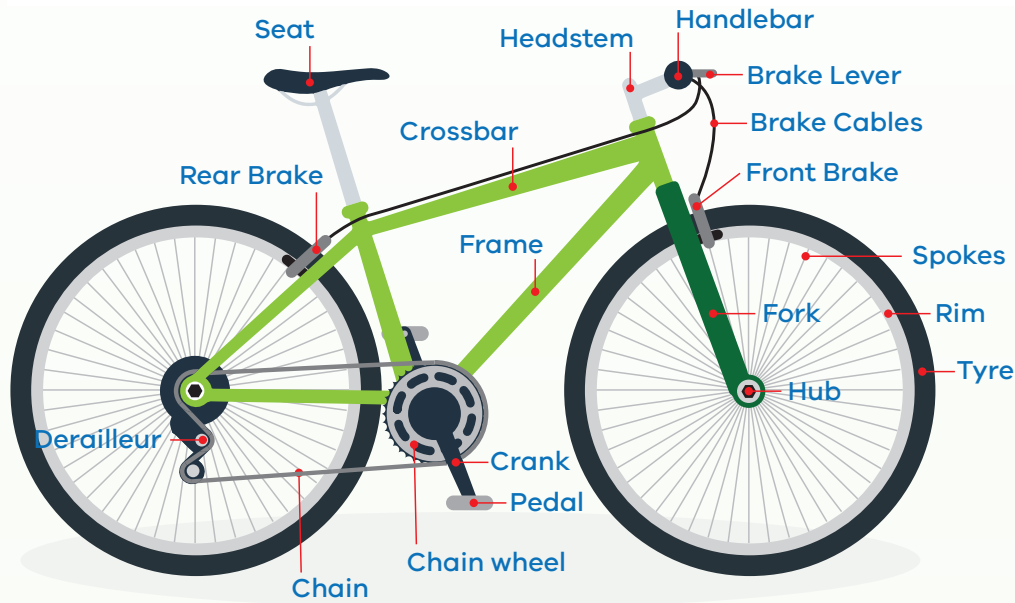
- keeps their bicycles in good working order



- follows all road rules and rides in a safe manner

*Before the age of 13 years children should not ride a bicycle on the road without adult supervision. Even when riding on footpaths and bike paths there are points at which roads need to be crossed. The reality is that most children, until around the age of 12 years, are still developing the skills to be able to ride safely in or near traffic.*





## Doing a simple bicycle safety check

*A simple safety check should be carried out regularly.*

Remember: Brakes, tyres and quick releases should be checked each time before riding. Children's bicycles should be the correct size and checked by you or at a bicycle shop to ensure all components are working effectively.

Bicycles need to be the right size for the rider. Buying a bicycle for a child to 'grow into' is dangerous. Use the information in this guide, and seek the advice of reputable bicycle retailers who will be able to help you to make the right choice.



### Size

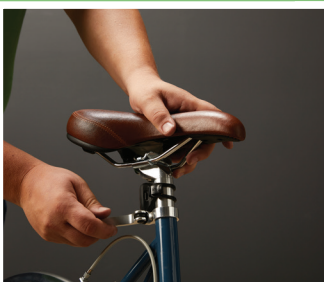
Riding a bicycle that is too big or too small can cause a child to lose control of the bicycle and may result in injury. The child should be able to straddle the bicycle with both feet flat on the ground. Clearance between the crossbar of the frame should be:

- three centimetres on a road bike
- five to ten centimetres on a BMX or mountainbike.



### Handlebar

Handlebar ends should be covered, as exposed handlebar ends can severely injure children in a fall, and handlebar grips must be secure. When seated, the rider's arms should be slightly bent and their knees should not hit the handlebar.



### Seat

A bicycle seat should be straight in line with the top tube.





### Warning device

Bicycles must have a bell or horn in working order that can be clearly heard.



### Brakes

Bicycles must have at least a working front or rear brake. When the brakes are applied, the wheels should not turn.



### Wheels and tyres

Look for loose wheel nuts or broken spokes, as these can cause the wheel to become unstable and dangerous when riding. Check that the wheels spin freely and that tyres are fully inflated and not worn. When pressed, if the tyre is pumped up enough, it will not depress. The recommended pressure is embossed on the wall of the tyre.



### Pedals

Check both pedals are not worn or damaged and that they spin freely when tapped sharply with your fingers. Check the crank is tight.



### Quick releases

Check that any quick release mechanisms on wheels are tight and folded upwards.



### Chain

Check the chain is clean, works smoothly without jumping and is not loose. Keep it lightly oiled and ensure it is dry and free of rust.





## Bicycle helmets- they're vital!

Every bicycle rider, and passenger, and scooter rider must wear an Australian Standard (AS/ NZS2063) bicycle helmet.

Research indicates that bicycle helmets greatly reduce the risk of head injuries, which are the major cause of death and injury to bicycle riders.

It is important everyone wears a helmet that is the correct size, fits firmly and comfortably when cycling both on and off roads. You are the best role model for your child so ensure you lead by example.

A helmet that does not fit correctly is unsafe, as it may move or slip off in a fall or crash.

As part of the *Bike Ed* program, a bicycle helmet check is carried out and children are shown how to correctly adjust and wear their helmet. The bicycle helmet check includes checking the condition of the outer and inner shell, the straps and fasteners, the correct position on the head and ensuring there is no cap or hat under the helmet.

## Choosing a helmet

Helmets come in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours. A helmet should sit down firmly and comfortably on a child's head without moving from side to side.

Let children choose the helmet that they like, as they will be more likely to wear it. If possible, have the helmet fitted correctly while in the shop.



## Looking after helmets

The helmet must be in good condition if it is to protect the rider, and helmets should be checked regularly for damage. Helmets that have been thrown around or treated roughly may need to be replaced. You should only clean helmets with water and mild soap to avoid damaging or weakening the helmet.

Refer to [www.vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au) for more information.

## What clothing to wear

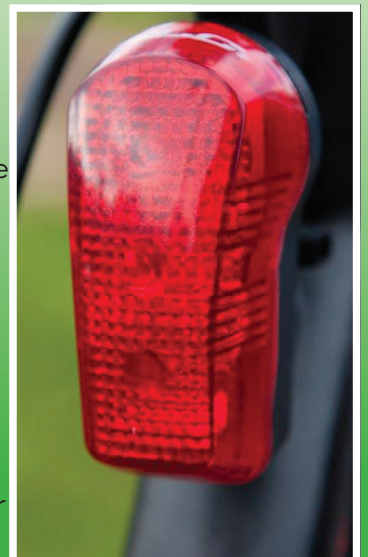
Wear light and bright coloured clothing when riding.

Wear enclosed shoes that have a non slip sole that provides traction. Keep laces tidy so they cannot get caught in the chain. It is not safe to ride barefoot, in thongs or sandals.



## When are lights needed?

Riding at night or in weather conditions where there is reduced visibility is not recommended. In these conditions, a bicycle must have a white front light and red rear light which can both be seen for 200 metres. The bicycle must also be fitted with a red rear reflector that is visible for at least 50 metres.







## Courtesy on paths

When riding on paths there are rules designed for everyone's safety:

- keep to the left of the path
- don't ride too fast or do anything unexpected
- let others know that you are approaching by using your bell or calling out
- give way to pedestrians
- obey signs along the path and ride in single file, especially on shared paths and footpaths
- ride side by side only when the path is wide enough and when it is safe.

## Be alert on paths

There are many things to watch out for when riding on paths, including:

- other path users - be extra careful near small children, older people and people with vision impairments
- dogs or other animals
- driveways, laneways or places where the path crosses a road
- hazards such as changes in the surface of the path, steep hills, puddles, pot-holes, blind corners and broken glass.

If a road has to be crossed, the rider should stop, dismount and walk across.

## Places to ride

Children under 13 years of age may ride on the footpath, and so too can adults if they are supervising bicycle riders under the age of 13. Riders 13 years or older must use bicycle paths or the roads, unless they are accompanying a bicycle rider who is under 13 years.

Footpaths are made for people to walk on and bicycle riders must be very careful when riding on them. Bicycle riders must ensure they keep left and give way to any pedestrians on the footpath, laneways or places where the path crosses the road. Parents/carers should talk about what this means for riding on a path and discuss possible strategies with their children.



It is recommended that children under 13 years of age do not ride on the road without adult supervision, until they have developed the understanding, skills and experience to cope with traffic. Adult supervision is essential until a child can demonstrate good bicycle control, behave safely when riding and show understanding of the road rules.

The checklist on this page should help parents/carers decide when their child is ready to ride without adult supervision.

An illustration of a brown clipboard with a silver clip at the top, holding a white sheet of paper. The paper contains the text of the checklist.

## Safe road riding checklist

To ride on the road safely your child needs to be able to:

- communicate with other road users and signal their intentions
- look ahead and scan the road and surroundings for potential hazards
- ride in a straight line, one metre out from the kerb or parked cars
- keep both hands on the handlebar, except when signalling turns
- plan to avoid heavy traffic areas and choose the safest route
- keep a safe distance from other vehicles in order to see and be seen
- understand and obey road rules
- wear a correctly fitted Australian Standards helmet without being reminded
- wear light and bright clothing and suitable shoes without being reminded
- ride responsibly with friends.

These skills and knowledge are taught as part of the Bike Ed program. However, parents/carers should make sure that children can demonstrate and show understanding of these points. Ideally, parents/carers and children should take the time to talk about and practise these skills together.