



# Active school travel

Active school travel benefits children and teenagers by providing an opportunity to engage in physical activity through walking, bike riding, or scooting on the school journey.

As most children and adolescents living in Australia do not meet national 24-hour movement guidelines, active school travel represents an important daily opportunity to increase overall physical activity levels.

Research shows active school travel helps students meet national physical activity guidelines, reduces risk of overweight and obesity, improves fitness, and reduces risk of cardiovascular disease later in life. Research also shows that active school travel benefits increased concentration, providing an increased readiness to learn.

Despite these benefits, only one-third of children living in Australia use active travel for at least part of their school journey.

Beyond physical health, active school travel contributes to mental well-being, social interaction, and academic performance.

Additionally, active school travel can reduce road congestion, traffic emissions, and air pollution, making it a crucial climate change mitigation strategy, while improving heart health across the community.

## Benefits of active school travel



Active school travel contributes to increased levels of physical activity, mental wellbeing, social interaction and academic performance...

and helps reduce road congestion, traffic emissions and air pollution



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Unfortunately, in Australia, participation in active school travel is low. The 2022 Australian Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Young People rated national active school travel levels a D+.

Barriers to active school travel include long travel distances, road safety concerns, inadequate infrastructure, and parental perceptions of personal safety.

The way neighbourhoods are designed can influence whether an area is oriented to driving or to walking and bike riding. It can also shape parental perceptions of safety in the area.

Urban planning solutions, such as increased walkability, lower speed limits, and dedicated cycling infrastructure, can facilitate active school travel.

To find out more, including the data and evidence, please read our 'Active School Travel' Discussion Paper on the Publications and Policies page:

[https://www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/resources/publications\\_and\\_policies](https://www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/resources/publications_and_policies)