

George Abbot School, Guildford – A case study of the school's newly recruited Active Travel Ambassadors launching their successful Active Travel Pedal, Park and Stride Campaign!

School description including issues and barriers

The George Abbot School enthusiastically joined the Modeshift Active Travel Ambassador programme during the 2024/25 academic year. There were 11 Active Travel Ambassadors (ATA's) and they mainly comprised of incredibly enthusiastic pupils from years 9 and 10. Their school is in the North-East of Guildford and mainly accessed by the busy A3100 London Road, but the main road does have some cycle lanes and also wide pavements. The school had also unsuccessfully campaigned for the development of improved cycle lanes on the A3100. The quiet residential area where the school is set is perfect for active travel as some roads have cycle lanes on both sides of the street and is a quiet and safe area for walking. Based on this information, and that a recent survey of the school showed that 700 out of 2000 pupils wished to cycle, and with the problems of congestion outside the school gates, the ATA's decided to launch a 3 week Active Travel Pedal, Park and Stride Campaign (16th June to the 4th July) that aimed to increase both cycling and walking to school and reduce school gate vehicle congestion.

Campaign planning and promotion

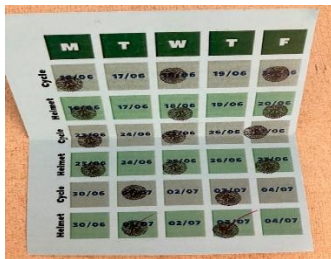
The data from a Hands Up Survey travel survey of the school, and Travel Issue Interviews, helped the Active Travel Ambassadors decide on the focus of their campaign. They did a fantastic presentation of their campaign idea to other schools and an expert panel at the Surrey ATA Campaign Junction in Reigate on March 28th 2025 and were awarded the first prize of £250!



The ATA's winning the top prize at the Surrey Campaign Junction

The ATA's decided to promote their Pedal, Park and Stride campaign through a variety of ways to increase participation. The campaign was first promoted in the school form groups via a slide show. The ATA's also made an announcement in an assembly.

Increase cycling – Personal Cycle Passports were handed out to pupils who wanted to take part. The passports were stamped by the Senior Leadership Team each morning at the school gates. Those cycling into school received one stamp and an extra stamp was given if the cyclist was wearing a cycle helmet. This focus on cycle helmet use was the result of an individual ATA's insistence that it was essential that they rewarded cycle helmet use in their campaign due to their experience of a friend having a cycle accident when they were not wearing a helmet. Those who participated were entered into an active travel raffle. More stamps meant a better chance of winning! Cyclists with a stamped Cycle Passport were also allowed to jump to the front of the canteen queue. They could also wear their PE kit, as the girls said that wearing school uniform was the main barrier to cycling.



Cycle passport



Active Travel Raffle

A Golden Padlock was also randomly attached to a bicycle in the cycle shed on Tuesdays and Thursday and sweets were given as a prize in order to incentivize cycling.

Increase walking and reduce congestion - A letter was sent to parents to further promote the Park and Stride scheme. This asked parents to drop off their child at a friend's house stating that it was fun to walk in together or to drop them off further down the road so their car didn't cause congestion near the school. The letter also asked parents not to turn in the small road leading to the school gate. It also warned parents against vehicle idling.

Campaign impact

Increase Cycling

Interviews of cyclists were carried out during and after the campaign to elicit views and surveys were conducted during and after the campaign.

It was found that there was an increase of 60 bikes to 160 on first day of the campaign!

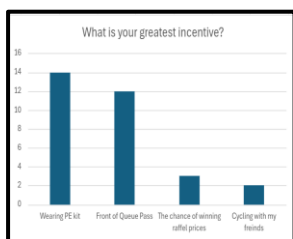
Cyclists increased from about 55 to 172 (peak) daily in the 3-week campaign period.

They compared temperature with cycling popularity – but no correlation was found.

85% of the 33 pupils interviewed said they planned to continue cycling.

96% of pupils interviewed regularly wore a cycle helmet.

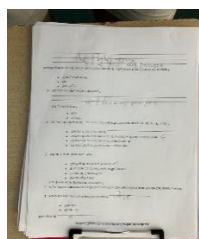
Most influential and popular prize was wearing a PE kit and the front of the canteen queue pass.



Incentives



Cycle interviews



Prizes

Increase walking and reduce congestion

A survey of vehicle drop-off behaviour was conducted 3 days each week for 3 weeks.

Drop offs outside the school decreased by about 50%. However, this may have been influenced by the GCSEs finishing meaning fewer drop offs.

Accreditation and what next?

The Senior Leaderships Team have realised there is still a need to address the issue of cars doing a 3-point turn at the school gates and pupils being unaware of road danger as they often use phones whilst walking.

A community police officer has offered to help out with the ATA Programme and warn parents against dangerous driving behaviour.

Lockers have will be installed in September to store cycle equipment.

The School have now an Approved Travel Plan! The aim is to achieve a Good Travel Plan accreditation by next year.

The ATA's want to organise bike maintenance workshops with Sustrans so the pupils will be riding safer bikes and also be more aware of how to maintain them.

The SLT are keen to repeat the Pedal, Park and Ride Campaign due to its resounding success!

Quotes

Senior Leadship Team - Rob Mudie (Head of Humanities)

“At George Abbot School, we are proud to support the fantastic work of our Active Travel Ambassadors. Promoting safer, healthier, and more sustainable ways of travelling to and from school is a priority for our whole community. The development of our School Travel Plan reflects our commitment to reducing congestion, improving

wellbeing, and encouraging responsible travel choices among students, staff, and families. We are excited to see the continued impact of this important initiative”.

George Abbot Pupils say ...

“It could continue as it is a great way to decrease cars”.

“We enjoyed it!”.

“It’s good for exercise and good for the environment”.

George Abbot Teachers say...

“What a great initiative, far fewer cars and the pupils seemed really positive”.

“Students seem much happier and are enjoying nature”.