

# Cycling proficiency training at school

## Dear parent(s),

Your child will be taking part in cycling proficiency training this school year. We would like to inform you about this and give you some tips to help your child ride their bicycle safely.

Children love riding bicycles, and this training will teach them how to be independent cyclists and stay safe on the roads. The training is carried out jointly by the school and the police, and usually takes place in the 4th school year.

## Children are not small adults

To ride bicycles safely, children need skills and knowledge. This is not easy at first, as they react differently in road traffic compared to adults:

- Even older primary school children are easily distracted, and it takes time for their concentration skills to improve.
- Their field of view is narrower than that of adults, so they see the world as if they are wearing horse blinkers.
- A child can only recognise a danger early enough to react in time from about age 8. They can only predict a situation early enough to take action to avoid any danger occurring from age 9 or 10.
- They only start looking around in other directions, instead of directly ahead, from age 8.
- Children can only realistically estimate speed and distance from about age 9.
- They start developing awareness for positions and perspectives from about age 9.
- Riding using just one hand is a skill that starts from about age 9.
- Being aware of what is behind them starts from about age 11.
- Up until they are 14 years old, children react more slowly than adults to what they see and hear.

Children usually have enough skills at age 9 or 10 to ride their bicycles in road traffic, but they lack experience. They can be quickly overwhelmed if too many things happen at once.

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## ***Bicycle control***

Being able to control a bicycle is essential for bicycle training. The training starts by checking that the children can do the following tasks without losing their balance or falling off:

- Riding in a straight line / following a track at a slow pace
- Looking around while cycling, looking back over their left shoulder
- Avoiding obstacles / changing lanes / turning corners
- Cycling with one hand and using hand signals (turning right/left)
- Braking when a signal is given
- Stopping at a given point / coming to a standstill

You can practise all of these things with your child. They need to master these cycling skills, and be used to riding, braking and stopping, before they can concentrate on the cycling training exercises and what is happening in traffic.

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## ***Main topics during cycling training***

The children will first learn about essential rules, traffic signs, dangers and behaviour. It is important that they develop an awareness of dangers and learn that other road users may also make mistakes.

The practical training component will then take place in the school yard, in a junior traffic training centre, or out on the road. A junior traffic training centre is a training area that simulates traffic situations. Children can practise their cycling skills with traffic-related exercises, e.g., turning left and right, cycling around bends and learning who has priority.

## ***And this is what you can do: Practise, practise, practise***

Learning to cycle is a gradual process. Help your child, practise with them. The more they cycle, the better! Children learn safe behaviour best in familiar surroundings where they cycle every day. The most useful experiences are gained from shorter trips in the neighbourhood around their home and school. These introduce them to situations that are important when cycling in road traffic.

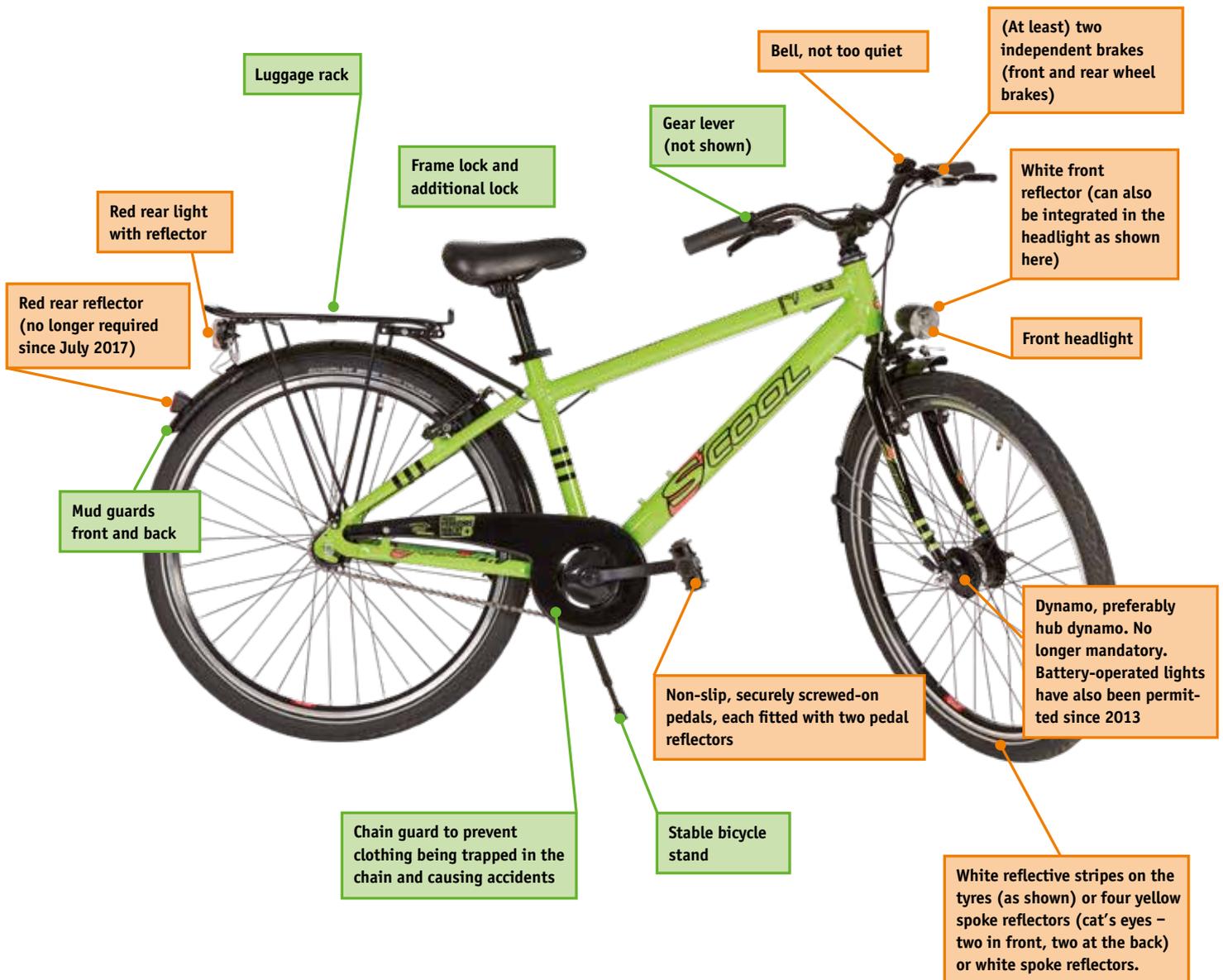
Some tips for practising with your child:

- Top priority is safety! Only practise in quiet places or on roads with little or slow-moving traffic where they can safely ride their bike.
  - Make sure your child's bicycle is roadworthy.
  - It is important that your child always wears a helmet when riding a bike!
  - Explain to your child that other road users can make mistakes at any time.
  - Teach them the most important traffic signs.
  - Don't overwhelm your child with too much information in one go.
  - Set a good example.
  - You will see what your child can do and what they need to practise when you go cycling together.
  - Your child must look around (over the shoulder) and clearly indicate their intention (hand signal) before changing lanes.
  - Cyclists must leave enough space between them and the person in front to be able to react rapidly if the latter suddenly brakes. Three wheel lengths are safe.
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## Roadworthy bicycles

A bicycle must be equipped with all required parts and be the correct size. Your child must be able to touch the ground with the tips of the toes on both

feet when sitting on the saddle. Lights and brakes must always work.



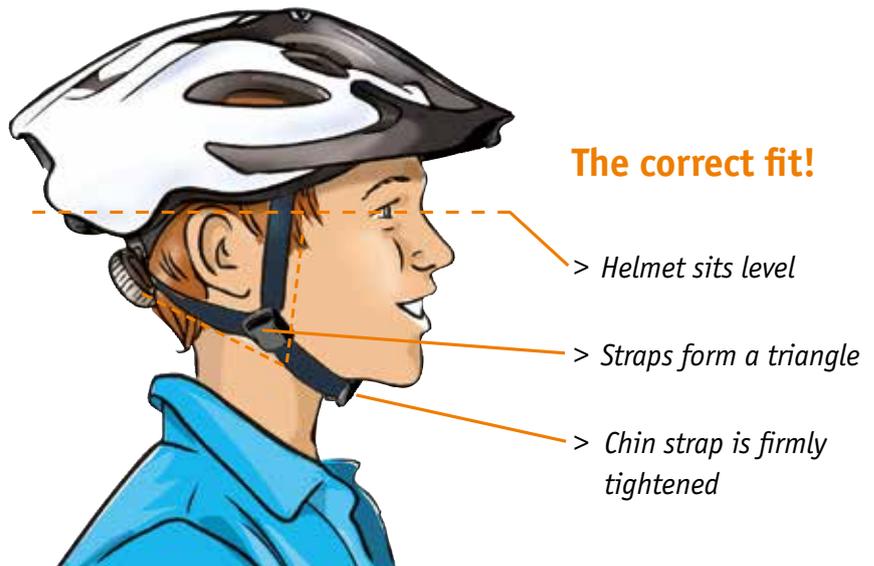
 Required

 Recommended

## Bicycle helmet

Never let your child ride without a helmet! A helmet is the best head protection. It must fit firmly on the head without wobbling. The size can be adjusted to the head using the head ring. All straps must sit firmly without pressure.

Set an example, wear a helmet too.



### The correct fit!

> Helmet sits level

> Straps form a triangle

> Chin strap is firmly tightened

## Where can/must children ride?

- Up until their 8th birthday, children must ride on the pavement; they can still use the pavement between age 8 and 9, even if there is a cycle path. They can be accompanied by someone aged over 16 on the pavement. Children aged 10 and over are no longer permitted to ride on the pavement.
- Cyclists must ride on the right on roads and cycle paths. They must ride between 0.5 and 1 meter away from the kerb.

## After the cycling proficiency training

Cycling proficiency training is not a cycling licence, it is just one step along the way to safer cycling. The children are still beginners as independent road users. Their awareness can be rapidly overwhelmed in complicated traffic situations.

Children cycle significantly more often from the age of 10, so the risk of accidents also increases. Your child will continue to need your support, particularly when starting secondary school. They will probably often have a different route to their new school. You should practise this new route with your child.

## Important traffic signs for cyclists



Intersection with priority to the right



One-sided road narrowing (right)



Roadworks



Give way



Stop. Give way



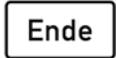
Roundabout



One-way street. Two-way cycle route



Cycle path



End of cycle path



Pedestrian pavement



Pedestrian pavement. Bicycles permitted



Shared pedestrian / cycle path



Split pedestrian / cycle path



Pedestrian zone. Bicycles permitted



Start of cycle street



No vehicles of any kind



No cycling



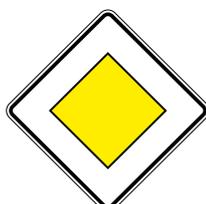
No entry



No entry. Bicycles permitted



Priority



Priority road



Priority road showing course of priority



Start of traffic-calmed zone



Pedestrian crossing / zebra crossing