



Media Release
Thursday 26 April 2018

Get active on the school run this autumn

Selwyn District Council's road safety team are running an 'Active Autumn' active transport campaign for schools in Term 2.

'Active transport' is using physical activity, such as walking, biking or scooting, to get to and from school, rather than the commute in a car, or bus trip.

School Road Safety Coordinator Stephanie Hautler says there are many physical and mental benefits to active transport, which are being encouraged with 'Active Autumn'.

"Children develop increased road safety awareness, decision making and risk assessment skills. It takes practice to develop skills such as being able to judge the speed of a moving vehicle, or how big a gap is needed to cross a busy road safely," she says.

"Gaining these life skills as a child is an important step towards gaining independence. Children are also better primed for learning, and studies have found that children who are active are not only physically fitter but can concentrate for longer.

"Active transport can be instrumental in increased social connectivity, not only for children, but parents too. Getting to know the neighbourhood and community is important for all of us to feel like we belong and makes for a safer more connected society.

"Skipping the car ride also means less noise, less congestion, less visual pollution and cleaner air. Burning less fuel saves money too!" she says.

During May, local Selwyn schools are being provided with Active Autumn packs to educate families about active transport. One of the activities children can take part in is the W.o.W challenge, where children can get a card stamped each time they walk or wheel to or from school. Completed cards will go in the draw to win an MGP scooter, helmet or backpack cover, plus heaps of other great prizes.

A poster design competition is also being held, with children challenged to create a poster about why walking or wheeling is good for you. The prize is a new helmet, and a day of Pedalmania for the winning student's school. Entries close 31 May 2018.

Active travel can be a challenge to fit into an already busy day. Below are some ideas that you may be able to utilise to get your child active:

- Park and stride – drop your child a short distance from school instead of at the gate. Scout out a location where they can safely walk to the kea crossing or school entrance without crossing any major roads or entranceways. Make this your safe meet point for after school pick up too.
- Pick a route and get to know it – find a route that minimises the number of roads to be crossed and avoids busy intersections, and get to know it together. Point out hazards such as blind corners and discuss where to cross.
- Find some buddies – you may be able to take turns with other parents escorting a small group to school. Better yet, organise a walking school bus or scooter train. Talk to your school about how to set up a walking school bus.

Check out www.selwyn.govt.nz for more information about Active Autumn.

Photo: Active transport to and from school is being encouraged with the 'Active Autumn' school campaign.

ENDS

Selwyn District Council media

027 556 8298

media@selwyn.govt.nz