MODULE 1: Getting started

Purpose
- Introduce the Bike Ed program to children and their parents/carers.
- Ensure children and their parents/carers understand the rules for Bike Ed.
- Ensure students understand the importance of wearing helmets and having the right riding gear.
- Carry out basic bike checks and ensure any needed repairs are undertaken before the practical riding sessions commence.
- Carry out helmet and riding gear checks before the practical riding sessions commence.
Bike Ed - A bicycle Education program for primary schools

Important information

• This classroom session is the opportunity to explain how the Bike Ed program will run.
• The activities set the scene for the program and enable you to find out the riding experience of students and whether they have a bike.
• If you are planning to use a bike trailer (see Bicycle trailers page 24.), remember you will need to enquire in advance about availability and make a booking.

Preparation

• Copies of permission Letter to parents/carers - see Sample: Letter to parents/carers (page 44).
• Copies of the Student Sheet: The rules for Bike Ed (page 45).
• Large sheets of paper for posters.
• Cycling Scenes: Helmets.
• Cycling Scenes: Footwear and clothing.

Estimated time required

2 hours

Introducing the Bike Ed program

Explain that the class will be taking part in a Bike Ed program. Give details of what will be involved and when practical sessions will take place.

Why cycle?

Q: How many of you cycle regularly?
Q: Why?

Brainstorm on the board the benefits of cycling, e.g.:

• Good for the environment - no greenhouse gas emissions or pollution.
• Keeps you healthy and fit.
• Can save time on some trips – such as short trips.
• Cheaper than travelling by car.
• Opportunities to get involved in cycling as a sport.

Ask students to think about what the most important reasons for cycling are for them, and to write a short piece about this. They should also write about whether they own a bicycle, a helmet, whether they can ride, how often they ride and where they ride. Explain this is for you only and will not be shared with the class and the reason for writing is to give you an idea of their knowledge and experience of cycling.

Collect these pieces of writing and use them as a guide to identify any students that may not own a bicycle or may not be able to ride a bicycle (See: Tips for getting non-riders mobile page 54).
Keeping safe

**Q:** What riding gear do you need to keep yourself safe when cycling?

**Q:** Why is this important? Seek details on each item.

Brainstorm on the board under the following headings. Use the *Cycling Scenes: Helmets* and *Cycling Scenes: Footwear and clothing* to stimulate discussion.

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**Approved helmet – to protect your head in a crash**

It has to be in good condition (dropping or mistreatment can reduce its protective qualities), the right size and correctly fitted bearing the Australian Standards Association mark AS/NZS 2063. Note that research has shown that helmets significantly reduce the risk of a head injury in a crash (estimated at 60% reduction).

**Footwear – to protect your feet in a crash, avoid injury while riding**

Shoes such as sports trainers with:

- non-slip soles so feet don’t slip on the pedals
- firm soles for support
- closed toes to prevent injury from road or footpath surfaces
- long shoe laces need to be tucked in to prevent being caught in the chain or pedals.

**Clothing**

- Clothing that is bright and light coloured – so you can be seen by other roads users. e.g. fluorescent colours are good in daylight, reflective materials are needed in poor light.
- Clothing that is suitable for protection in hot, cold, windy and wet weather.
- Long pants should be close-fitting around the lower leg area to avoid catching in the chain or pedals.

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Explain that as well as a roadworthy bike, students will have to bring the following to every practical session:

- an approved helmet, which will be checked for condition and fit
- suitable footwear for riding
- suitable clothing for the weather conditions that enables them to be seen (even if you are supplying riding vests, they should be encouraged to wear bright and light coloured clothing to help establish this behaviour)

Divide the class into six small groups and assign two groups to each type of riding gear (*helmet*, *footwear*, *clothing*). Using large sheets of paper, have each group prepare an advertising poster for the riding gear they have been assigned. Each poster for riding gear should explain the key issues around its importance. Display these in the classroom.
Discuss what students believe should be the rules for Bike Ed practical sessions, why these rules are important and necessary and what the consequences should be for students who break them.

Use Student Sheet: The rules for Bike Ed (page 45) as a guide to create your own rules or hand this out to students. Whether you hand out the sheet or create your own rules, it is important that this is taken home and a copy displayed in the classroom.

TAKE HOME ACTIVITIES

- Send home the Letter to parents/carers (this can be found in the Bike Ed resources online so you can customise it) and make sure the permission slip is returned. This letter outlines the Bike Ed program and the requirements for their child to participate.
- Ask students to take home the agreed rules for Bike Ed the class will be using and discuss these with their parents/carers.
1.2 Practical - no riding

Important information

• This practical session does not involve riding bikes, only conducting bike checks and helmet and other riding gear checks.
• It should be conducted ideally one to two weeks before the commencement of the riding sessions to allow children and their parents/carers to have any bike repairs required to be carried out before riding sessions begin.
• Note that this session can include basic bike maintenance if you wish, however, parents/carers should be left with the responsibility for bicycle maintenance and repairs.

Preparation

• 1.1 Classroom session should have been completed.
• The letter to parents/carers should have been sent out and the permission slips for each child returned.
• Students should bring in their bikes, or if bikes are being supplied these should be available (See: Bicycle trailers page 24).
• You will need an area large enough for students to work in pairs or small groups with their bikes.
• Students should bring in the riding gear (helmet, footwear and clothing) they plan to use for the practical sessions, so this can be checked as well.
• It is important to have some basic tools and equipment such as a tyre pump, some adjustable spanners, a set of Allen keys, a spoke spanner and some rags. While the purpose isn’t to perform repairs, some adjustments can be made very quickly and easily while making checks.
• Students will need a pen.
• Copies of Student Sheet: Bike safety check (page 46).
• Copies of Student Sheet: Helmet and riding gear safety check (page 47).

Estimated time required

1.5 hours

Bike safety check

Depending on the number of instructors and assistants available, this activity can be conducted in small groups or students can work in pairs and carry out the check on each others bikes. It is important that students are closely monitored while undertaking checks to make sure that any problems with bikes are noted.

Hand out the Student Sheet: Bike safety check to each student.

Divide the class into small groups or pairs and demonstrate each of the following checks, one at a time. Then have the students carry out the checks and record the results on the Student Sheet: Bike safety check. If you have some basic tools and equipment you may choose to have students make simple adjustments as the check takes place.

When the checks are completed collect the Student Sheet: Bike safety check and then have the students perform the quick bike check line up that will be done before each practical session.

The Student Sheet: Bike safety check should be checked, copied and handed back to students to take home for parents/carers to read, sign and then return after any repairs or adjustments have been made.
1. Frame fit

- The rider should be able to straddle the bike with both feet flat on the ground.
- On mountain bikes and BMX there should be at least 5-10 centimetres clearance between the top tube of the frame (or where a top tube would be) and the rider’s crotch.
- On road bikes, the clearance should be about 3 centimetres.

- On all bikes the distance between the handlebar and the seat should be the length of the rider’s forearm.

2. Seat

- The seat should be adjusted so that the rider can at least touch the ground with the left toes when seated.
- To check for correct seat adjustment the rider should:
  - sit on the seat and hold the handlebars (another person can assist with balance if necessary)
  - position one pedal at the bottom of the pedal arc in line with the seat tube
  - then place the heel of the appropriate leg on to the pedal.

- The leg should be comfortably straight – not locked at the knee. Adjust the seat height to achieve this setting for comfort and efficiency.
- Some children may be anxious if they are not able to touch the ground easily without leaning the bike to one side. While skills are developing with school ground activities, the seat may be lowered to a point where the student can comfortably
Bike safety check

• The handlebar ends should be covered and the handgrips secure.
• Check the handlebar for correct alignment. Straddle the front wheel and grip it between your knees. Try to wiggle the handlebar from side to side, and forward and back.
• Ask the rider to sit on the bike (supported by others if necessary) or ride it in a small circle. Check that the rider can reach the handlebar grips easily with their arms slightly bent and that their knees do not hit the handlebar.

3. Handlebar

• The seat should be in good condition and have no damage, such as cracks and broken springs.
• Grip the seat and check that it is stable, without movement from side to side.
• The seat should be adjusted to sit flat and be straight in line with the top tube.

4. Warning device

• Check that there is a bell or horn in working order that can be clearly heard.

5. Headset

• Hold the join between the top headset and the frame with the forefinger and thumb of one hand.
• Try to wiggle the handlebar forward and back with your other hand.
• No movement should be felt between the headset and the frame.
Bike safety check

6. Brakes

- All bikes must have at least one effective brake.
- For Bike Ed programs it is recommended that students ride bicycles which have a hand brake on each wheel or have working front and rear brakes.

Handbrakes

- Squeeze the front brake lever and try to wheel the bicycle forward. The front wheel should not turn.
- Squeeze the back brake lever and try to wheel the bicycle forward. The back wheel should not turn.
- When brakes are applied, there should be a gap between the brake levers and the handlebar.

Foot brakes

- Turn one of the cranks until it points backwards.
- Press down on the pedal with one hand and try to push the bike forward with your other hand.
- The back wheel should not turn.

7. Wheels

- Check that the wheel nuts are not loose and the spokes are not loose or broken.
- Lift the front of the bicycle and spin the front wheel. It should spin freely without stopping suddenly or scraping or hitting anything.
- Lift the back wheel and repeat
- Check the rim for damage such as splits, bulges or bends.
8. Tyres

- Tuck your fingers under the rim of the wheel and squeeze the tyre firmly with your thumbs. If the tyre is pumped up tight enough it will not depress.
- Tyres should be inflated to the manufacturers’ recommended pressure, which is embossed on the wall of the tyre. Inspect the tyres for worn spots or bulges by turning the wheels slowly.
- The valves should be capped and pointing straight to the hub.

9. Pedals

- Check that both pedals are working, in good condition and will spin a few times when tapped sharply with your fingers.

10. Chain

- Lift the bicycle by the seat so that the back wheel comes off the ground.
- Hold one pedal and move it forward so that the back wheel turns. Now move the pedal backwards.
- Check that the chain works smoothly without sticking or jumping and is not too loose, dry or rusty and is free of excess grease.

11. Lights and reflectors

- It is unlikely that many students’ bikes will be fitted with lights. Riding at night or in weather conditions where there is reduced visibility is not recommended.
12. Quick bike safety check

Explain that this is the safety check that will be done before each practical Bike Ed session and that if a bike fails, then the student will not be able to participate.

This time the check should show any problems that students have found, so make sure these have been noted on the Student Sheet: Bike safety check.

With students sitting on the seat of their bike, quickly check each bike as follows:

- Walk along the line and look for under-inflated tyres.
- Check that quick releases on front and rear wheels are tight and in the correct position.
- Check students can touch the ground with both feet.
- Check helmets are correctly fitted.
- Have the students as a group wheel their bikes forward a little and apply their front handbrake when you tell them to. Each bike should stop immediately.
- Have students wheel their bikes forward a little again and this time apply their rear brakes. The bikes should stop.
- Individually check any bike that does not appear to stop immediately.

- It is a legal requirement that a rider of a bicycle must not ride at night, or in hazardous weather conditions causing reduced visibility unless the bicycle or the rider displays:
  - front white light that is clearly visible for at least 200 metres
  - rear red light that is clearly visible for at least 200 metres
  - a rear red reflector that is clearly visible for at least 50 metres when light is projected onto it.
Helmet and riding gear safety check

Depending on the number of instructors and assistants available, this activity can be conducted in small groups or students can work in pairs and carry out the check on each others helmets and riding gear.

Hand out the **Student Sheet: Helmet and riding gear safety check** to each student.

Divide the class into small groups or pairs and demonstrate the following checks. Have the students then carry out these checks and record the results on the **Student Sheet: Helmet and riding gear safety check**.

Note that for reasons of hygiene and consistency of fit, it is recommended that children have their own bicycle helmets. It is expected that in general, parents and care-givers supply the child’s helmet.

Helmets can be cleaned with water and mild soap. Helmets may be seriously weakened by certain chemicals, including cleaning agents, adhesives, paints and solvents.

**HELMET**

1. **Standard**
   
   • Students must wear an approved helmet that is certified to meet the Australian Standard AS/NZS 2063.


2. **Condition of the outer shell**
   
   • It should be complete, in good condition and not cracked or broken. If damaged, it should be replaced.

3. **Condition of the inner shell**
   
   • The polystyrene foam liner should be complete and not cracked, broken or have pieces missing.

   • If the foam liner can be depressed with a finger at any point, it is not firm enough to provide protection in a fall.
Helmet and riding gear safety check

4. Straps and fasteners

- Straps should be complete and not torn or frayed and fasten firmly and comfortably around the chin.
- All clips and buckles should fasten properly and not be broken or have pieces missing.
- If damaged, the helmet should be replaced.

5. Fit

A helmet which is the correct size for the rider should sit down firmly and comfortably on the head without moving from side to side or forwards or backwards. Pony tails may need to be adjusted. Headbands, hairbands, caps and beanies should not be worn.

- To check for fit, place hands on top of the helmet and try to move it. It should not be possible to tilt the helmet:
  - forwards to cover the eyes
  - backwards to uncover the forehead
  - sideways to uncover the side of the head.
- When the helmet is done up it should be squarely positioned on the head.
- The rim of the helmet should sit on the forehead just above the eyebrows and should not be tilted back to uncover the forehead.

- The straps should be adjusted so that there is no slack when the buckle is securely fastened under the chin. They should not be twisted and the side straps should form a “V” shape with the point just under the ear lobe.
FOOTWEAR AND CLOTHING

1. Footwear

- Shoes should have firm non-slip soles to provide traction on the pedals and have closed toes to prevent injury from road or footpath surfaces.
- Shoe laces should be tucked in to prevent being caught on the chain or pedals.

2. Clothing

- Bicycles are small in comparison with other vehicles on the road. Being visible and conspicuous to other road users improves the safety of bicycle riders.
- Clothing must be bright and light coloured to improve visibility.
- Wear protective clothing for the weather conditions especially in hot, cold, windy or wet weather.
Dear parents and carers,

The Bike Ed program, a part of the school curriculum, will be taught to children in (year or grade) this year.

Each child will require a bicycle in safe working order and an approved helmet that fits correctly and is in good condition. A bike safety check will be undertaken shortly and we request your cooperation in having any necessary repairs, adjustments or replacements made promptly. A helmet and riding gear safety check will also be undertaken and it is essential that your child’s bicycle helmet fits comfortably and securely and that the polystyrene foam liner is undamaged. Your child must have footwear that has closed toes and firm, non-slip soles. Each child must also wear bright and light coloured clothing for every practical riding session.

The program consists of classroom and take-home activities and cycling activities done outdoors in the school grounds and on footways. You will be notified before any on-road riding is undertaken. All of these activities will be supervised.

There are three certificates which indicate a child’s progress and will be awarded during the program. A Level 1: Bike Ed basic riding skills certificate, Level 2: Bike Ed pathway cycling certificate and Level 3: Bike Ed on-road cycling certificate will be presented to all who successfully complete each stage of the program.

Please complete the form below to indicate your approval of and permission for your child to participate in the Bike Ed program. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

__________________________________________

Bike Ed program coordinator

My child, ________________________________ of Year ________, has my permission to participate in the Bike Ed program conducted as part of the curriculum of (School name) Primary School.

I understand my child will require a bicycle in safe working order and an approved helmet that fits correctly and is in good condition. I agree to arrange any repairs, adjustments or replacements to my child’s bicycle as indicated on the Bike safety check that will be sent home shortly.

I will also check my child’s bicycle helmet as indicated on the Helmet and riding gear safety Check that will be sent home shortly and have it replaced if it does not fit properly or is damaged in any way. I also understand that my child must wear suitable footwear and clothing (bright and light coloured) during practical riding sessions.

If my child is injured and I cannot be contacted, I authorise the teacher in charge to consent to my child receiving such medical and surgical treatment as may be deemed necessary.

Name _________________________ Signed ____________________ Date _________________

Telephone numbers: Home ___________________ Business ___________________
These are our rules for Bike Ed. Our group and our instructors agree with these rules and the consequences for not observing them. We want to observe these rules so we can all enjoy our riding activities and do them safely.

Bike Ed Rules

1. We must wear an approved cycling helmet, properly fitted and fastened and in good condition for all cycling activities.

2. We must wear a bright and light coloured vest or top and closed toe, firm non-slip sole shoes for all cycling activities.

3. At the start of each cycling session, we must carry out a bike safety check. Any part of the bicycle requiring repair must be reported to the instructor. Another bicycle must be used until the repair has been made.

4. We must pay attention and obey the Bike Ed instructor’s directions.

Consequences

The consequences for not observing any of these rules during a riding session is to not take part in riding activities for that session.
## Bike safety check

**Student Name:** 

Any repairs or adjustments required need to be completed by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>comments on repairs or adjustment required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1. Frame fit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Right size for the rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2. Seat</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correctly adjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not damaged</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3. Handlebar</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Handlebar ends covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Handgrips secure</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4. Warning device</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has working bell or horn</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5. Headset</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Headset has no movement</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6. Brakes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Working front brake</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Working back brake</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>7. Wheels</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No loose wheel nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No loose or broken spokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Front wheel spins freely</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Back wheel spins freely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>8. Tyres</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Front correctly inflated and in good condition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Back correctly inflated and in good condition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>9. Pedals</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not broken and spinning freely</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>10. Chain</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Works smoothly without sticking or jumping</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not too loose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not dry, rusty or has too much grease</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have read this *Bike safety check* and made sure that any required repairs or adjustments have been made. I believe my child’s bicycle is in good working order and give permission for it to be used in the *Bike Ed* program.

Signed by parent/carer: ___________________________ Date: _______________
Student Name:

Any repairs or adjustments required need to be completed by:

**HELMET – A helmet must be replaced if it shows any signs of damage or wear.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Standard</td>
<td></td>
<td>Approved helmet that meets the Australian Standard AS/NZS 2063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Condition of the outer shell</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not damaged or cracked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Condition of the inner shell</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not damaged or cracked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Straps and fasteners</td>
<td></td>
<td>Straps not torn or frayed and clips and buckles not broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fastens firmly under chin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Correct size</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tips on helmet fit**

A helmet which is the correct size for the rider should sit down firmly and comfortably on the head without moving from side to side or forwards or backwards. Pony tails may need to be adjusted. Headbands, hairbands, caps and beanies should not be worn. To check, place hands on top of the helmet and try to move it. It should not be possible to tilt the helmet:

- forwards to cover the eyes
- backwards to uncover the forehead
- sideways to uncover the side of the head.

When the helmet is done up it should be squarely positioned on the head. The rim of the helmet should sit on the forehead just above the eyebrows and should not be tilted back to uncover the forehead. The straps should be adjusted so that there is no slack when the buckle is securely fastened under the chin. They should not be twisted and the side straps should form a “V” shape with the point just under the ear lobe.

**RIDING GEAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Footwear</td>
<td></td>
<td>Closed toes and firm, non-slip soles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Clothing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bright and light coloured – so rider can be easily seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Close fitting so it won’t catch and suitable for the weather conditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have read this *Helmet and riding gear safety check* and will make sure my child has a correctly fitting, safe helmet and safe ‘visible’ riding gear for the *Bike Ed* program.

Signed by parent/carer: ________________________ Date: ________________