

The Safe Migration Project

Starting Primary School

Make your child's journey to primary school a safe one with these important tips.

Try using active forms of travel and plan the safest route

Walking, scootering, or cycling are healthy and environmentally friendly ways to travel to school that can also be social and enjoyable. To do so safely:

- consider the safest route – **it might not always be the quickest**
- choose streets with low speed limits (ideally 40km/h or less)
- plan to avoid busy roads or complicated intersections
- choose the safest locations to cross roads, such as pedestrian crossings, traffic signals, pedestrian refuges, and areas where drivers can see you.



Stay close to children when walking

Young children lack the physical or perceptual skills to travel to school safely without active supervision. To be safe:

- stay close to children when walking or scootering to school
- always hold their hand when near traffic and while crossing roads
- role model 'Stop, Look, Listen, Think' when crossing roads.

Ride safely on scooters and bikes

If you choose to scooter or cycle to school:

- make sure you can actively supervise your child
- wear a helmet – it is a **legal requirement** for children and adults riding scooters and bikes to wear one
- helmets must meet Australian standards and fit correctly to provide proper protection – **they can reduce head injury risk by 74%¹**
- ensure you ride with a bell, an effective brake, and a rear reflector on bikes
- plan and choose the safest route by using footpaths on low-speed roads, bike and shared-use paths where available
- you can cycle on the footpath with your child if they are 12 years or younger.

¹ Bombach, M. R., Mitchell, R. J., Grzebieta, R. H., Olivier, J.
The effectiveness of helmets in bicycle collisions with motor vehicles:
A case-control study. Accident Analysis and Prevention. Issue 53, 2013.

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The 5-Step Test

Only when you can say **YES to all 5 steps** can your child move to an adult seat belt for that particular car.



Ensure your child is safe as a passenger

If you drive your child to school, it is important that:

- all children travel in the rear seats and use an appropriate child restraint or booster seat for their size
- children must use a booster seat until they **pass the 5-Step test** (see above), which is typically between 10 and 12 years of age
- booster cushions without a back must not be used because they do not provide head or side protection in a crash, and **are illegal**
- children enter and exit the car using the safety door – the rear passenger door, closest to the kerb, away from traffic.

Slow down when driving

Young children can be easily distracted and unpredictable when using the roads. They can also be hard for drivers to see because of their size. This makes children our most physically vulnerable road users.

- Slow down and take extra care when driving around school neighbourhoods to protect children.
- Driving below the sign-posted speed limit helps make children and school environments safer.

Consider where you park

- Park away from the school building and then walk to the school gate to reduce congestion and improve safety near school entrances.
- If you need to park near the school, use dedicated drop-off and pick-up zones and always follow parking rules.

The Safe Migration video resource



Scan this QR code to watch an engaging video that includes practical tips for parents and carers with children starting primary school.

Additional resources

Click the below links to learn more.

[Child car seats](#)

[Cycling with children](#)

[Bicycle helmets](#)

[Road Safety Education Victoria](#)