

# GREEN-SCHOOLS TRAVEL

ANNUAL REPORT 2025





### **An Taisce, The National Trust for Ireland,**

is the foremost environmental organisation in Ireland. Its range of interests extends from the natural heritage of land, air, water, flora and fauna, to the heritage of buildings and gardens. Through its local, national and international networks, it seeks to educate, inform and lead public opinion on the environment and influence policy and development. Strategies to achieve these aims include awareness and education programmes and campaigns such as:

- Green-Schools
- Green-Schools Travel
- Blue Flag
- Clean Coasts
- National Spring Clean
- Green-Flag for Parks
- LEAF – Learning about forests

### **SDG Ambassadors**

An Taisce was designated an SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Champion Organisation for 2023/2024 and in 2024 has achieved the status of SDG Ambassador, working to advocate and promote the goals. As an SDG Ambassador, An Taisce leads as an example of how organisations or groups can integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into their work and activities.



The Green-Schools Travel Programme is funded by the Department of Transport and supported by the National Transport Authority.



### **FEE (The Foundation for Environmental Education)**

seeks to promote environmental education by coordinating programmes and improving awareness of the importance of environmental education. It is composed of a network of organisations which undertake individual programmes in their own countries and participate in international efforts. An Taisce, as the Irish member of FEE, coordinates FEE international programmes in Ireland as follows: Green-Schools, GreenCampus, Blue Flag, Young Reporters for the Environment, Learning about Forests (LEAF).

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Message from the Director

The past year has been an inspiring one for the Green-Schools Travel programme, with schools across the country demonstrating what can be achieved when communities come together with a shared commitment to sustainable travel. Well done to every school that secured the Green Flag award this year for their work on the Travel and Global Citizenship Travel theme – your efforts are something to be really proud of, and we hope your achievements have been celebrated!

This success belongs to so many people. From pupils who changed their daily travel habits, to teachers and principals who championed the initiative, to parents, guardians and the wide community who supported the journey – your enthusiasm and creativity have brought this programme to life.

I would like to pay special tribute to our dedicated staff who work tirelessly to support schools nationwide. Their expertise, encouragement and innovation are the backbone of this programme.

The stories and projects featured in this report reflect the variety and ambition of the work taking place in schools. The positive impact is clear, and it reinforces why this programme remains so important. We are committed to ensuring this momentum continues in the years ahead.

My sincere thanks to the National Transport Authority, the Department of Transport and our Local Authorities, whose continued support enables this work to grow and thrive.



*Cathy Baxter, Director of Education and Community Action*

**-Cathy Baxter, Director of Education and Community Action**

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## Executive Summary

2025 was another strong year for the Green-Schools Travel Programme, as we continued to promote sustainable and active travel in school communities nationwide. Through school engagement, national events, and collaborative partnerships, we supported students, teachers, and families in reducing car use, improving air quality, and making active travel part of daily life.

Our direct work with schools remained central to our success. In 2025, we supported 610 schools, with Travel Officers delivering workshops, audits, and hands-on activities that helped build a positive culture around sustainable travel. These in-person interactions encouraged practical steps toward more sustainable choices.



*Allison Phillips, Green-Schools Travel Manager*

## Executive Summary, cont'd

National events again motivated action. The Big Travel Challenge in February encouraged schools to highlight the sustainable mode best suited to their area, with winners celebrated at Dublin Zoo. Bike Week in May brought cycling workshops and events to primary and secondary schools, followed by Scoot to School Week in June for younger pupils. National Walk to School Week, held during Climate Action Week in October, showcased the health and environmental benefits of walking. Clean Air Week in November further raised awareness of the link between travel habits and air quality.

Walkability Audits continued to play an important role, giving students the chance to assess their surroundings, advocate for safer routes, and better understand their influence in shaping their communities.

The programme also invested in longterm infrastructure. In 2025, schools received 770 new cycle parking spaces, 46 bike shelters, and 324 scooter parking spaces through Green-Schools Travel grants. These facilities support safe and secure active travel and will benefit school communities for years to come. Cycle Right training grants enabled 5,071 students to complete certified cycle training, boosting skills and confidence.

Partnerships remained key to our impact. We worked with Green-Schools Core and Safe Routes to School colleagues; local authorities; cycling and mobility advocates; environmental NGOs; Road Safety Groups; and local sports partnerships to enhance infrastructure and expand sustainable travel options. Work continued with Laois County Council and Portlaoise schools through the Portlaoise Cluster Project, using forums, training, workshops, competitions, and other supports to encourage active travel in all 10 schools.

Through the Department of Transport Public Engagement Pilot Initiative, we advanced the Bus in the City programme with a strategic rollout in 10 schools across Waterford, Limerick, and Cork. Engagement included route mapping, public transport literacy, hands-on bus experiences, and an art competition with winning pieces displayed on nearby bus stops.

Looking ahead to 2026, we will continue to support schools nationally while deepening engagement with local and national partners to advance sustainable travel. We will maintain our focus on travel habits that improve the health, wellbeing, and safety of school communities. For the first time, we will provide fully translated Green-Schools handbooks and a full suite of Irish language travel materials.

In 2026, we will streamline our calendar by reducing the number of national call to action weeks, helping schools focus on the travel modes and behaviourchange approaches most relevant to them. We will also continue supporting cycle and scooter parking development and Cycle Right training delivery with Safe Routes to School and Cycling Ireland.

We sincerely thank all schools, teachers, students, parents, and partners whose commitment made the programme's 2025 achievements possible. Your leadership in sustainable travel is helping to build a cleaner, healthier, and more resilient future for all.

**-Allison Phillips, Green-Schools Travel Manager**

# INTRODUCTION TO GREEN-SCHOOLS TRAVEL

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Since its establishment at national level in 2008, the Green-Schools Travel Programme has continued to play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable and active travel within school communities across Ireland. Funded by the Department of Transport and supported by the National Transport Authority, the programme enables schools to reduce car dependency through student led actions, practical learning, and meaningful community engagement.

The programme operates through the well established Green-Schools seven step methodology, which is a voluntary whole school approach that supports schools in setting targets, tracking progress, and involving students, teachers, families, and local stakeholders in driving behaviour change. The Green-Schools Travel Programme is delivered across three key themes: Travel, Global Citizenship Travel, and Travel Projects. Schools work on each theme for a two year period before achieving their corresponding Green Flag. As part of the Travel Programme, each participating school receives tailored support from a dedicated Green-Schools Travel Officer\*, who provides guidance, educational resources, experiential learning, and hands-on support. Travel Officers also represent both schools and the programme at community, Local Authority, and national levels, ensuring that student experiences meaningfully contribute to wider sustainable mobility efforts.

Participating schools range from small rural primary schools to large urban secondary schools, demonstrating the programme's adaptability and relevance across diverse educational settings. The Green-Schools Travel Programme aligns closely with key national strategies including the National Sustainable Mobility Plan, the Climate Action Plan, and the Road Safety Strategy, supporting national objectives for reducing emissions, enabling safer active travel, and encouraging more sustainable travel choices.

## Programme Objectives

The Programme aims to encourage students, parents and school staff to walk, cycle, scoot, use public transport or carpool instead of using the private car on the school run.

The key objectives of the Programme that support this aim are as follows:

- 1 To promote sustainable and active transport to school
- 2 To promote walking to school
- 3 To promote cycling to school
- 4 To promote non-electric scooting to school
- 5 To promote using public transport to get to school
- 6 To promote carpooling to get to school
- 7 To develop the #AndSheCycles Ambassador Programme in Secondary Schools
- 8 To empower schools to liaise and take action with relevant stakeholders

**\*Dedicated Green-Schools Travel Officers support schools in every Local Authority region.**

Carlow County Council	Chiara Hanrahan & Paula Carroll
Cavan County Council	Gerard O Callaghan & Rory Maguire
Clare County Council	Sarah Hegarty
Cork City Council	Lisa O'Grady
Cork County Council	Catherine Russell
Donegal County Council	Aengus Kennedy & Dolores McWeeney
Dublin City Council	Ellen Kissane & Anne Nospickel
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council	Julianne Pickard & Lorraine Flanagan
Fingal County Council	Rachel Mackarel
Galway City Council	Lorraine Farrell
Galway County Council	Laura Tannian & Lukasz Krzywon
Kerry County Council	Angela Wall
Kildare County Council	Paula Carroll
Kilkenny County Council	Chiara Hanrahan
Laois County Council	Michèle Castiaux & Chiara Hanrahan
Leitrim County Council	Ciaran Hussey
Limerick City and County Council	Angela Wall & Tania Lipper
Longford County Council	Ciaran Hussey
Louth County Council	Gerard O Callaghan
Mayo County Council	Lukasz Krzywon
Meath County Council	Rory Maguire
Monaghan County Council	Gerard O Callaghan
Offaly County Council	Michèle Castiaux & Laura Tannian
Roscommon County Council	Ciaran Hussey & Laura Tannian
Sligo County Council	Ciaran Hussey & Dolores McWeeney
South Dublin County Council	Julianne Pickard & Paula Carroll
Tipperary County Council	Edwina Coman & Chiara Hanrahan & Tania Lipper
Waterford City and County Council	Edwina Coman
Westmeath County Council	Rory Maguire & Michèle Castiaux
Wexford County Council	Chiara Hanrahan
Wicklow County Council	Lorraine Flanagan



# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2025

- **1,584** visits to schools were made by Travel Officers during the year
- **53,541** participant engagements; including 47,751 student engagements, 4,697 teachers and school staff, and 1,093 parents and caregivers.
- 41 schools participated in baseline surveys conducted by Travel Officers in October 2025. This amounted to 7,054 student responses from 300 individual
- **4 Travel Forums** were held by the Portlaoise Cluster Project



5 National  
**Call to Action**  
events were held

- 95 schools participated in the Big Travel Challenge in February
- 8,653 participants engaged in Bike Week in May
- 4,458 participants from 65 schools participated in Scoot to School Week in June
- 19,683 participants from 115 schools participated in National Walk to School week in October
- 128 schools participated in Clean Air Week in November

- 40 #AndSheCycles Ambassadors were awarded in May 2025
- 80 substantial actions were taken by #AndSheCycles Ambassadors to tackle the gender gap in cycling
- 134 #AndSheCycles Ambassadors from 16 schools were accepted in the 2025 intake in October



- 158 Walkability Audits were conducted by Travel Officers with students
- 65% of schools awarded in 2025 recorded an increase in the number of students walking



- 770 cycle parking spaces and 46 shelters provided to 33 schools 324 scooter parking spaces delivered to 14 schools
- 5,017 students received Green-Schools Travel grants toward cycle training in 2025



78 teachers and secondary school students attended 5 online Green-Schools Programme seminars in September 2025



89% of schools awarded for a travel theme in 2025 noted a decrease in car use in their applications



12 award ceremonies in 7 locations around Ireland, where 164 schools were awarded for their work on a Green-Schools Travel theme

## School participation in a Travel theme

Schools work on a travel theme for a minimum of two years. In any given school year, schools engaging in a travel theme will be at different stages of the programme: Schools that have completed a minimum of two years on a travel theme will progress to award status (May), schools progressing to a travel theme will be invited to commence (September) and schools that are currently working on the theme.

**In 2025, 595 schools worked on a Travel theme.**

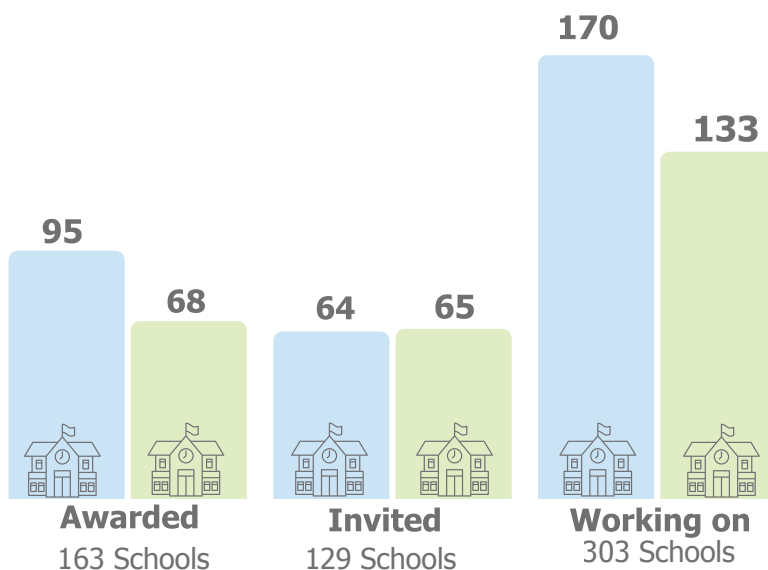
**163 schools were awarded for their work on a travel theme in May 2025.**

- **95** schools received their first travel flag: 58 primary schools, 33 post-primary schools and four non-mainstream schools.
- **68** received their second Travel Flag for Global Citizenship Travel: 63 primary schools and five post-primary schools.

**432 schools started or continued their work on a Travel theme in 2025.**

- **129** schools were invited to participate in a Travel theme in September 2025 :64 schools were invited to participate in their first Travel theme, and 65 schools were invited to participate in their second travel theme, Global Citizenship Travel.
- **303** schools continue to work on a Travel theme: 170 Travel, 133 GC Travel.

**A further 15 schools participated in Travel themed projects as part of the Green-Schools Projects Pilot.**



*School status within the programme in 2025 by travel theme*

# SEVEN STEPS IN MOTION



## Step One: Green-Committee

Our Green-Schools Committee is an active and enthusiastic group in our small three-teacher school in Northwest Donegal. Focused on the Travel theme, we work together to promote sustainable and safe travel options for our school community. We hold monthly meetings, where teachers and pupils from Junior Infants to 6th Class come together to discuss ideas, track progress, and plan activities. Our aim is to encourage walking, cycling, carpooling, and other eco-friendly travel choices to reduce our school's carbon footprint. Through fun initiatives, surveys, and awareness campaigns, we strive to make a real difference in how we travel while fostering a love for the environment among our pupils.

- Scoil Cholmcille (Murroe NS), Co. Donegal

## Step Two: Environmental Review

At the start of our travel flag, we conducted a hands-up survey in 1st to 6th classes to determine which was the most common mode of transport. We discovered that over 60% of children came to school by car, about 20% walked and around 10% cycled. Because a lot of children live in very close proximity to the school, we have bike sheds on the school grounds and cycle lanes outside the school grounds, we decided to focus on promoting walking and cycling to school.

- Ashbourne ETNS, Co. Meath

## Step Three: Action Plan

In our Green-School Committee meetings, we regularly examine and discuss our Action Plan for travel. This involves reading our action plan and ensuring we are on track. We have found that because we review and monitor this regularly, we tend to stay on track of our actions. We have found some very valuable data from repeated travel surveys. For example, we found the weather can hugely affect our active travel and that the senior end of the school is more active than the junior end of the school. Through repeating travel surveys and sharing the most active class with the rest of the school, we found that the numbers of active travel in the school have increased. This helps us to monitor active travel numbers. The principal announces the most active class on a given day via intercom and awards them a certificate for their efforts. These certificates help us to monitor the different year groupings progress, and we hope for all levels to eventually receive certificates.

- St. Marys Primary School, Enfield, Co. Meath

## Step Four: Monitoring & Evaluation

*We take part in Wow Days all year round. We keep a record of which class has the highest number travelling to school in a sustainable manner. The best class keeps the Golden Boot for the week. We have also been doing Scores on the Doors, and we have rewarded the best classes with a prize at the end of term. We took part in the No Idling Campaign and will be resurveying at the end of March to see if our Campaign has made a difference.*

*-Our Ladys GNS, Co. Wicklow*

## Step Five: Curricular Links

*The Global Citizenship Travel theme was particularly enjoyable and interactive over the two years. The support given from the travel officers has made the whole process really structured from a teacher/organiser perspective and very engaging and hands-on for the children. The workshops delivered were excellent, very informative and targeted. We as a school have enjoyed getting out for our WOW walks on a regular basis. It has increased our awareness of the importance of getting out and walking, not only for the good of the environment but also for our health and wellbeing. The older children loved teaching the younger children about road safety and supporting them on our walks. The cycle safety funding allowed our 5th and 6th class children to engage in the programme/course, and they got so much from it. We were delighted with the experience and plan to continue it for 5th and 6th on a bi-annual basis.*

*-Scoil Naomh Fursa, Co. Galway*

## Step Six: Informing and Involving

*On the First Friday of each month, the Green Team gather at the school gate in the mornings for our Feet First Friday Initiative. They play instruments (drums, cow bells, whistles) and chant to encourage the children to walk / scoot / cycle to school. We follow up our Feet First Friday campaign with regular Travel Surveys across all classes. The travel surveys help us to see the number of children who are walking, scooting, cycling, park & stride, carpooling or taking a private car to school. We document the results and communicate these to all classes. Classes are encouraged to improve on their results each month.*

*- Balbriggan Educate Together National School, Co. Dublin*

## Step Seven: Green Code

*We did a brainstorm and a group of students decided to write and record a rap called Green Code. The students then wrote out the lyrics, practiced and rewrote them until they were happy with it. They then booked the podcast room and recorded the rap. The resulting rap was included on our school's website.*

*- Kinsale Community School, Co. Cork*

# PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AND ACTIVE TRANSPORT TO SCHOOL

## Travel Surveys

The impact of the travel theme is measured through application data submitted by schools and standard hands-up surveys conducted by Travel officers with a sample of schools.

### Application Data 2025

Schools submit detailed applications relating to their work on a theme. This highlights their progress and outlines the actions and outcomes of their work. For Travel themes, schools are required to submit baseline and follow-on travel survey data collected as part of their work on the theme.

In March 2025, school journey data for 28,074 pupils attending 153 schools (119 primary, 33 post-primary and 1 special school) was submitted as part of the application process. This year, the modal split for school journeys based on the most survey data provided was 6,110 students walked to school, 6,325 students took the bus, 2,417 students opted to Park & Stride, and 1,413 students cycled.

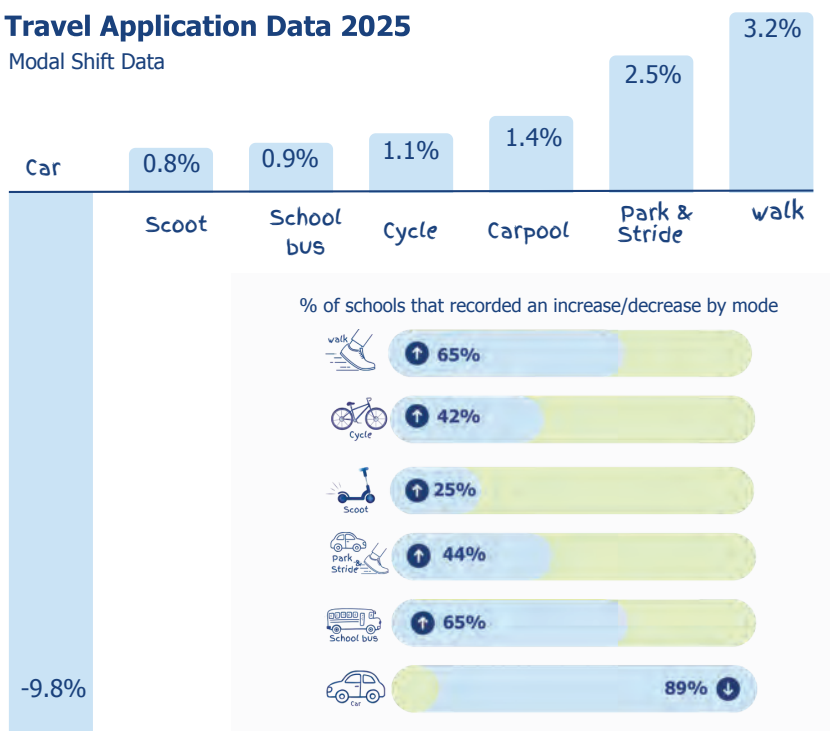
A modal shift of 9.8% away from car use and towards more sustainable modes was recorded by participating schools (see graph below). Data analysed from 153 schools indicated that 65% recorded an increase in walking and bus transport, 42% recorded an increase in cycling and 89% experienced a decrease in car use.

*'For our first survey, we surveyed 168 students. We discovered that 76 students came by car, 47 walked, 50 cycled, 20 took the bus and 5 came by other means. We were surprised that so many came by car. Since then, we have carried out several surveys and compared the results. For example, we regularly count the number of bikes parked at the school. On the day of our renewal visit, there were 105 bicycles parked outside.'*

-St. Kevins College, D11

### Travel Application Data 2025

Modal Shift Data



## Travel Survey Data 2023–2025

Travel surveys are conducted with a randomly selected sample of schools each year. These are completed as 'Hands up' surveys in class led by Green-Schools Travel Officers and are used to gauge the success of the programme. Baseline surveys are conducted in October of Year 1 and repeated in May of Year 2 following the school's completion of the theme. In addition, 'travel profiles' are also collected for both survey periods. These aim to collect general information about a school's location and provision for sustainable travel.



*A total of 3,628 students were surveyed*

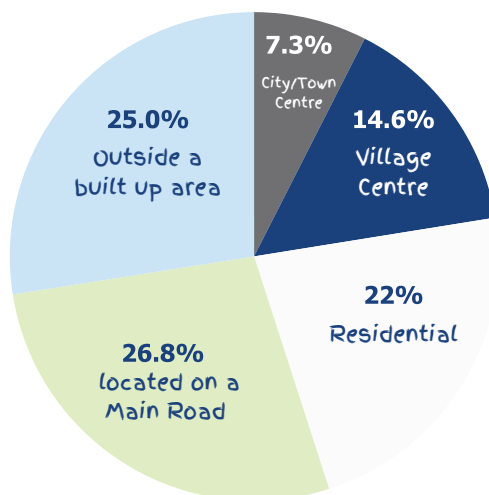
### Survey population

The survey cycle 2023–2025 was completed with schools (31 primary, 10 post-primary) from 19 Local Authority Areas. A total of 3,628 students were surveyed as part of the baseline survey and 3,521 as part of the follow-on survey.

### School locations

School locations varied where the majority of the sample was either outside a built-up area or on a main road. Only 21.9% were located in a city/town (7.3%) or village centre (14.6%).

Rural schools formed most of the sample with 24 schools (58.5%) and only 17 (41.5%) were considered to be in an urban environment.



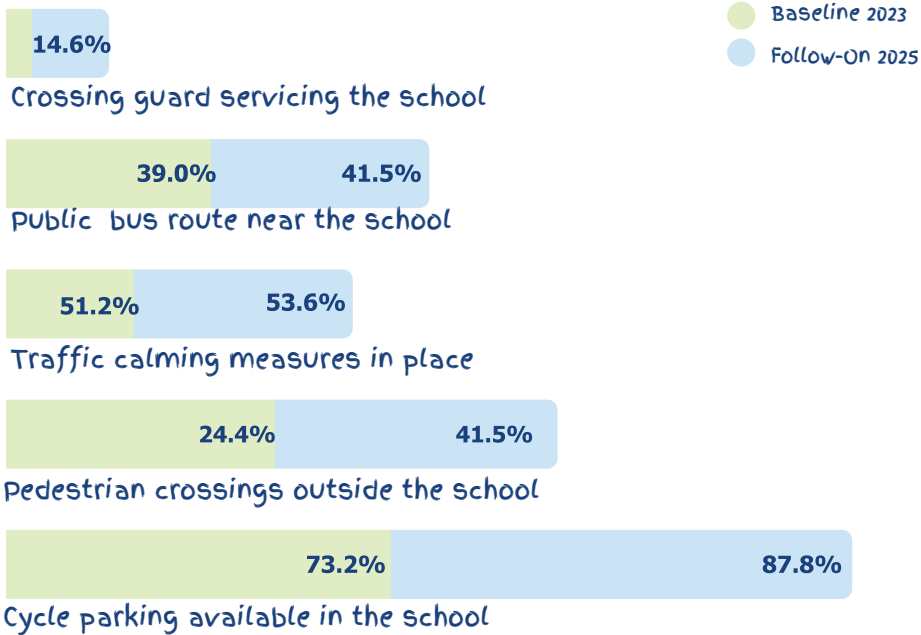
*Survey school locations 2023–2025*

## Provision for sustainable transport

An increase in pedestrian crossings, traffic calming measures, cycle parking and public transport were noted between survey periods. Hard infrastructure such as cycle lanes and footpaths remained the same. The number of crossing guards increased in both urban and rural locations from 4.9% to 14.6% within the survey period.



*The number of crossing guards increased by nearly three times in the period surveyed*



*Travel Survey 2023–2025 – Infrastructure*

## Travel Surveys

Classroom surveys generated mixed results for this survey period. Survey outcomes were separated by school location type rural/urban to match with scope for change and are illustrated in the graphs below.

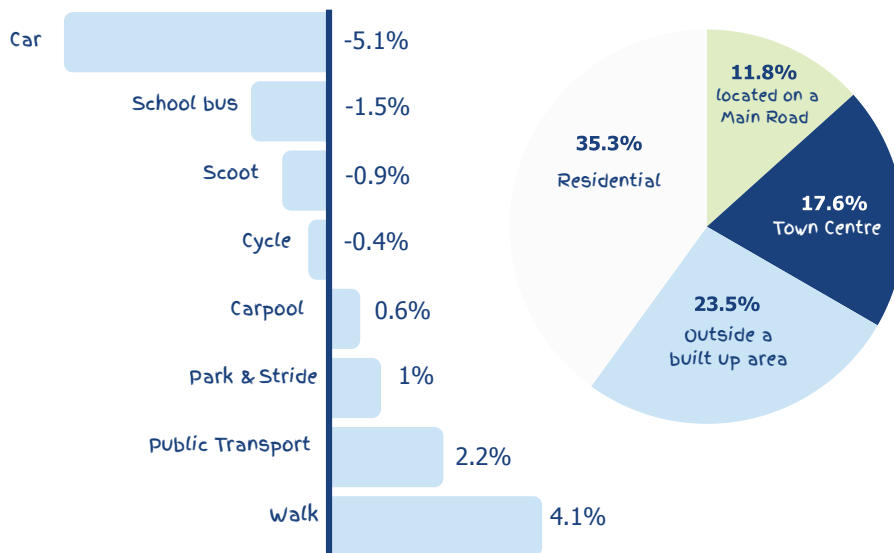
### Urban Schools

Surveys were conducted in 17 urban schools where 1874 students participated in the baseline survey in October 2023 and 1679 in the follow-on survey in May 2025. A modal shift of 5.1% away from private car use was noted for urban schools with corresponding increases in the uptake of walking and public transport. Cycling reduced slightly (-0.4%) as did school bus uptake (-1.5%). Of the urban schools surveyed, only 17.6% of urban schools were located in a city or town centre with 11.8% located on a main road.

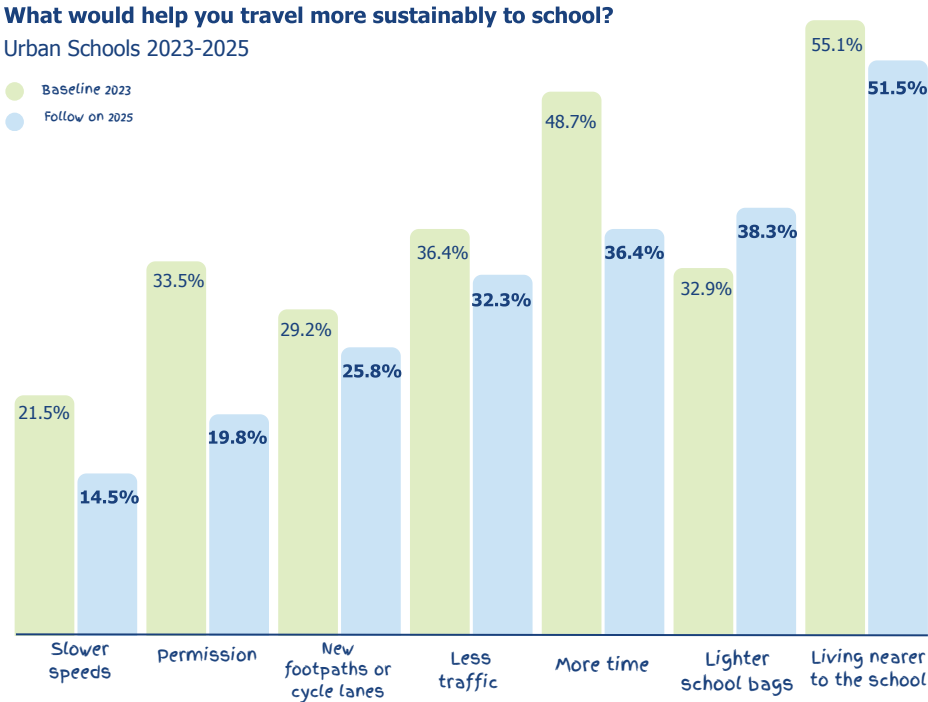


#### Urban Schools

Modal shift recorded in urban schools 2023-2025



Students that travelled by car (car, park & stride, carpool) were asked what would enable them to travel more sustainably to school. Baseline surveys conducted with 866 students were compared with responses from 718 students for the follow-on survey. Student perspectives on barriers to school journeys reduced for all questions, most notably in reference to speeding which reduced from 21.5% to 14.5%. Proximity to the school generated the highest response where 51.5% indicated that living nearer to the school would encourage them to walk/cycle/scoot more.



Measures that would support sustainable travel in urban schools

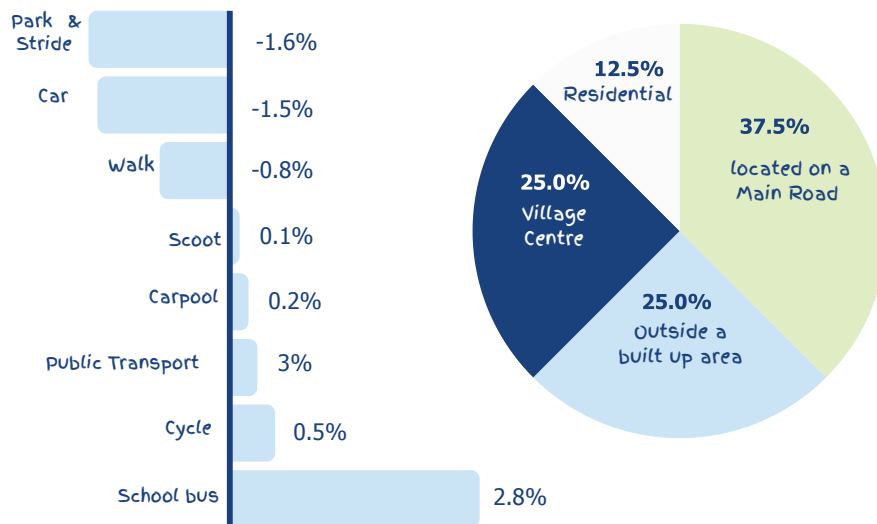
## Rural Schools

Surveys were conducted in 24 rural schools where baseline survey responses from 1754 students in October 2023 were compared with responses from 1842 students in the follow-on survey in May 2025. Modal shift for rural schools was limited for the 2023–2025 period where 37.6% were located on a main road and a further 25% were located outside a built-up area. A modal shift of -1.5% away from car use was achieved. Rural schools demonstrated a shift away from walking (-0.8%) and shift towards cycling (0.5%) within the survey period. It is likely that students that walked for the baseline switched to cycling when the follow-on survey was conducted. A greater modal shift of 2.5% and 3% towards school bus transport and public transport was achieved within the survey period.



### Rural Schools

Modal shift recorded in rural schools 2023-2025

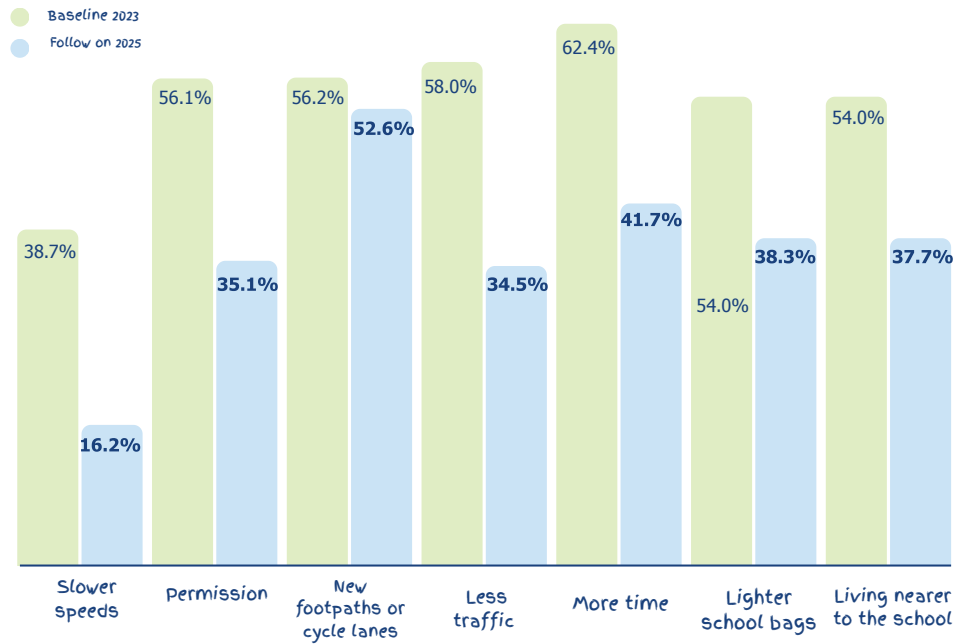


Travel Surveys 2023–2025 – Modal Shift recorded in rural schools

Students that travelled by car (car, park & stride, carpool) in rural schools were asked what would enable them to travel more sustainably to school. Baseline surveys conducted with 1106 students were compared with responses from 1109 students for the follow-on survey. Student perspectives on barriers to school journeys reduced for all questions, most notably in reference to speeding which reduced from 38.7% to 16.2%. The weight of school bags was considered a major factor which decreased from 54% to 38.3% within the survey timeline. Infrastructure remained a priority for rural students which remained over 50% (>580 students) for both surveys.

**What would help you travel more sustainably to school?**

Rural Schools 2023-2025



*Measures that would support sustainable travel in rural schools*

## Baseline Surveys 2025

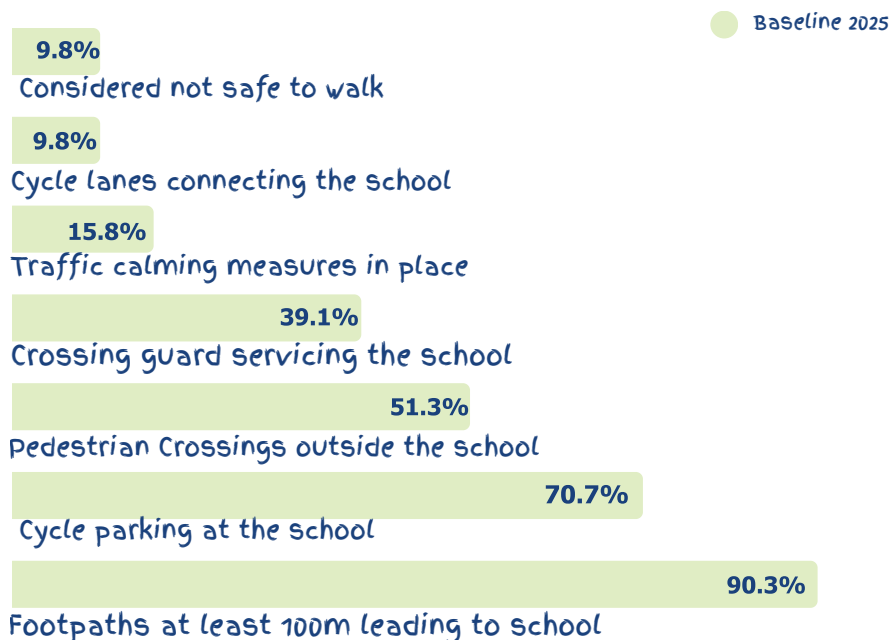
In 2025, 41 schools starting a travel theme in September 2025 were randomly selected to participate in the baseline travel surveys for the 2025–2027 cycle. A total of 333 individual ‘hands-up’ surveys were conducted with a mix of single and combined classes by Green-Schools Travel Officers in October 2025. The total population surveyed was 7054 students (3824 primary, 3230 post-primary)

### School location

73.3% of the schools surveyed were located in urban environments with the remaining 26.8% considered rural. In contrast to the 2023–2025 survey cycle, 45.3% of schools surveyed are located in a city/town centre location. A further 17.1% are located in a neighbourhood setting.

### Provision for sustainable travel









A summary of available infrastructure as collected through the school travel profile exercise for 41 schools is presented below. Over 90% of schools have footpaths at least 100m leading to the school, 51.3% have pedestrian crossings in place outside the school and 39.1% have a crossing guard in place at peak times. Four schools (9.8%) within the sample were noted as not being ‘safe to walk’ owing to infrastructural constraints. Over 70% have cycle parking in place but of these only 9.8% have cycle lanes connecting to the school.



Baseline Surveys 2025 – School Infrastructure

## Baseline Travel surveys 2025

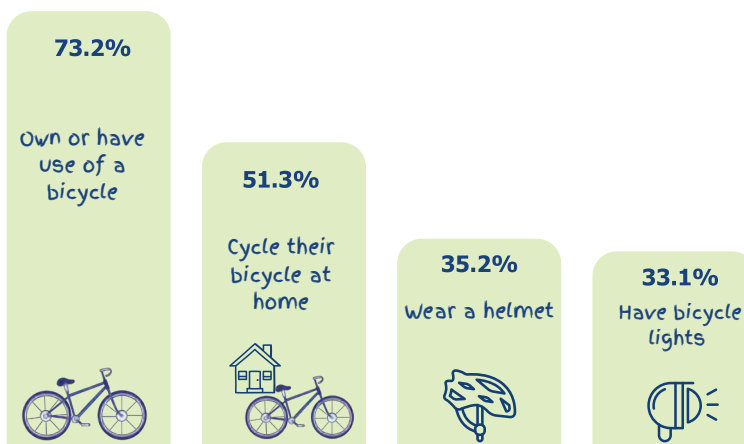
The modal split for schools starting a travel theme in September 2025 for journeys to and from school are presented in the table below. Active modes (walking, cycling, park and stride, scooting) and shared modes (public transport, carpooling, school bus) are used by 69.3% for journeys to school and 70.9% for journeys from school. Sustainable modes increase slightly for journeys from school which highlights opportunity for modal shift for the 2025–2027 survey cycle.

		To school		From school	
		No. students	%	No. students	%
Walk		1872	26.5%	2052	29.1%
Cycle		253	3.6%	302	4.3%
Scoot		58	0.8%	60	0.9%
Park & Stride		626	8.9%	485	6.9%
Carpool		283	4.0%	224	3.2%
Public BUS		336	4.8%	468	6.6%
School bus		1463	20.7%	1432	20.3%
Car		2163	30.7%	2031	28.8%

*Journeys to and from school in sample survey schools October 2025*

## Cycling behaviour

The majority of students (n=5167, 73.2%) have access to a bicycle but only 51.3% (n=3619) cycle their bicycle at home. The use of helmets is significantly low where only 35.2% (n=2481) of those surveyed indicated that they wear a helmet when cycling. Only 33.1% (n=2334) indicated that they have lights on their bicycle.



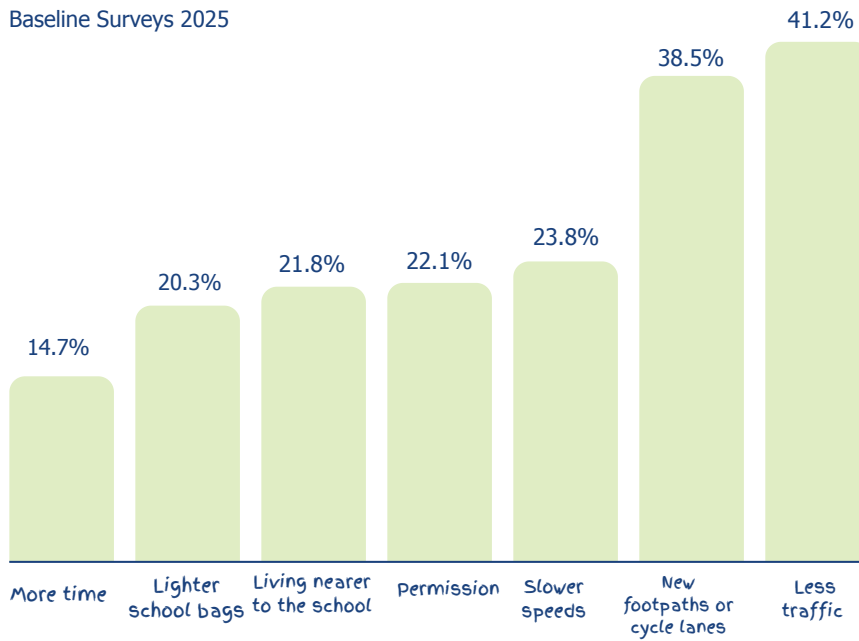
*Baseline Surveys 2025 – Cycling Behaviour*

## What would support the uptake of sustainable travel choices for school journeys?

Students were provided with a series of options that could support sustainable travel for school journeys. Of these, less traffic on the roads (n=2904, 41.2%) and a new footpath or cycle way (n=2712, 38.5%) were the most popular responses. Living nearer the school only accounted for 21.8% of the recorded responses.

### What would help you travel more sustainably to school?

Baseline Surveys 2025



Baseline Travel Survey 2025 – Measures to support sustainable travel

# CALL TO ACTION INITIATIVES

In line with our programme objectives, Green-Schools Travel organised a number of Call To Action initiatives throughout the school year.

## Programme Objective 1: Promoting Sustainable and Active Transport to school

### Big Travel Challenge

This year marked the 10th anniversary of the Big Travel Challenge, which asked schools to achieve a tangible increase in sustainable travel over a period of two weeks in February. As the competition ended on the 14th February, the event was given a Valentine's theme with schools encouraged to 'Love your Health, Love your Planet'. This year schools were encouraged to focus on multiple modes of sustainable travel, while creative alternative actions and efforts to raise awareness of sustainable travel were also recognised.

The county winner category was brought back again this year to encourage participation and foster friendly competition on a more local level. Another addition to this year's competition was the creation of bonus prize categories to invite schools to get creative and come up with innovative and novel ways to promote their chosen travel mode(s). These included prizes for Best Bus or Carpool Karaoke, Most Inspiring Social Media Post, Most Creative Alternative Sustainable Action, and the Staffroom Challenge.

This year also featured a 'social media takeover' over the two weeks to drive engagement and enthusiasm, and this showcased activities and actions being undertaken by various schools with the support of their Travel Officers for each of the nine days. It also encouraged schools to post their own images and videos of their actions to social media, mainly Instagram, so they could be re-shared by the Green-Schools Travel account @greenschools\_travel and serve as inspiration to other schools. One example included Killea N.S, the Most Inspiring Social Media Post winner, who posted videos for each day of the challenge that linked sustainable travel to the Valentine's theme in playful and creative ways.

From the county winners, four regional winners were selected. These regional winners were invited to the Big Travel Challenge Awards ceremony which took place on April 3rd in Dublin Zoo, where the national winner, Scoil Chríost Rí, Laois, was announced as Travel School of the Year. In addition to the wealth of alternative creative activities that schools undertook and shared, the schools who participated in the challenge demonstrated a significant modal shift in sustainable travel numbers over the course of the nine days.

The total baseline numbers of sustainable travel across the board increased **by 38% on Day 1 of the challenge, by 65% at the end of the first week, and finally by an 84% increase on the final day of the competition.** This was also despite reports of many schools encountering bad weather on the challenge's final day.



*Learn more about  
the Big Travel  
Challenge Winners  
here*



Big Travel Challenge Awards,  
Dublin Zoo, April 2025



Ireland's Travel School of the Year:  
Scoil Chríost Rí, Portlaoise, Laois



Kilmoyley NS



St. Paul's BNS, Castlereagh



Drumcondra NS,  
Eastern Regional Winner

## Clean Air Week

Now in its seventh year, Clean Air Week brings together primary and secondary schools across the country – mobilising students, teachers and school communities to raise awareness about air pollution and to take concrete steps toward reducing it. During the week, schools were encouraged to investigate the air outside their schools monitoring air quality, reflecting on transport-related pollution, and exploring how everyday choices (especially around travel and engine idling) affect the quality of the air we breathe.



*Learn more about  
Clean Air Week here*

A core focus for 2025 was encouraging an “investigative” enquiry into air quality outside schools. Schools were encouraged to record the number of vehicles idling outside their schools through a dedicated No-Idling Survey and to carry out a No Idling campaign to ask drivers to pledge to refrain from leaving their engines on while waiting outside the school gates. Clean Air Week also included engaging activities and competitions.

Secondary School students were encouraged to take part in a creative campaign initiative to raise awareness about premature deaths caused by poor air quality. There was also the option for secondary school students to investigate the air quality in their local vicinity by studying the data from the Environmental Protection Agency’s air quality stations and represent the data in a creative way. A collaboration with GLOBE Ireland provided Secondary School students and senior national school students the opportunity to be part of a webinar that included expert guest speakers from the EPA and the University of Galway. An art competition aimed at national school students promoting healthy lungs asked them to create expressive colourful art by blowing paint across a page creating abstract paintings.

Additionally, there was a range of downloadable resources: posters, toolkits (in English and Irish), air-quality science sheets, and tips for cleaner travel and reduced emissions.

The aim was twofold: to educate and empower young people to understand air quality issues – and to motivate practical action at school and community level (walking, cycling, public transport, switching off idling engines, planting trees, raising awareness etc.).

## Competitions

For Clean Air Week there were two main competitions: An art-based competition for national schools and a creative campaign on air quality awareness competition for secondary schools. Spot prizes were also given to schools participating in a No Idling Campaign as well as an Air Quality Investigation Project.



*Clean Air Week  
mascot, Carlos  
was named in the  
2024 competition*

## Stories

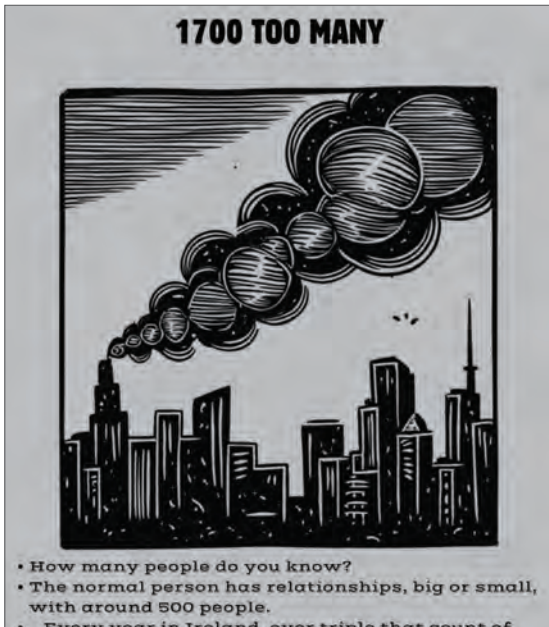
A Green-Schools Travel Officer in the midlands raised awareness in schools and the wider community by engaging with local media. Organising photoshoots outside schools and publishing articles with the Sligo Champion and Roscommon Herald.

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St. Josephs National School, Kingscourt, Co.Cavan, took part in a poster making workshop with their Green-Schools Travel Officer, with the focus on asking parents to switch their engines off when parked outside their school.



Rockfield NS, Sligo



## Programme Objective 2: Promoting walking to school

### Walk to School Week

For Walk to School Week, schools were asked to hold one or more WOW (Walk on Wednesday / Weekday) days where students and the rest of the school community made an extra effort to walk, or incorporate walking, on their journey to school. The theme focused especially on encouraging students, school staff and parents to include walking at any part of their route to school, whether in the form of walking, park and striding, or combining public transport and walking.

The theme of 'Making Connections' was at the forefront this year, which encouraged students to connect with nature, their locality, and other people during their walk to school. Pick 'n' mix resources for this theme were provided to schools to supplement their walking efforts.

**In total, 115 schools entered the WOW day competition with a total of 19,683 participants who incorporated walking into their journey to school were reported in the competition.** These participants included students, parents and school staff. It should be noted that many more schools are estimated to have taken part and did not enter into the competition.



Learn more about  
Walk to School  
Week here

### Walk to School Week Stories

**Foxford NS in Co. Mayo** – The whole school got into the spirit of National WOW Day this year, as 250 children and their teachers took to the streets of Foxford, splitting into two lively walking groups that filled the town with laughter and excitement.

Joining in the fun was Travel Officer Lukasz, who walked with one of the groups before engaging children in the "Journeys to School Around the World" presentation, helping them imagine what it's like for children in other countries to travel to school each day. They loved exploring how their own journeys compare to those of their global peers.

The school kept the momentum going all week, encouraging everyone to walk as much as possible and keeping a tally of daily walkers. Their impressive participation was submitted for the National Walk to School Week (NW2SW) competition, showing just how committed Foxford NS is to walking, wheeling, and sustainability.



Listen to Travel  
Officer Aengus on  
Newstalk

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### Post-Primary WOW initiatives

Gaelcholaiste Carraig Ui Leighlin organised a healthy breakfast for students who opted to walk or park & stride to school on the 7th of May, 2025. Their Travel survey showed that 10% of the student population, approximately 15 students, usually walk to school. However, for this WOW event, the school had 75 students walking – four times the average number. This initiative was a huge success and shows the impact the Green-Schools committee has had in encouraging and promoting walking to school over the two years of working on their Travel Flag.



Watch St. Mary's  
National School in  
Sandyford on RTE's  
news2day



St. Paul's BNS, Castlereagh



Kilrossanty NS, Waterford



Belcarra NS



Knocknagree NS,



Belcarra NS

## Programme Objective 3: Promoting cycling to school

### Bike Week

Bike Week 2025, held from 12–16 May, celebrated cycling across Green-Schools with creativity, collaboration, and strong student engagement. Travel Officers facilitated a wide range of events and workshops designed to promote cycling as a fun, inclusive, and sustainable mode of transport. 8,653 participants engaged in Bike Week.



*Learn more  
about Clean Air  
Week here*

Throughout May, 118 bike workshops were delivered, reaching 4,156 students nationwide. These sessions supported skill-building, safety awareness, and confidence on the bike. A highlight for secondary schools was the screening of *Love Song to a Bicycle*, an Irish documentary exploring cycling culture. The film sparked conversations about students' experiences and perceptions of cycling in Ireland. A national photo competition invited students to capture their connection to cycling, with entries from both primary and secondary schools showcasing creativity and enthusiasm.

On the 14th of May, the nationwide Cycle on Wednesday (COW) Day brought together 2,171 students from 32 schools, encouraging students to cycle to school as part of a collective celebration of active travel.

Larger-scale events added further momentum to Bike Week. Travel Officers, in collaboration with local authorities, Gardaí, and sports partnerships, hosted: school cycles (24 in total, with over 1,020 participants), female-only cycles for #AndSheCycles campaign, cycle buses, bike discos, and multi-modal journeys combining cycling with public transport

Group cycles ranged in size from 20 to 140 participants, with 16 school cycles taking place during Bike Week alone, engaging over 765 students. These events not only promoted cycling but also fostered a sense of community, independence, and joy among participants.

### Castlebar and Westport Bike Week Cycle Events

During Bike Week 2025, Castlebar and Westport hosted some of the most dynamic school cycle events in Mayo, engaging 406 students with the support of 50 volunteers. Coordinated by the local Travel Officer, and supported by Mayo Sports Partnership, Gardaí, Mayo County Council, parents, and community volunteers, the events offered students (from 1st class to Transition Year) a chance to cycle safely in their local areas.

In Westport, joint school cycles brought together 156 students from Quay NS, Scoil Phádraig, Holy Trinity, Gaelscoil Westport, and Sacred Heart Secondary School. The large group of cyclists made a visible impact on town traffic, highlighting the growing presence of young cyclists.

In Castlebar, students from Castlebar PS, Snugboro NS, and Gaelscoil Raifteirí participated in a joint cycle involving 88 pupils, while Cong NS contributed 70 students across two rounds. Additional schools, including Foxford NS, Culleens NS (Ballina), and Barnacarroll NS, added a further 92 participants to the county-wide celebration.

These events showcased the power of collaboration and community in promoting cycling, and demonstrated the enthusiasm of Mayo's schools in embracing active travel.



Bike Week, Castlebar



Bike Week Killarney



Ursuline College



Salthill NS, Bike Week



Bike Week, Castlebar



St. Aloysius Secondary School

## 2025 Bike week events throughout the country

Travel Officer Aengus, organised 2 cycle events with funding support from Donegal Sports Partnership. Classes from Termon NS went to Glenveagh National Park, 2 classes on two separate days. The park provided free buses as the roads are dangerous for cyclists in their area. Bikes were hired for all students, and they completed a 16km trip through the park, some having never experienced cycling before outside of cycle right training.

Travel Officer Ciaran supported Scoil Mhuire Convent, Longford, with a school cycle. The girls from Scoil Mhuire, also involved in the #AndSheCycles Ambassadors Programme, collaborated on a joint cycle with St. Mel's, a boys secondary school. It was a first for Scoil Mhuire as they hadn't undertaken a group cycle before and they thoroughly enjoyed it.

Travel Officer Sarah, attended a 6km fun cycle organised by Annagh NS, with the whole school bringing their bikes on the day (with the exception of junior classes). 25 participants plus teachers.

Travel Officer Ellen supported Gaelscoil Inse Chóir with their weekly Cycle Bus twice during Bike Week and had a cycle racing track on their school grounds.

Travel Officer Lucy organised a whole school cycle with Scoil Mhuire Rosslare.

**Over 140 students** from Scoil Mhuire Wexford participated in a school 'cycle bus' on the 16th May 2025. Escorted by An Garda Síochána and parents, the group cycled 1.6km from the beach car park to school.

As part of Bike Week, Travel Officer Michèle joined Portlaoise College on their BIG CYCLE attended by **50+ students cycling** around Portlaoise town with the support of the Portlaoise Gardaí. Portlaoise Educate Together also organised a bike disco attended by over **60 cyclists**.

## **Celebrating cycling infrastructure**

A city cycle was organised for National COW Day on 15 May 2025, giving students from St. Aloysius Secondary School in Cork the opportunity to try TFI bicycles. Five 3rd year students and two teachers from the Green-Schools Committee cycled from the school to the Lee Fields with their Travel Officer for a student organised picnic. The group had first noticed the TFI bike stand during their Walkability Audit earlier in the year and were keen to use the bikes. Through stakeholder engagement with TFI, bicycles were provided for the event.

For some students who had not cycled in several years, the trip offered a supportive way to rebuild confidence on safe cycle paths through the city before reaching the scenic Lee Fields. Following the positive experience, the students now plan to promote TFI bikes as a way to travel to school and to local destinations such as the library, parks, and greenways.

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## **Mix your mode**

The Green-Schools Committee at Millstreet Community School, supported by their Green-Schools Travel Officer, organised a unique Bike Week activity in May 2025. Using local public transport networks, students travelled by train from Millstreet Station to Killarney, with rail travel kindly sponsored by Iarnród Éireann. Upon arrival, the group undertook a cycle, exploring off-road trails and taking a short hike to Torc Waterfall. This was followed by a brief paddle in the lake and a picnic along the shoreline.

Throughout the day, the Travel Officer provided insights into the local flora and fauna and encouraged the group to follow Leave No Trace principles and remain mindful of their environmental impact. The committee returned to Millstreet by train, concluding a valuable learning experience that combined sustainable and active travel with an appreciation of Killarney National Park.

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## **Mix your mode**

The Green-Schools Committee at Regina Mundi College organised a Sustainable Travel Action Day to encourage students to engage with a variety of sustainable transport modes. As part of the activity, the group walked from the school to a local bus stop, took a city bus to Kent Station, and continued by train to Midleton. There, they hired bicycles and cycled the newly opened greenway, giving students the chance to experience safe and accessible cycling infrastructure.

The event provided a practical demonstration of the sustainable travel options available in Cork and helped students build confidence in cycling in a supportive environment. As participants in the #andshecycles ambassador programme, the committee used the activity to promote cycling among students who may be more hesitant to cycle, including many who identify as female.

To further support the initiative, the committee created promotional materials, including eye-catching posters and a student competition, which helped boost engagement and visibility across the school community.

## Cycle Training Grants

Green-Schools Travel continues to support the development of practical cycle safety and skills through funding for Cycle Right Training—Ireland’s national standard for cycle education, supported by the Department of Transport, the Road Safety Authority, and Cycling Ireland.

Eligible schools can apply for a grant of €10 per student, up to 60 students, to receive eight hours of cycle training from an approved provider. This training equips students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to cycle safely to school or for leisure.

In 2025, this funding remained open to schools actively working on the Travel theme or schools that had previously been awarded their travel flag. Over the course of the year, 144 schools, representing 5,017 pupils nationwide, received Cycle Right grants through Green-Schools Travel.

## Cycle Parking

Green-Schools Travel (GST) has been supporting schools with cycle parking infrastructure since 2011. Since partnering with the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programme in 2021, GST has significantly scaled up its delivery efforts. Since 2021, cycle parking has been provided to 392 schools, resulting in the installation of 6,250 cycle parking spaces and 402 shelters nationwide. In 2025, cycle parking was delivered to 44 schools. This included the installation of 770 cycle parking spaces and 46 shelters, for a total investment of €464,493.96.

The partnership between GST and SRTS is set to continue into 2026, with further infrastructure delivery planned.



*The installation of the bike rack has also made a noticeable improvement, preventing students from leaving their bikes on the public footpath and keeping the area clear of obstructions. The students have also really enjoyed getting bike licenses, they have mentioned how this is the first licence they will get before a drivers’ licence. Both pupils and teachers have gained confidence as the program has progressed, contributing to its overall success. This initiative has also helped build a strong sense of community within the school, uniting students, staff, and local partners around a common goal.*

**-St. Felims National School, Co. Cavan  
(Travel School Awarded 2025)**



## Programme Objective 4: Promoting non-electric scooting to school

### Scoot to school Week

From 9th–13th June, schools across Ireland embraced Scoot to School Week 2025, a national initiative promoting scooting as a fun, active, and sustainable way to travel. A total of 65 schools participated, with 4,458 students taking part in Scoot on Wednesday (SOW) and Scoot at School (SAS) events.

Travel Officers delivered 159 scooter skills workshops, reaching 3,196 students with sessions that included road safety training, scooter games, and helmet fitting. Two key resources supported the week: the Obstacle Course Challenge Pack, encouraging on-yard scooting fun, and the story of Scotty the Scooting Snail, which highlighted the benefits of scooting in a playful, accessible way.

To boost engagement, a national call-to-action email was sent to over 3,300 primary schools, and top-performing schools were awarded Micro-Scooter prizes for uploading their participation data.

Scoot to School Week 2025 successfully combined education, fun, and community spirit—encouraging thousands of students to get active and rethink their daily journeys.

### Scooter Parking

Green-Schools Travel (GST) has been supporting schools with scooter parking infrastructure since 2011. Since partnering with the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programme in 2021, GST has significantly scaled up its delivery efforts. Since 2021, scooter parking has been provided to 108 schools, resulting in the installation of approximately 2,682 scooter parking spaces nationwide. In 2025, scooter parking was delivered to 16 schools, for a total investment of €14,232.96.

The partnership between GST and SRTS is set to continue into 2026, with further infrastructure delivery planned.



*Learn more  
about Scoot to  
School Week here*

## 2025 Scoot to School Week events throughout the country

Team Lead Lukasz facilitated a scooter workshop at St. Anthony's Special School in Castlebar as part of S2SW. Ten children with varying abilities, supported by their SNAs, participated in the session, which began with a discussion on their scooting experiences and safety. The children then practised key skills such as balancing, dismounting, and ducking. Both the students and their assistants were highly engaged and pleased to take part in the workshop.



Travel Officer Rachel delivered scooter workshops at St. Canice's GNS, Finglas, as part of National SOW Day. The school used the event to encourage active travel and promote their upcoming Active Week, with plans for a second SOW Day during that time. All second-class students took part in the workshops, which included discussions on road safety and proper helmet use, followed by on-yard scooter skills and games. For students without scooters, a bike/scooter-themed treasure hunt was organised. Older members of the Green-

Nestled in the hills of Tipperary, Lis na mBroc is a small rural primary school. To mark S2SW, the school invited Team Lead Chiara in to deliver some fun scooter sessions. Inspired by Scotty the Snail, even some of the more nervous participants were scooting with smiles in no time.



Catherine McAuley Junior School



Sacred Heart NS scooter skills



Catherine McAuley Junior School



Rathoe National School



Barnacaroll NS

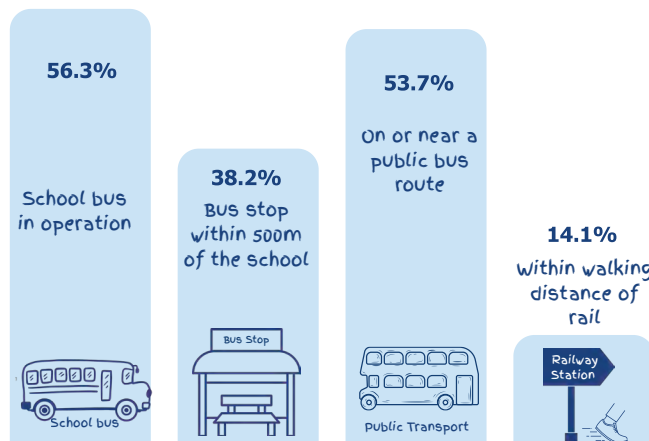


Scoil Mhuire Leixlip

## Programme Objective 6: Promoting using public transport to get to school

In 2025, Green-Schools Travel placed a focus on developing public transport initiatives and the promotion of bus safety in participating schools. This included classroom engagements, bus stop audits and interactive workshops on public buses and local link services. In addition, the programme worked in partnership with the Department of Transport and National Transport Authority to further develop the Bus in the City concept piloted in 2024.

School profile data gathered from 497 schools that worked on a travel theme in 2025 indicated that 53.7% were located on or near a public bus route, 38.2% were within 500m of a public bus stop and 14.1% were within walking distance of a railway station. Over 56% of schools surveyed had a school bus or private bus in operation. Few schools have a school bus policy in place and staff surveys indicated a low awareness of local public transport services in the locality.



*Public Transport Infrastructure in participating schools 2025*

### Bus in the city

In 2025, Bus in the City was developed further as part of the Public Engagement Pilot Initiative (PEPI) under the Department's Climate Action & Sustainable Mobility Public Engagement Strategy 24' – 25'. This project is one of four public engagement pilot projects led by the Department of Transport as part of the above strategy.

Bus in the City aimed to engage 468 students from 4th – 6th class attending 10 primary schools in Cork, Limerick and Waterford with local public transport networks. Three further schools will act as 'control' schools to measure the impact of the intervention. The project was delivered by Green-Schools with support from the National Transport Authority from November 2025 to January 2026 and will be evaluated by Aecom in January 2026 and June 2026. A summary of work undertaken in 2025 is as follows:

- Support in school selection criteria, design and evaluation methodology
- Lesson plan design and workshop development tailored to school localities.
- 13 introductory meetings with principals and staff in participating schools.

- 20 general workshops were delivered in November 2025 with 468 students which aimed to explore the benefits of public transport in a world café style workshop. This promoted peer-to-peer discussions about the various facets of public transport.
- A bus stop art competition was launched with all schools where over 400 entries were submitted from all three regions. These will be placed on display at local bus stops in January 2026.
- Two busability workshops were delivered in December 2025 with 60 students from Scoil Mhathair De, Limerick where students explored various travel planning methodologies (TFI Journey Planner, Bus Eireann Timetables) and learned how to use a LEAP card.
- 55 students from St. Catherines NS, Cork City took an active public bus service to the cinema as part of their engagement in the Bus in the City project.

Looking ahead to 2026, busability workshops and bus field trips will be conducted with remaining schools including staff and parental workshops. All schools will participate in travel planning and fieldtrips on active bus transport links in January 2026. These will be detailed in the Green-Schools Travel Annual Report 2027.

## **Public Transport Workshops**

### **Direct engagement with public bus infrastructure**

Strong connections were made between Green-Schools Travel and City Direct Bus Operators during the Kilkenny Bus in the City Pilot in 2024. This led to the delivery of a special workshop for the School of the Holy Spirit, Co. Kilkenny on April 2nd, 2025.

Located in Kilkenny City, this special school caters to students with autism and has shown a proactive interest in public transport. Actions implemented include a student-led campaign advocating for a bus stop outside the school. In April 2025, the school collaborated with Green-Schools Travel, City Direct, and An Garda Síochána to host a tailored Bus in the City style workshop. The students were collected outside the school where they were provided with the opportunity to explore the vehicle in a calm and familiar environment. This was followed with talks on the benefits of public transport, including the use of Leap cards, JAM (Just A Minute) cards, and strategies for managing delayed services. Students were encouraged to ask questions and share concerns, leading to thoughtful discussions and high engagement throughout the day. It is hoped that this partnership with City Direct will be built upon again in 2026.

## **Other public transport events 2025**

### **Building experiences on Local Link Services**

Participation in public transport workshops grew in 2025, reflecting an increased interest among schools in exploring local transport options. Students from two schools participating in a travel theme took part in activities designed to encourage greater engagement with local link public transport services.

#### **Kilcrohane NS, Co. Cork**

Students from Kilcrohane National School, located on the Sheep's Head Peninsula in rural County Cork, participated in a trip on the Local Link bus service to Bantry in 2025. With support from their Green-Schools Travel Officer, students reviewed the bus timetable, leap card options and identified their nearest stop in preparation for their journey. For many younger pupils, this was their first time travelling by bus. Junior classes took the bus to the local library for a craft and story time session. Older classes used the service to travel to Bantry and completed the Bécín Looped Walk.

#### **Kilfinnane National School, Co. Limerick**

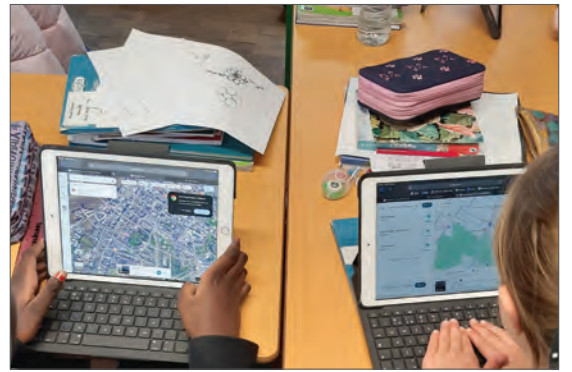
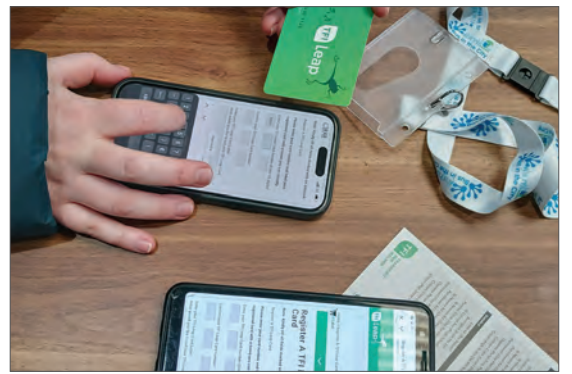
Building on the success of the Bus in the Country pilot initiative introduced in 2024, junior infant students from Kilfinnane National School organised a trip on the Local Link bus service to Kilmallock Library to celebrate World Book Day on 15 March, 2025. Through the Travel theme, the school has explored both commercial and Local Link services as viable options for school trips, opening up new opportunities for learning experiences beyond the classroom.



School of the Holy Spirit, Kilkenny



Kilcrohane NS, Cork



School of the Holy Spirit, Kilkenny



St. Catherine's, Cork City

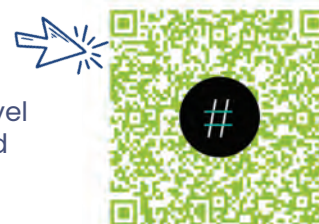


St. Catherine's, Cork City

## Programme Objective 6: Developing the #AndSheCycles Ambassador programme in Secondary Schools

### #AndSheCycles

The #AndSheCycles Programme, launched in 2019, is a Green-Schools Travel campaign that provides a platform for teenage girls to explore, understand and address the barriers that are preventing them from cycling to school.



Learn more about  
#AndSheCycles  
here

### What is the #andshecycles Ambassador Programme?

Across Ireland, census data from 2016 revealed that just one in every 250 teenage girls cycled to school every day, compared with 1 in 25 boys, so it was evident that cycling for girls was not nearly as accessible as cycling for boys. On foot of this statistical revelation, the #AndSheCycles campaign and Ambassador Programme were formed. The most recent census (2022) indicates a shift in a positive direction, with 1 in every 131 females between 13-18 now commuting to school by bicycle. However, with 1 in 17 boys now cycling, a significant gender gap remains.

The #AndSheCycles Ambassador Programme engages with students across the country to challenge out-dated perspectives while also addressing the current concerns of the modern teenager in relation to cycling. This unique programme supports student leaders to take action within their school environment and wider community to enable and empower teenage girls to cycle to school.

Focused on teenage girls and inclusive of trans and intersex women and girls, as well as non-binary and gender fluid students (who are comfortable in a space that centres the experience of young women), the #AndSheCycles campaign provides a platform for peer-led discussion about actions to close that gap.

### 2024/2025 Timeline:

The 2024/25 school year marked the completion of the fifth year of the #AndSheCycles Ambassador Programme. The programme was open to all secondary schools actively working towards their Green-Schools Travel or Global Citizenship Travel flag award, or schools previously awarded for either theme. With a target of 100 ambassadors for the 2024/25 year, 97 students accepted a position onto the programme across 12 schools and Youthreach groups, spanning 11 counties.

In **October**, two training days were held in Dublin and Limerick with 59 ambassadors attending either event. The event allowed students to vocalise shared concerns and experiences around cycling. Under guidance from #AndSheCycles team members, ambassadors addressed relevant barriers with potential solutions that then began to form the basis of their action plans for their respective schools. A vision board collage activity encapsulated thoughts and attitudes expressed throughout the day.

The first online network gathering in **November** covered skills development in leadership and communication. Hannah Craig from the HerMoves campaign spoke about leadership qualities from a female perspective, and Green-Schools Communications Coordinator Sheila McCormack-Cooney gave tips for concise and effective campaigning through various media.

The #AndSheCycles team members visited ambassador schools during **January** as a new support feature within the programme for the year, to provide extra guidance heading into the action implementation period (January to end of March approximately). Ambassadors were able to share their updates on their planned actions, discuss potential obstacles or concerns around achieving their objectives. Team members were able to provide advice and direction specific to each school, and programme participants responded positively to the visits in subsequent feedback.

Ambassadors were invited to Dublin in **mid-February** for the second network gathering at Sundrive Velodrome located at Eamon Ceannt Park. Ambassadors experienced a day of cycling together on the outdoor track, as well as receiving essential bike repair training from instructors at The Bike Hub.

International Women's Day: The third network gathering of #AndSheCycles ambassadors in **March** in celebration of International Women's Day was held online, with speakers Karen Moore of Maynooth Cycling Campaign and Elmarie O'Brien, a young amputee cyclist and outdoor adventurer. Ambassadors from six schools attended the webinar. Karen covered a wide range of experience from her own cycling journey to her two young daughters' evolving relationship with cycling, to work as a campaigner for cycling in Maynooth. Elmarie "Ellie" engaged everyone in a game of Bike Bingo, challenging the ambassadors to see how many cycling related activities they could cross off on the list, while sharing an interesting story of her own for each topic.

#### **#AndSheCycles Awards:**

The 2024/25 programme culminated in an awards ceremony in Galway in **May** with seven schools attending, along with 11 supervising teachers. 69 ambassadors were presented with their medals and certificates, 40 in person and 29 in absentia. St. Louis' Secondary School Carrickmacross was named Ambassador School of the Year. Each of the 11 portfolios submitted were on display at the ceremony along with the vision boards from the training event, allowing ambassadors to celebrate each other's efforts. Ambassadors from St. Louis Secondary School in the following weeks spoke on the Claire Byrne show about winning Ambassador School of the Year and what the campaign helped them to achieve.

## 2025/26 Timeline:

In **September**, the #AndSheCycles programme was launched for the 2025/2026 school year. The programme received a high number of applications, and 17 schools were selected, representing 134 student ambassadors, the largest cohort to date.

The selected schools span the following counties: Galway, Carlow, Kilkenny, Athlone, Limerick, Clare, Dublin, Meath, and Laois.

On 11 **November**, the team delivered the first in-person training event at the Midlands Park Portlaoise Hotel, welcoming 83 ambassadors. Schools unable to attend received on-site training, ensuring that all participating schools completed their ambassador training.

On 3 **December**, an online network gathering took place, during which Communications Coordinator Sheila led a storytelling workshop. Practical tips were shared for strengthening their own campaigns and how to capture their story through media such as video and photography.

This year also marked the introduction of a new digital portfolio format via Canva. The team reviewed the updated approach with ambassadors and provided a video tutorial to support them in creating their submissions. From January through May, Travel Officers will carry out school visits to check in with ambassadors, assess campaign progress, and provide support as needed. In March, the programme will host its in-person cycling events, with final planning currently underway. Portfolios are due on 23 April, and the programme will culminate with the annual awards ceremony in early May, celebrating the achievements of all ambassadors.

## Stories

### **Portlaoise College AndSheCycles Ambassadors chatting with Laois Environmental Officer Sam McLeod on all things cycling**

The #AndSheCycles ambassadors from Portlaoise College recorded a special podcast episode featuring a conversation with Laois Environmental Awareness Officer, Sam McLeod. The discussion focused on encouraging more girls to cycle to school and explored the broader cycling landscape across Laois.

During the episode, the ambassadors shared their own experiences and highlighted both the challenges and opportunities for making cycling more accessible for girls.

They also spoke about their Pink Cycle initiative, designed to create a fun, visible, and supportive event that encourages girls to cycle together. Through events like this, the ambassadors hoped to shift perceptions and show that cycling can be both enjoyable and empowering.

One ambassador reflected on her daily cycle to school, saying, "I feel really refreshed and in a better mental state to go into school."



*Listen to the  
podcast here*



Ambassadors from Regina Mundi College, Portlaoise



Sundrive Velodrome, February 2025



St. Joseph's Rush, Co. Dublin



Bike Repair training, February 2025



#AndSheCycles Awards in Galway, May 2025

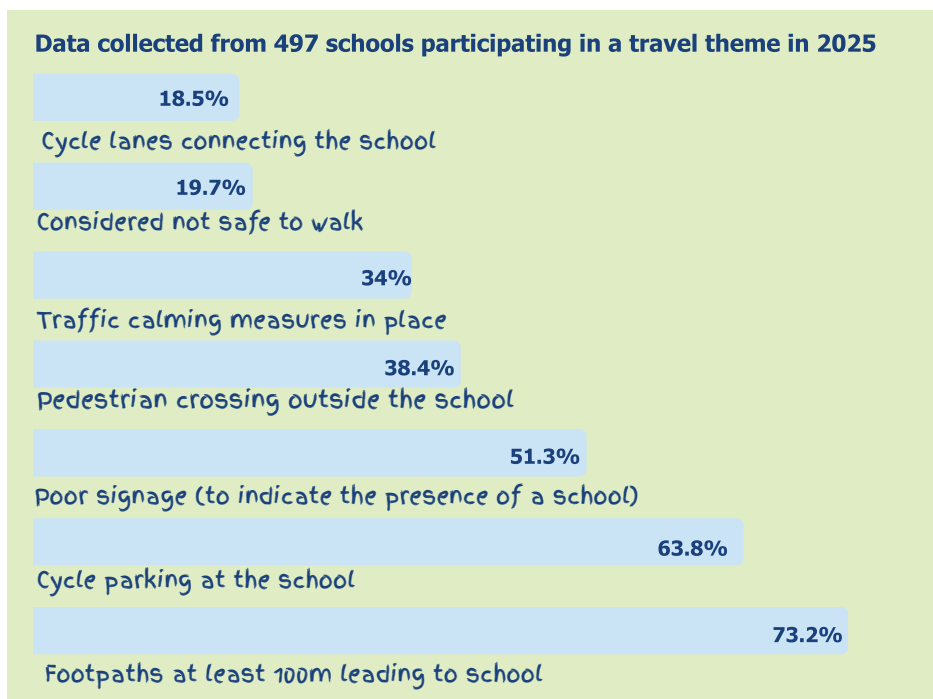
# TRAVEL ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

When starting a Travel theme, schools are invited to take a closer look at transport through the environmental review process. All schools start their environmental review with a baseline travel survey and then select other actions relevant to their location. Walkability audits, cycleability audits and traffic surveys are key parts of the travel environmental review.

For example, schools awarded in March 2025 indicated that 157 walkability audits, 44 cycleability audits and 99 traffic surveys were conducted from 2023-2025. Some schools conduct additional actions such as safety awareness, speed or no-idling surveys as part of their environmental review.

Travel school profiles are collated by Green-Schools Travel Officers for all participating schools. These profiles aim to collect baseline information relating to available infrastructure, school policies and identify opportunities for sustainable transport. Data on surrounding infrastructure was collated for 497 schools (111 Year 1, 386 Year 2) that worked on a Travel theme in 2025. A key finding was that walking/cycling to school was considered unsafe for 19.7% owing to infrastructural constraints. Other findings include:

## Key findings



*Environmental review data, all schools 2025*

## Audits

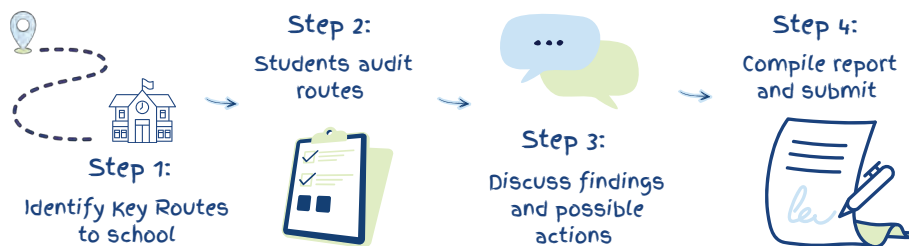
Walkability and Cycleability audits aim to capture student perspectives on key routes to school. Ultimately, they serve to determine if walking or cycling is feasible and safe to promote as part of the school's travel action plan. Audit findings are school specific and provide direction for the travel theme to move forward.



*Travel Officers work closely with Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Officers to ensure effective information sharing. In some cases, schools participate in both programmes simultaneously and receive coordinated support on local infrastructure and behaviour change to encourage active use of new infrastructure.*

### Walkability Audits

In 2025, 158 walkability audits were carried out with participating schools. Key findings included faded road markings or poor visibility on approach routes, absence of pedestrian infrastructure, traffic concerns (speeding, congestion) and unsafe routes.



School representatives, supported by their Travel Officer, walk key routes to school to identify positive and negative attributes for walking. Students are encouraged to consider safety, connectivity and local attributes as part of their exploration of the local area.

Following on from the audit workshop, students discuss findings and identify actions that would support safe and sustainable modes of transport for their school. This information is then used to compile a report or letter to acting bodies to address or celebrate findings. Areas for action are divided among the various shareholders to act upon. For example, schools are encouraged to organise specific awareness campaigns in response to issues noted during the audit (no-idling, safety, speed or parking interventions) or promote WOW days (Walk on Wednesdays / Weekdays) if routes are viable. Where significant infrastructure issues arise, the students contact local authorities through report submissions or whole class letter writing workshops to local representatives. For local issues beyond the remit of the school, local enforcement or engagement with local community groups is focussed upon.

### A summary of some of the successes in 2025 are provided below:

Much positive feedback and engagement with local authorities was noted in 2025 where audits submitted were taken into consideration or noted as being held on record. Some examples from 2025 include:

- New road markings installed in Colaiste Eascaigh, Kilglass and Scoil Naomh Attracta in Co. Roscommon. Ardagh NS in Ballina, Co. Mayo also received new road markings based on audit recommendations.
- An audit conducted with students from Ballyleague NS, Co. Longford in early 2025 noted considerable issues with speeding, parking and school signage. This was addressed in November 2025 with the installation of new markings and crossings outside the school.

- Infrastructural improvements following on from school 'Travel Hub' events held in Macroom in 2024 were implemented in mid-2025. These events were designed to communicate audit findings from multiple schools to key stakeholders (TII, Cork County Council, MEPs etc). In September 2025, Green-Schools Travel and Safe Routes to School revisited participating schools with local authority representatives to highlight and discuss the various improvements installed.
- Safety upgrades are planned in 2026 for a junction located on a key route to school for students attending Milford Grange NS, Co. Limerick. This follows on from an audit submitted in September 2025 which was subsequently raised at local council meetings.

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## Cyclability Audits

'Cycleability Audits' or 'Cycle Audits' conducted as part of the Green-Schools Travel theme aim to raise awareness of issues facing young cyclists, create a positive attitude toward cycling, and facilitate a better understanding of the environment. Cycle audit delivery varies across participating schools and is dependent on the location, scope for change and access to bicycles. Some schools, owing to safety concerns, complete their cycle audit in tandem with the walkability audit where observations relative to cycling are noted. For some, student representatives are guided by the Green-Schools Travel Officer.

Schools awarded in 2025 completed 44 cycleability audits in their surrounding area between 2023-2025. Of these, many noted that cycling was not an option.

Students from Firhouse Community College in South County Dublin applied for cycle parking following on from their cycle audit. According to the school, fewer than 25 students cycled regularly to school in 2023. Surveys conducted by the Green-Schools committee indicated that this figure had risen to over 50 in 2025. They also noted that the number of teachers cycling had doubled. This school is set to benefit from significant improvements in cycling infrastructure as part of the D24 Neighbourhood Cycle Network with the construction of the Firhouse road scheme in 2026 by the South Dublin County Council Active Travel scheme.

Students from Kings Hospital, Dublin noted visibility and signage issues at entrance points to cycle lanes in their locality. The school is located close to the cycle lane along the N4, and near bridges with cycle lanes over the M50 and N4. Students noted the absence of markings to warn oncoming traffic of cyclists merging onto the road and how parked vehicles may hide the entrance. According to the school, they engaged directly with local representatives to address these issues where improvements were made to facilitate safe access to the greenway.

*'Teachers and the principal were very supportive of this workshop as they see the danger outside their schools and see the benefits of the letter writing workshop. They stated that it linked perfectly with both the English curriculum and the social sciences curriculum.'*

Lunnagh NS,  
Co. Donegal

Barnaderg National School in Co. Galway noted, *'We realised the lights on the sign approaching the school were not working at the right time and the line markings were not on the road. Following on from our audit, we contacted Galway County Council. We also realised that students need cycle training to cycle safely to school.'*

## Speed Interventions

Speed is a consistent issue raised through the walkability audit process, where many schools implement actions such as requesting speed enforcement, traffic calming measures or launch their own campaign to advocate for lower speeds.

In 2025, Green-Schools Travel Officers across the country participated and encouraged schools to participate in public consultations for local speed limit reviews. Local knowledge and direct engagement with schools through walkability audits and speed surveys enabled Travel Officers to highlight issues that could have been overlooked. For example, it was found that 28 schools in 23 towns fall just outside proposed 30km/hr zones for Donegal. Without review, these would remain as 50km/hr zones (and so encourage vehicles to increase speed outside school zones).

Following on from successful speed campaigns in Cork in 2024, rural schools experiencing speed issues are organising action events and Love 30 campaigns outside their school. These aim to raise awareness about the presence of the school and encourage passing motorists to slow down. For rural schools with limited scope for sustainable transport, this has provided them with a meaningful way to engage with the theme and make a positive difference outside their school.

## Stories

Ransboro National School, Co. Sligo noted excessive speeds during their walkability audit and organised their own Love 30 campaign in June 2025. This school is adjacent to the regional route R292 but will not benefit from any proposed speed limit changes. As part of this event, the students prepared a petition for the school community to sign, supported by their Local councillor Fergal Nealon, which sought to amend the current speed limit from 50km/hr to 30km/hr.

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The Green-Schools committee from Holy Family NS, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin organised a Love 30 campaign on the 4th November 2025 following on from a speed survey conducted as part of their environmental review. The event aimed to raise awareness about the presence of the school and to remind the wider community to slow down. This was supported by South Dublin County Councils Road Safety Officer, Gardai and was featured in the Southside People in November 2025.

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On 28 January, a Green-Schools Travel Officer conducted a speed survey with Mulranny National School during morning drop off and again immediately afterwards. The initial survey found that 30% of vehicles were speeding within the village. During the second survey, carried out with pupils who were wearing highvisibility vests, only 5% of vehicles were recorded exceeding the speed limit. The highest speed recorded was 77 kilometres per hour in a 50 kilometre per hour zone. These findings will be included in the compiled Walkability Audit report.



*Learn more about  
Love 30 here*

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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## Key Stakeholder Events in 2025

Sustainable transport is a diverse topic with many different initiatives underway across each county in Ireland. In 2025, Green-Schools Travel Officers nationwide participated in a range of stakeholder events to support the objectives of the programme.

### Road Safety

Road safety is an integral part of the Green-Schools Travel Programme where officers nationwide actively engage with stakeholders to promote mutual objectives.

#### Road Safety Working Groups

In 2025, Green-Schools Travel Officers joined Road Safety Working Groups and Road Safety Together Committees in Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Leitrim, Limerick, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, and Westmeath. These groups are multi-agency, local authority led committees designed to improve road safety at community level and support the delivery of Local Road Safety Action Plans. Participants include local authority representatives, An Garda Síochána, Comhairle na nÓg, the Road Safety Authority and more, depending on the local area.

These groups provide an opportunity to better understand how national and regional road safety priorities are being advanced locally and actively engage stakeholders in the development of local road safety plans. They also provide an opportunity to develop partnerships and communicate work on the Green-Schools Travel Programme to key stakeholders. For example, the Galway Travel Officer presented to the Galway Road Safety Committee in February 2025. This outlined sustainable travel initiatives in schools (Walk on Wednesdays), Safe Routes to School and Green-Schools Travel walkability and cyclability audits, and student speed surveys. Emphasis was placed on the importance of incorporating children's perspectives into infrastructure planning, a contribution that was positively received by members. Attendees also received an update on the Road Safety Plan which stressed alignment with the Government's Road Safety Strategy and the need for measurable targets. Green-Schools Travel supported the follow-on discussion on public engagement, noting how local partnerships could play a vital role in delivery. Further updates from city and county engineers outlined progress on safety, traffic calming, and active travel schemes, while An Garda Síochána reported on enforcement and education measures.

In Sligo, local Travel Officers were offered the opportunity to comment on the next local area road safety strategy and communicate speeding issues experienced by schools in Sligo. In Donegal, the local Travel Officer attended the group's Road Safety Road Show Event which highlighted the importance of road safety (and impacts of poor driver behaviour) for post-primary schools in October 2025.

## Safer Roads Road Safety Conference

Travel Team Lead for the Munster Region, Angela, joined the Road Safety Working Group for Kerry in 2024. Following on from this Angela was invited to present at the Safer Roads Road Safety Conference in Killarney, County Kerry in May 2025, by Declan Keogh, Road Safety Officer for Kerry County Council. The conference brought together a variety of stakeholders and service providers, including road safety and transportation experts, government and local authority officials, road policing and vehicle inspection agencies, road safety advocates, educators and promoters, cycling bodies and community safety networks. Angela welcomed the opportunity to speak about Green-Schools Travel, focusing on walkability audits and the importance of the students' voice, as they travel these routes to and from school every day. She spoke about school engagement with the wider community and local authorities, concerns for schools and shared good news stories. Angela linked with SRTS to present also and after presenting she was part of a panel discussion relating to road safety and school communities.



*Learn more about the Road Safety Conference here*

## HSA Keep Safe Event

In 2025, Green-Schools Travel Officers participated in the HSA "Keep Safe" event in Athlone, engaging around 100 5th and 6th class pupils from local primary schools. The programme, sponsored by the Health and Safety Authority and facilitated by Junior Achievement, brought together state agencies to deliver practical safety messages through interactive sessions. Travel Officers focused on cycling safety, covering bike, helmet, and clothing checks to prepare students for safe cycling. The event successfully promoted positive attitudes and behaviours around safety in everyday situations.



## Health

Get Ireland Walking is a national initiative that aims to empower and support people to choose to walk more often for recreation, transport and health as part of their everyday lives. Stakeholder events are organised by Local Sports Partnerships nationwide to support the development of local walking action plans. These are attended by local interest groups such as representatives from the PPN, Youth Services, HSE and local authorities. In 2025, Green-Schools Travel Officers participated in stakeholder events in Limerick, Cork, Waterford and Laois.

## Accessibility

Independent Travel Scheme – Bus Éireann (SDG10 –Reduced Inequalities)  
Green-Schools attended the launch of the new Bus Éireann ‘Independent Travel Support’ (formerly Travel Assistance programme’ in April 2025 with attendees from a range of organisations (NTA, Department, HSE, special education facilities). Led by Christian Clarke, manager of Bus Éireann accessibility programmes, the team outlined actions taken and plans for the future. The scheme has now trained 2000 individuals in both Cork & Limerick. The Waterford scheme has kicked off and will be formally launched later this year. This will also be expanded to Galway. This service accommodates individuals up to 18 years of age and offers a one-to-one service to support independent travel.

## Mobility

### National Sustainable Mobility Forum 2025

Green-Schools Travel attended two sustainable mobility forum events in 2025 to represent school sustainable travel perspectives. This annual event aims to engage with stakeholders on progress related to the Sustainable Mobility Policy (SMP) in support of walking, cycling, public transport, and shared mobility in Ireland. As part of these events, stakeholders were divided into groups to discuss specific topics. On May 15th, 2025, Green-Schools Travel acted as rapporteur for the ‘Decarbonising Urban Networks – Progress and Insights (SMP Goals 2 and 3)’ online group. For the in-person event on June 6th, 2025, Green-Schools Travel participated in the ‘Building safe and attractive infrastructure for active and inclusive mobility (SMP Goals 4 and 7)’ group.

### ATU Sustainable Mobility Conference

To mark World Sustainable Transport Day, Green-Schools Travel attended the first inaugural symposium “Towards Sustainable Mobility: Every Step Matters.” The event took place on the 27th of November and featured five speakers: Robert Egan, Travel Officer Lukasz Krzywon, Vinayak Malaghan, Niamh O’Reilly, and John Byrne, from leading organisations across Ireland. Each speaker shared practical steps and initiatives to advance sustainable mobility. The symposium was organised by the Department of Civil Engineering & Construction at Atlantic Technological University (Sligo) in collaboration with the Mathematical Modelling & Intelligent Systems for Health & Environment group. Lukasz Krzywon presented the work of the Travel Programme to an audience of approximately 40 participants.

## **Embracer – Shaping the Future of Mobility – Exchange of Experience event** *Cork April 9th+10th 2025*

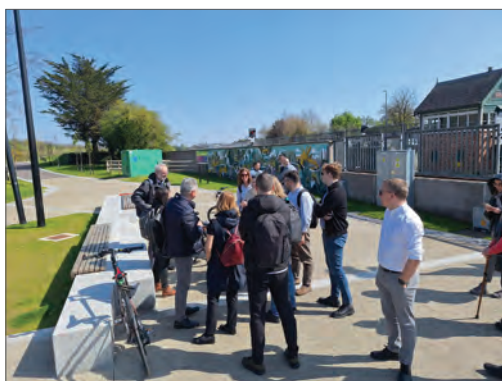
As stakeholders in the Cork Transport and Mobility Forum Travel, Green-Schools Travel Officers Catherine Russell and Lisa O'Grady attended this event as the TMF are part of the Embracer European wide project which is aiming to redefine urban mobility.

This event brought together experts, decision makers and mobility pioneers to shape the future of sustainable, multimodal transport and looks to unlock the power of intermodality to create efficient, liveable urban spaces. Representatives from countries including Serbia, Portugal, Germany, Finland, Romania, Italy, Lithuania travelled to Cork to present on their cities and examine what is being done in Cork to achieve sustainable transport options.

Topics included looking at Ride-sharing/Micro mobility in Romania, Integrated bike and car sharing systems in Cagliari, Italy, Reclaiming the Streets: car free days in Leipzig, Germany, Bike mobility experience in Italy, Sustainable Streets in Novi Pazar, Serbia, From Challenges to Opportunities: crafting a sustainable mobility future for Ljutomer, Lithuania, Potential users and Willingness to pay for mobility as a service in Finland.

There were two 'Study visits' as part of the event: the first, to the new Midleton Greenway via train, followed by an opportunity to try out the new TFI electric bikes on the Greenway. The second study visit was to see the new car-free Mahon Marina and Greenway via bus/cycle from City Hall.

This event was a great opportunity to meet people working in the field of sustainable transport from all over Europe and share ideas and knowledge. The Serbian contingent, who included the Mayor of Novi Pazar, was particularly interested in speaking with us about our work on walkability audits and as they are a developing country which is only starting out on their walking infrastructure journey they could learn a lot from what we are doing in Green-Schools Travel.



## **Just Transition Transport Workshop**

Green-Schools Travel was represented at the Just Transition Transport Workshop held at the Wayfinding Centre in Glasnevin. This stakeholder event aimed to inform policy planning for a fair and equitable transition within the transport sector. Travel Officers participated in facilitated roundtable discussions alongside Commission members and other key stakeholders, exploring the challenges and opportunities of climate action in transport. The workshop provided valuable insights to help shape inclusive and sustainable mobility strategies for the future.

## **Community Events**

### **Skibbereen Cycle Bus**

The Skibbereen Cycle Bus encourages children from St Patricks BNS, Gaelscoil Dr. Uí Shúilleabháin, St Joseph's NS and Abbeystrewry NS to cycle to school safely. Parents, teachers and adults marshal the children on a set route. Any students who want to cycle safely to school can register with their school and join the convoy as it travels through the town, picking up cyclists on the way and delivering them to the four schools. Travel Officer Catherine has been trained as a volunteer and regularly marshalls on the cycle bus. The bus has been a great success running weekly throughout the year.

# COLLABORATION & PROJECTS

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## Portlaoise Cluster Project

The Portlaoise Schools Cluster Project is part of the Portlaoise Low Carbon Town Initiative. While the project was initiated by Laois County Council, it is run in the 10 primary and secondary schools of Portlaoise by Green-Schools.

The aim of the project is to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and safety on the way to school. This will be achieved by encouraging students, parents and teachers to walk, wheel, cycle, scoot, park & stride, use public transport or carpool instead of using the private car on the school run. Beside the environmental benefits, the added bonus of active travel will be improved physical and mental health for all.

The project is planned to run over 2 academic years. The first year focused on promoting walking from October 2024 and cycling from April 2025. The promotion work was carried out by the Green-Schools committees of each school and supported by two Travel Officers. For this purpose, the Travel Officers organised Travel Forums to allow the students from different schools to exchange ideas with each other.

## Travel Forums

In April 2025, two Portlaoise Travel Forums were held in the Laois Council Chambers, bringing together Green-Schools Committees from local primary and secondary schools. The forums took place on the 1st of April (Primary Schools) and the 8th of April (Secondary Schools), with a combined attendance of 50 children and 6 teachers from six primary schools, and 12 students and 2 teachers from two secondary schools.

The focus of these forums was to prepare for the launch of Cycle On Wednesdays (COW) and Bike Week 2025. Students shared their experiences and insights on road safety, both as pedestrians and cyclists, and collaborated on plans for weekly COW days starting in April. They also exchanged ideas for a special COW launch event scheduled for the 14th of May.

It was particularly inspiring to witness the growth in student confidence since the previous forum. Students spoke with pride about their achievements and demonstrated strong leadership in planning future initiatives. Each committee left with a clear action plan for Bike Week, reflecting the forums' success in fostering meaningful student engagement and promoting active travel in Portlaoise.

## GS Coordinator Networking event

A Networking and Appreciation Lunch was hosted for the Green-Schools coordinators and other persons involved in the project in the Killeshin Hotel on the 30th of April 2025. The objective was to thank all participants for their engagement in the project and to provide them the opportunity to network with each other, exchanging experiences and helpful tips.

## Online Cluster Clinic

As part of the ongoing Portlaoise Cluster Project, three online Cluster Clinics were delivered to participating schools. The objective of these clinics was for schools to share their experiences to date - what worked well, for example, and to inform them of the next steps of the project.

Committees were set to task to plan for the upcoming Big Travel Challenge, once they had received a presentation on same. The new inter county Cluster Competition and rewards system was introduced to all, as was a timeline of events from now until the end of term.

## Awards Ceremony

The Portlaoise Schools Cluster Project Awards Ceremony took place on 23rd May 2025 at the Dunamais Arts Centre, a venue selected for its strong sustainability ethos and accessibility for all participating schools. The event celebrated the achievements of nine schools involved in the project, with each receiving a participation plaque in recognition of their efforts.

Based on the Portlaoise Cluster Project League Table credits, the top three schools were honoured with special awards.

The ceremony was well attended, with 47 students and 24 adults representing their schools, including teachers and board of management members. All schools were present, with the exception of St Mary's CBS.

The event was organised by the Green-Schools Travel team and featured engagement with key local stakeholders, including representatives from the local authority, Active Travel, and Climate Action. The ceremony highlighted the collective commitment of Portlaoise schools to sustainable travel and community collaboration.



**Gold Award:**

Holy Family Senior School

**Silver Award:**

Portlaoise College

**Bronze Award:**

Maryborough National School

## **September–December 2025**

### **Green Schools Coordinator Networking Breakfast**

A networking meeting was held on the 1st October 2025 for the Green-Schools coordinators to kick off the second year of the Portlaoise Schools Cluster Project. Nine of the ten schools taking part in the project were represented. The meeting included a reflection on the first year of the project and plans for the second year, as well as goals for the end of the project.

### **Open Nights**

In September 2025, Travel Officers attended the open nights of three of the secondary schools in an effort to promote the PCP, with mixed results. The most successful open night was at Scoil Chríost Rí, where many primary schools students were reached as they were visiting their future secondary school.

### **Safer School Gates Flyers**

Approximately 2,500 flyers promoting safe behaviour while travelling sustainably at school and on the way to school were designed by Green-Schools Travel Officers and distributed by the Green-Schools committees of each PCP schools to road users and parents on their school grounds in October and November 2025.

### **Bike Workshops and collaboration with other organisations**

In September 2025, Laois Sports Partnership lent two balance bikes to complete the Laois Co. Co. Bike Library, as it had been noted in year 1 of the project that an unexpected proportion of 3rd class pupils were unable to cycle. 21 bike workshops were facilitated between September and November 2025, which saw 200 students practicing bike skills, including 7 children learning to cycle for the first time.

### **Travel Forum no. 3**

The third Travel Forum of the project was held over two days in November 2025, on the 4th November for Primary Schools and on the 6th November for Secondary Schools. As previously, the forums were hosted by Laois County Council in Laois Chambers. The Primary Schools Travel Forum was attended by 40 students and eight teachers while the Secondary Schools Forum was attended by 20 students and two teachers. Subsequent Travel Forum catch up sessions were held with the four schools who could not attend due to poor weather conditions. An additional 50 students and five teachers attended these catch up sessions. These three hour-long forums focused on the Santa Stroll in December 2026, the new local Bus Link and announcing an upcoming Bus4U workshop competition, Clean Air Week 2025 and planning for “after the PCP” with the creation of draft Sustainable Transport Policies for the schools.

### **In-class workshops**

With the cold and wet days increasing after November, the offer of bike workshops was replaced by an offer of in-class workshops. Over November and December 2025, 12 workshops were delivered on the themes of My Journey To School, Speed Survey, Food Miles and Sustainable Cities, with approximately 255 students and 12 teachers.



Santa Stroll, Portlaoise



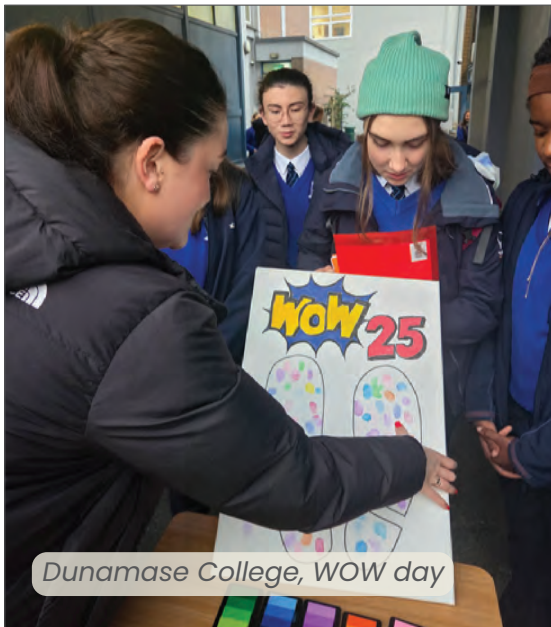
Travel forum catch up



Portlaoise Travel forum, April 2025



Walk to School Week



Dunamase College, WOW day



Portlaoise Travel forum, April 2025

# CASE STUDIES

## Travel Case Study: Urban

**School Name:** Coláiste Mhuire, Co. Westmeath

**School Type:** Secondary School

**Location:** Urban

**Green-Schools Theme:** Travel

**School Population:** 850 pupils, 70 staff

**School description:** Coláiste Mhuire is located on College Street, a cul-de-sac, beside St Mary's Primary School in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. The school zone is subject to heavy levels of vehicular and pedestrian traffic where over 1250 pupils (850 Coláiste Mhuire and 400 St. Mary's NS) access the area at peak times. A walkability audit conducted with committee members highlighted pedestrian safety concerns at the entrance/exit of the school and at the drop-off point of one of the bus routes (Kerrigan's Bar on Harbour Street).

### Challenges

- Illegal parking at the Zebra crossing
- Heavy traffic at peak times owing to its location adjacent to another large school
- Increase in school population
- Concerns about pedestrian safety
- High proportion travel by private bus. This presented challenges for cycling events.



### Actions

- Strong communications with all members of the school community (Digital screen in the school, emails, noticeboard and sharing on social media, committee engagement with senior management)
- Peer to Peer campaigning (slide shows to show year groups)
- Walkability Audit
- Road Safety Road Show
- Action days (WOW,COW, Climate Action days) including a TY Greenway cycle
- Bicycle maintenance workshops
- CSP projects
- No Idling campaign for Climate Action Week
- Participation in GLOBE Air Monitoring campaign
- Contact with stakeholders regarding safety issues on school routes
- Applied for bike parking from An Taisce

## Success

- 20 students cycled the Greenway from Mullingar to Athlone as part of National Bike Week. Some students travel by bus so the school innovated by hiring bicycles so that all could participate.
- Garda presence on college street at least twice a week at peak times to ensure student safety.
- Reduced number of cars idling at peak times.
- Increase in the number of students cycling to school.
- RSA leading light award in Secondary Education.
- The school achieved a modal shift of 4.4% away from independent car use and a 3.5% shift towards cycling.



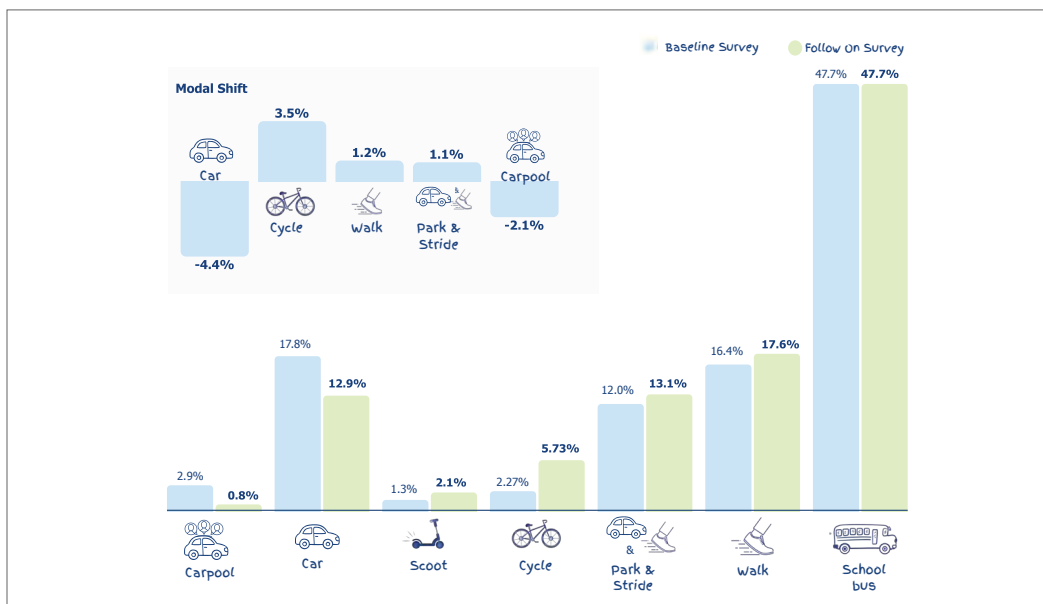
Watch Colaiste Mhuire's Road Safety video here



*'The Green-Schools committee prepared an action plan tailored to the school. This included a number of ways to promote sustainable modes of transport such as participation in key national events (Big Travel Challenge, National WOW Day and National Bike Week). Whole school actions which are memorable are key ingredient of success in a secondary school. Regular WOW days were also a feature of the action plan. Other actions included inviting Coyne's Bike Shop in Kinnegad to visit the school to encourage bike to work scheme and deliver bike maintenance workshops. We also ran several awareness raising workshops and CSPE travel projects.'*

*'We monitored the number of students coming to school by bike or scooter and noted that there was no proper shelter for them so we applied for a bike/scooter shelter and since it was installed there has been a 200% increase in the amount of students coming to school by bike or scooter.'*

*'We have had two No Idling Campaigns and carried out No idling surveys. The results were emailed to parents and staff, displayed on the Green Schools Noticeboard and digital screens in the school and that made a huge difference to the number of cars idling.'*



## Travel Case Study: Rural

**School Name:** Scoil Naomh Bríde Boardsmill NS, Co. Meath

**School Type:** National School

**Location:** Rural

**Green-Schools Theme:** Travel

**School Population:** 184 pupils

**School description:** Boardsmill NS is a rural primary school of 184 students, located in a sparsely populated area at the intersection of two dangerous regional roads (R161 and R156). Walking is not a realistic option, so the school focused on promoting bus travel and carpooling over personal car use.

### Challenges and Achievements

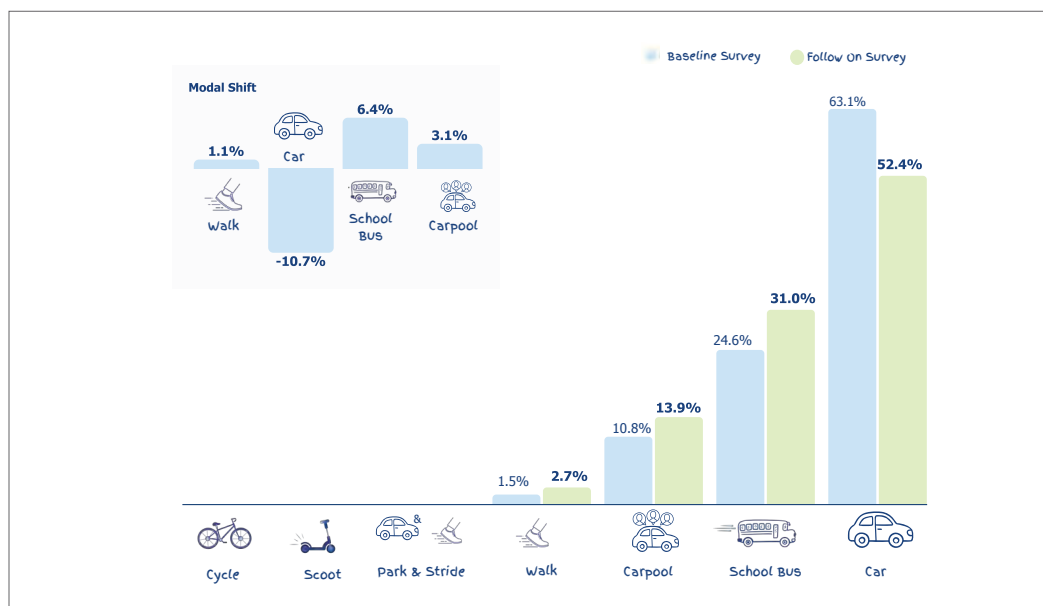
In September 2024, a school bus crash occurred in which some students sustained minor injuries. Despite this setback, the school recorded an astonishing 6.4% modal share increase in bus travel. To help regain students' confidence, Principal James Battersby took them for ice cream by bus shortly after the incident – a thoughtful gesture that had a positive impact on restoring trust. A local politician organised an emergency protest regarding speeding and road safety in the area to raise awareness.

Traffic safety remains a major concern. The speed limit outside the school is 50 km/h, yet a speed survey of 15 vehicles carried out 20 minutes after school pick-up revealed that every driver broke the limit, with an average speed of 71.2 km/h. The volume of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) is also high, and is expected to rise by 20% during the construction phase of the Ballivor wind farm. It is proposed that peak school times are avoided by drivers.

### Cycling and Active Travel

In 2022, Boardsmill received 30 cycle parking spaces as part of its designation as an SRTS Subsequent School. However, despite anecdotal stories of some students cycling and around two bikes being regularly seen during travel officer visits, the school recorded a 0% modal share for cycling. The consensus here is that the surrounding roads are too dangerous, with high-speed traffic and frequent HGVs, making cycling to school an unrealistic option.

Recognising this, the Green-Schools committee decided to focus instead on raising awareness of the benefits of cycling among older students who will soon transition to post-primary schools across the region. A bike film festival was organised, engaging 85 students and teachers, and sparking discussions around the personal and wider societal benefits of cycling.



## Creative Approaches to Air Quality

With a high volume of vehicles outside the school, Boardsmill NS also turned its attention to air quality. During Clean Air Week, a no-idling survey was conducted to monitor idling habits, followed by parents being given “no-idling” pledges. While initially successful, repeat surveys showed that idling was beginning to creep back up. The committee responded creatively by distributing no-idling themed air fresheners, running a poster competition, and establishing a permanent outdoor exhibition of students’ no-idling artwork. This initiative resulted in a 48% reduction in idling traffic – a significant success for the school community.

## Communication and Community Involvement

Boardsmill NS has been proactive in keeping the wider community informed and engaged. They run a lively travel blog and a newsletter, Scéalta Scoile, which regularly updates parents and students on initiatives. Their Green-Schools noticeboard is bright and informative, and the school uses the Aladdin app to message parents directly, ensuring that everyone remains involved in their travel projects.

## Conclusion

Boardsmill NS has shown resilience and creativity in addressing rural school travel challenges. By focusing on sustainable bus use, tackling idling, and raising cycling awareness, the school achieved a 10.7% reduction in personal car use, with increases in bus use (6.4%), carpooling (3.1%), and walking (1.1%). Their experience proves that meaningful change is possible even where walking and cycling are impractical, with community involvement and creative solutions.



*Find out more about this schools travel flag journey*



*Boardsmill NS students participate in a ‘Human Graph’ initiative*

## Urban GC Travel Case Study

**School Name:** Caherconlish National School, Caherconlish, Co. Limerick

**School Type:** National School

**Location:** Urban

**Green-Schools Theme:** Global Citizenship Travel

**School Population:** 105 pupils, 12 staff

**School description:** The school completed their first Travel theme in 2012 where they introduced Walk on Wednesdays and Park & Stride events from the nearby church. The school is located on a bend and pedestrian infrastructure ceased at beginning of the school property where students had to navigate parked vehicles to reach the school access point. Beyond the school was a rural road that was not safe for young students walking. A walkability audit conducted with two class groups in 2022 highlighted that infrastructural barriers identified in 2012 remained. In 2023–2024, the school engaged with local authorities, Green-Schools Travel and Safe Routes to School to address these issues. The combined approach of hard and soft measures supported a sustainable increase in active mobility for this school where self-reported surveys indicate that 55.7% of students walk regularly to school and car use has reduced from 34% to 4.8%.

### Challenges

- Lack of pedestrian infrastructure at the front of the school.
- Car-centric front of school environment. Students have to navigate parked vehicles to enter the school.
- School is situated on a bend with high levels of traffic throughout the day including heavy-duty trucks.
- Passing vehicles frequently exceed the 50km/hr speed limit.
- Lack of pedestrian crossings, disconnected paths and poor surface condition.
- Absence of safe crossing points from key park & stride locations.
- Absence of cycle parking and cycling infrastructure.

### Key Actions

- Walkability Audit
- Mapping
- Traffic Surveys
- Applied for cycle parking from An Taisce Green-Schools Travel
- Applied for Safe Routes to School
- Active engagement with local council and local authorities
- GST Bicycle maintenance workshop
- Cycle Right Training
- Participation in the Big Travel Challenge, COW, WOW, SOW days
- Continuous monitoring of transport modes



*Caherconlish NS school entrance before improvements*



*Bike parking at Caherconlish NS*

## Success

Working closely with the Active Travel team in Limerick County Council, the SRTS team to realise hard infrastructure and Green-Schools Travel to support behaviour change.

### Hard infrastructure interventions:

- A raised pedestrian crossing on High Street
- Build outs for traffic calming purposes
- Junction tightening at Hillview Drive
- Footpath widening
- Removal of parking spaces outside the school and extension of the pedestrian area

### Soft measures:

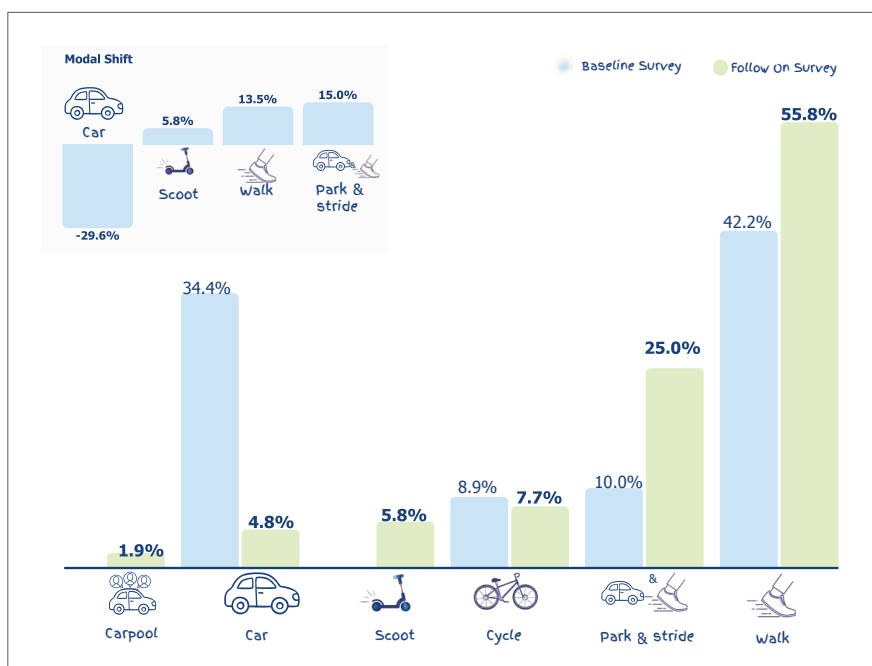
- Increased awareness of sustainable travel and uptake of sustainable modes of transport
- High levels of participation in call-to-action events (COW,WOW,SOW, BTC)
- Strong curricular integration



*'The promotion of sustainable travel has been a hugely enjoyable and rewarding experience for the whole school community and for the local community. Anything that promotes sustainable travel, takes cars off the road and makes the area safer for all can only be a positive thing.'*

*'The new front of school treatments were officially launched by Mayor of Limerick John Moran in February 2025 who also partook in an organised 'Park and Stride' event with pupils from Caherconlish NS, their parents/guardians and staff at the school. A commemorative tree has also been planted adjacent to the school in conjunction with the opening of the project.'*

*'We took part in the Travel Tracker 2025 in order to record the sustainable travel taken and the number of students who participated over a two-week period. It was a good way of seeing the changes in use of sustainable travel since the Safe Routes to School Programme was completed in Feb 2025. We also evaluate progress through classwork, and the projects/discussions children have in their classrooms based on sustainable travel and being a global citizen.'*



## Rural GC Travel Case study

**School Name:** St. Joseph's Primary School, Kilmuckridge, County Wexford  
**School Type:** National School  
**Location:** Rural  
**Green-Schools Theme:** Global Citizenship Travel  
**School Population:** 205 pupils, 18 staff

**School description:** St. Joseph's commenced work on their Global Citizenship Travel theme in September 2023 and were awarded in March 2025. Through the travel theme the school achieved a significant shift in travel behaviour. Led by a committed and passionate Green-Schools coordinator and an active Green-Schools Committee which changed throughout the year to allow multiple students the opportunity to be proactively involved.

### Challenges

- Lack of pedestrian infrastructure at the front of the school
- Car culture – at the start of the theme 83% of students were driven to school
- Parental feedback cited travel choices were influenced by road safety concerns and being time poor
- Lack of safe and secure cycle parking

### Key Actions

- Walkability Audit
- Participation in all Call to Action Weeks (WOW, COW, SOW, Clean Air Week)
- No Idling Campaign
- Walking bus from multiple estates
- Applied for cycle parking and a scooter rack from Green-Schools
- Applied for cycle right training grant
- Promotion of the benefits of active travel
- Maintenance of previous themes



*Bike to School Week*

## Success

Over the course of two years there was a 32% increase in the numbers of students walking to and from school.

The introduction of a large, sheltered bike rack and cycle skills training led to a 20% in the numbers of students cycling. Students travelling by car were also encouraged to Park & Stride. Collectively the growth in these active modes led to a 75% decrease in car trips dropping off and collecting outside school, improving road safety and reducing congestion at the school gates.



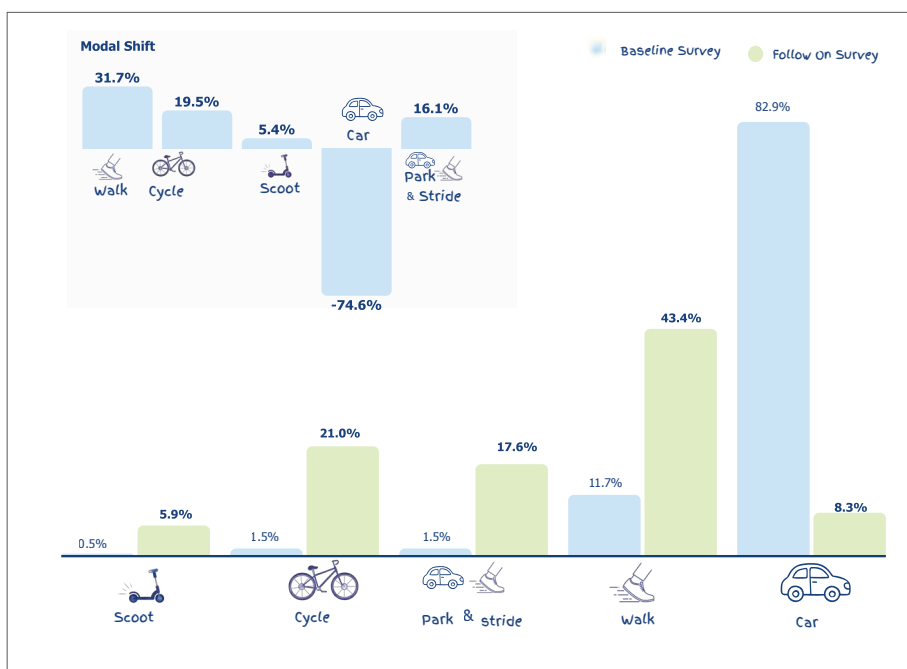
Scout to School Week



*'Our Action Day was on a Wednesday. Lots of children participated in a walking bus to school. We had two walking busses from either side of the village. Lucy, the Green Schools Travel Officer, came to our school and did travel snakes and ladders with the juniors and then went on to do a travel quiz with the seniors. The Green Schools Committee informed the children of a Bling your Shoe competition. The junior end participated in an art competition. The Green-Schools committee participated in an Instagram takeover and shared their posts online. The Green-Schools committee visited all classes to talk to them about using the correct bins, recycling batteries, turning off lights, reducing carbon footprint and using less water.'*

*'Improvements in local infrastructure supported our safety outside our school. This included painting the pedestrian crossing and parking spaces.'*

*'There has also been a huge decrease in engine idling at the front of the school. All parents turn off engines as the children are talking about it.'*



St. Josephs NS application survey data detailing baseline and follow on surveys and modal shift compared to baseline.

# GREEN-SCHOOLS TRAVEL & THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In 2023, An Taisce was selected as an SDG Champion by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. Today we are an SDG Ambassador and evidence of our commitment to upholding the ideals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be seen through the work on the Green-Schools Travel and Global Citizenship Travel themes.



## SDG 3: Health & Wellbeing

*'The children who walked to school commented that they loved spending time with and talking to their friends on the way to school. This had a positive impact on both our Wellbeing programmes. The Green Schools fosters positive relationships between the school and the wider community. The activities developed and promoted positive behaviours in the student body and promoted well-being in general. It gave lots of opportunities for the children's self esteem and confidence to develop while working on the Green Schools Committee. There is a noticeable increase in the number of children walking, cycling and scooting to school. There is also a noticeable decrease in the amount of traffic outside the school at drop off and pick up times.'*

**-St.Rynaghs School, Co. Offaly (Awarded 2025)**



## SDG 3: Health & Wellbeing

The Kings Hospital in South Dublin created strong links with the Sustainable Development Goals through their work on the Global Citizenship Travel Theme. The committee explored numerous aspects of SDG 3: Health and Wellbeing from the exploration of air quality, speed reduction and promoting the health benefits of walking. They even purchased their own speed gun to raise awareness about safer driving beyond their work on the theme.



*'Following promotion by committee members and surveys amongst staff, funding was obtained for two electric car charging points on the school grounds. We took part in GLOBE air quality monitoring twice yearly in autumn and spring, raising awareness amongst students of Nitrogen Dioxide levels around the school. Our air quality is not the worst in the country but is in the medium range due to the proximity of the N4 and M50. Two of our student committee members presented their findings at the GLOBE air quality event in January 2024. No Idling surveys were conducted, which revealed that the transition to a student set down area has been successful. A set route allows pedestrians and cyclists to be safer in the back car park. Other points to note include the school purchasing a speed gun, similar to the one borrowed from the travel officer, so that we could conduct further measurements, and to raise awareness of safer driving amongst staff and parents. A member of the committee, Maura, entered a project on making roads safer for pedestrians and road users with a visual impairment into Scifest in May 2024, then winning the National final in November. She will represent Ireland at ISEF in Ohio in May 2025.'*

*Two of our senior committee members addressed the assembly on different days. Topics discussed included highlighting actions taken by the committee this year and forms of sustainable travel and its advantages. The multiple benefits of walking for our health and wellbeing were emphasized. The assembled students and staff then walked a lap of the school back to their lockers. They were guided by the remaining members of the environmental committee. This was a great exercise in making the committee more visible to their fellow students (literally) as they had to wear luminous hi-vis vests. This was highlighted by the headmaster in his weekly newsletter and on our school social media feeds. Students enjoyed the opportunity to get some fresh air, and the opportunity to chat with their friends. Staff passed on lots of compliments for the idea and the opportunity, and it did not require much class time to complete.'*

**-The Kings Hospital, South Dublin (Awarded for GC Travel 2025)**

### **SDG 11 Sustainable Cities**

*'Our big event this year was our "Travel to School Sustainably Week". This had a marvelous response and has opened the door to plenty of follow-on activities to keep the school community focused on sustainability. It was strongly promoted for two weeks prior to the week itself with both the Green-Schools committee and the class teacher talking to all classes to explain how it was going to happen. It allowed for a lot of education of pupils on the theme and generated a lot of positive interaction on the key aspects of sustainability. The pupils were incentivised to travel sustainably by allowing pupils to wear a non-uniform jumper on the day(s) that they travelled sustainably. There was such a marked response that a lot of feedback was received on the extremely low numbers of cars at the school gate. And this is a school that has no regular school bus. The headline figure is that Private Car (excluding car-pooling) fell from 76% down to 27%. All the data that was collected was further cementing of the ethos of the theme: to travel sustainably. While taking data the committee endeavored to talk about the changes to the pupils and to encourage discussion and debate on it.'*

**-Ballindereen NS, Co. Galway (Awarded GC Travel 2025)**



## SDG 13 – Climate Action



Kinsale Community School (KCS) is a leading example of climate action at post-primary level. Each year the school organises a day of action where they invite all 12 feeder primary schools to take part in climate action activities led by students. This is known as the KCS 'mini C.O.P.' and has been delivered since 2021.

In their own words, ahead of their 2025 event:

*'In 2024, 260 primary students attended, with 250 confirmed for the 2025 event on March 5th 2025. At the event, Young Environmentalist and Young Scientist climate-based projects will be highlighted and the Green-Schools committee are responsible for delivering a range of themed activities. These include activities such as balancing our planet using giant Jenga, save our fish from plastic garbage, a climate-based alphabet race, making seed bombs, repairing clothes, leaf identification, and much more. Events relating to the travel theme include estimating how far students travel to school every day and inviting all students to walk around our track to make up the total distance. Some Green-Schools students will also speak about the programme at the event. For this, our students and teachers research, discuss and create games and have to practice delivering them before the event.'*

The school is also proactive in other areas beyond their mini-COP event. In 2024/2025, they organised a WOW Day and compiled a promotional video to support the event. According to their surveys, 33% of the school walked to school. KCS is also hosting a Climate Conference 2025 for TY students. This year's theme will be 'Shaping Tomorrow": Climate Action and Sustainable Development for Young Leaders'. The school is also engaged with the Climate Ambassador Programme where a student spoke at the National Youth Assembly in 2023.

**-Kinsale Community College, Co. Cork (Awarded 2025)**

# MAINTAINING TRAVEL BEYOND THE THEME

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Once awarded, schools focus on their next Green-Schools theme. A requirement of the programme is to maintain and build on work from previous themes. Listed below are some examples of how schools continued their work to on the travel theme as cited in school applications submitted for other themes in 2025.

*WOW days take place after Easter every year for 6-8 weeks. The teachers walk the children to the school from the local G.A.A. pitch. Parents have been advised in the school newsletters to make sure they turn off their car when collecting their children to ensure no-idling is taking place. This message is sent out by the Green-Schools Committee. Hi-vis jackets are given to all children in the school at the start of the year to promote walking/cycling/scooting to school. A tally is completed each term to see how each child travelled to school.*

## **-Kilteely National School, Limerick (Awarded for Travel in 2022)**

*Our school has implemented several school-wide initiatives to promote sustainability, which are organized by the staff committee, who meet each month to plan and coordinate these efforts. For example, events like 'Feet First Friday' encourage students to walk to school, reducing car usage and promoting active travel. Additionally, the 'Golden Boot Award' recognizes the class with the most sustainable travel practices each week. Other initiatives, such as providing bike and scooter parking and organizing litter-picking activities, further reinforce our commitment to maintaining a clean and eco-friendly school environment.*

## **-Scoil Choilm CNS, Fingal, Dublin (Awarded for Travel 2020)**

*We took part in the Big Travel Challenge and proudly displayed our photos on the notice board. We encourage parents to park and stride from the church carpark. We recently asked parents to avoid accessing the side lane at the school and thankfully this provides a safer route to school through the church car park. We also look forward to initiatives planned for Bike Week at our school.*

*We participate in WOW (Walk on Wednesday) and keep a record of the number of children that walk, cycle, scoot and take a bus to school instead of the car. The winning class is announced over the intercom and receive the WOW trophy. We organise a human bus from an accessible location for the whole school community on the last Wednesday of every month. We send out reminders to parents about our upcoming WOW and human bus days.*

## **-Convent Junior School, Monaghan (Awarded for Travel in 2023)**

# PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

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## **Internal Training Event: Knowledge Share – Systems Thinking with Professor Quentin Crowley, TCD (20-03-2025)**

This Knowledge Share Session, held in March, discussed the IKC3 educational project, local and global aspects of climate change, managing risks and impacts, as well as introducing the systems approach to tackling climate change. Three different systems thinking tools were presented – Iceberg, (Berkana) Two Loop Model, Casual Loop Diagram. During two breakout room sessions, staff identified problems related to An Taisce's work and how the models could help solve these. Further educational opportunities were discussed. 28 of the staff attended the session.

## **Just Transition Transport Workshop – Stakeholder Engagement**

Green-Schools Travel was represented at the Just Transition Transport Workshop held at the Wayfinding Centre in Glasnevin. This stakeholder event aimed to inform policy planning for a fair and equitable transition within the transport sector. Travel Officers participated in facilitated roundtable discussions alongside Commission members and other key stakeholders, exploring the challenges and opportunities of climate action in transport. The workshop provided valuable insights to help shape inclusive and sustainable mobility strategies for the future.

## **Micro-credential in Climate Leadership Development (course director: Dr. Quentin Crowley, TCD)**

This six-month NFQ Level 9 certificate programme was designed for interdisciplinary professionals seeking to strengthen their climate leadership and sustainability expertise. It developed leadership skills and covered key areas: climate change as a systemic challenge, climate leadership fundamentals, climate justice and transformational leadership, and behavioural change strategies.

By framing climate change as a systemic challenge, the course fostered understanding of environmental, social, and economic interconnections—critical for planning Green-Schools workshops. Its focus on climate justice and transformational leadership supports educators in promoting inclusive, fair responses to climate issues. Practical behavioural change strategies equip participants to drive long-term engagement and leadership within Green-Schools communities.

# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

## Irish Language Green-Schools Handbooks

Fully translated Irish-language handbooks will be available to all schools in 2026. This represents a major step forward in ensuring that the programme is accessible and inclusive for every school community. Work will continue on translating our most widely used Green-Schools Travel resources and on creating new Irish language materials so that all schools can benefit from high quality supports in both languages.



## Streamlining the Green-Schools Travel Events Calendar in 2026

Green-Schools Travel will streamline its events calendar in 2026. Following extensive feedback from stakeholders, including participating schools, the programme will reduce the number of Call to Action Weeks from five to two. This change will allow schools more time to focus on the active and sustainable travel actions most relevant to their community, while ensuring Travel Officers can provide tailored support to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The two Call to Action Weeks will take place in the spring and autumn terms. The spring event will align with Bike Week and focus on cycling, while the autumn week will promote all active and sustainable modes of travel, helping schools establish positive travel habits early in the school year.

