MODULE 4: Riding on paths

Purpose

- Reinforce that riding on paths is generally the safest option.
- An opportunity to practise skills developed in the program to date, including scanning for hazards and riding in a group.
- Understand and apply the rules for sharing different paths and footways safely and courteously with pedestrians and other bicycle riders.
4.1 Classroom

Important information

• Children under 12 years of age can cycle legally on the footpath and so can adults accompanying them. Generally footpaths and shared paths are a safer option when compared with riding on the road.

Preparation

• Cycling Scenes: On the path 1 and 2.
• Copies of a map showing bicycle paths/shared paths in the local area – may be available from the local council, Bicycle Network or use a street directory.
• Copies of a letter and permission forms for parents/carers about the path ride in the local area – see Sample: Letter to parents/carers (page 104).

Estimated time required
1.5 hours

Path cycling

Explain that the group will be participating in a ride on paths around the local area.

Q: What are the different types of paths you can cycle on? e.g. footpaths, bike paths, shared paths.
Show the Cycling Scenes: On the path 1 and 2. Point out the signs used on different types of paths and discuss what these mean using the teaching points on the back.

Q: Who can legally cycle on the footpath?
Children under 12 years of age and adults riding with children.
Q: What are the advantages of riding on paths? e.g. it is often the safest option.

Brainstorm a list of what we need to be aware of to ride safely on paths. For each ask about what we need to do to be safe, e.g.

- Safety of other users (pedestrians, other bicycle riders, scooter riders) – look out for others, slow down and warn them if you are coming from behind (use the bell or call out “Coming by!” or “Passing!”).
- Driveways/gateways – lookout for signs of cars, people or pets coming out or in.
- Not riding fast – keep the speed down at all times so you are ready to stop quickly if needed.
- Turning blind corners – slow down, keep left and be ready to stop.
- Which side to ride on – always ride on the left side of the path.
- Animals – always be on the look out for dogs and other animals.
- Not riding in pairs – unless the path is wide enough and there is a good view ahead.
- Stopping and dismounting when the path comes to a road that needs to be crossed – walk the bike across the road and always use Stop, Look, Listen, Think.
- Stopping and parking your bike – make sure you don’t block the path for other people.

Planning a ride on local paths

Discuss previous experience of riding on footpaths, bicycle paths/shared paths in the local area.

In small groups distribute copies of a map of the local area showing bicycle paths/shared paths in the local area.

Explain to the students that they are going to investigate where the group could go in a ride on paths in the local area. Point out that the route needs to:

- begin and end at the school
- be an appropriate distance to allow it to be completed in the time allocated (30-40 minutes of riding and time for breaks along the way)
- maximise the use of bicycle paths/shared paths.

Have each group plan a ride and then present it to the rest of the class. Try to make a group decision on which is the best. Explain that you will be checking the route (or possible routes) to make sure it is suitable. Note that once this has been done, a route map of the ride should be displayed in the classroom.

Discuss what they will need to bring along for the day of the ride:

- bike, helmet and suitable riding gear (bright and light coloured clothing)
- water bottle to be carried on the bike or in a backpack.

Distribute letters about the ride for parents/carers – see Sample: Letter to parents/carers page 104.
4.2 Practical - Riding

Important information
- It is essential that a trained instructor has ridden the selected route before the activity.
- The ratio for instructors/assistants to students needs to be 1 to 10. See Rules and legal requirements for Bike Ed programs page 21 for further details.
- A quick bicycle safety check needs to be undertaken prior to beginning riding activities.

Preparation
- Copy of Teacher Sheet: Riding on paths assessment (page 105).
- Check availability of other instructors/assistants to ensure adequate supervision of the group.
- A trained instructor needs to ride the selected route well before the activity to identify any possible hazards.
- Obtain permission forms from parents/carers for children to leave the grounds to do this activity.
- Prepare a map showing the route to be followed.
- An instructor needs to carry a mobile phone and a basic first aid kit in case of an emergency.
- Download and print Level 2: Bike Ed pathway cycling certificates from vicroads.vic.gov.au/bikeed

Estimated time required
2 hours

Quick 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.
Briefing students before the ride

Using the map explain the directions and possible hazards or special features that may be encountered – driveways on footpaths, roads to cross, loose stones or bumps, bridges and hills. Discuss how these will be tackled safely.

Road crossings

Stress that they must stop, dismount and then walk their bikes across when told to by the instructor and use the Stop, Look, Listen, Think crossing procedure. They must:

- stop and dismount two metres before the path ends
- wheel their bicycle, rather than slow ride, through any railings at the exits and entrances to bike paths and shared paths
- wheel their bicycle to the edge of the road
- scan both ways (observe traffic lights, if present) and wheel their bicycle across the road when clear in both directions
- wait on the other side for the rest of the group to cross, scan for other users, remount and continue riding.

Communication with others in the group

- If there are changes in conditions ahead, it is important that warning messages are passed down through the group, such as for a pothole, glass on the track or pedestrians approaching. The first rider scans ahead and calls out ‘pothole’ to the rider behind, who in turn calls out to the next rider behind and so on.

Overtaking a pedestrian or bicycle rider travelling in the same direction

- If riding in pairs, move to ride in single file, ring your bell, or call out ‘passing’ to signal your approach; move out to the right, ride slowly until there is room to overtake.

Passing a pedestrian or a bicycle rider who is coming towards them

- If riding in pairs, move to ride in single file, move to the left of the path and ride on by.

Crossing narrow bridges

- Ride slowly in single file; give way to other users from both directions who are already on the bridge.

Steep slopes

- It may be necessary to dismount and wheel the bicycle up the slope, remount and either walk or ride down the slope. If riding, the brakes will need to be used to control speed.
If it is planned to practise riding in pairs, then explain where and when this will be done. Footpaths are not suitable for riding in pairs because of the likelihood of pedestrians and the risks from driveways. This should only happen on a path that is wide enough and has good visibility of the path ahead, such as a long straight and flat section. The group should switch from single file to pairs and back to single file when the path narrows or other users are present.

**Group ride on paths**

- Take time to stop at safe points on the ride, where the group can get off the path completely. Remind the group of how to tackle hazards or features that will be coming up, such as a road crossing.
- Observe and record on the *Teacher Sheet: Riding on paths assessment* each student’s abilities. Note this can be completed during breaks along the way or immediately following the ride.
- Ensure an instructor or assistant remains at the front and the rear of the group at all times.

Note: The *Level 2: Bike Ed pathway cycling certificate* is awarded after satisfactory completion of this module. If a student is not considered competent enough to be awarded the certificate, it may be useful to contact parents/carers and explain the situation and make suggestions for how they could help their child practise the required skills.
Dear parents and carers

Children at our school have taken part in the Bike Ed program recently. We are very pleased with the progress children have made in learning to ride skillfully and confidently as well as their development of safe and responsible cycling behaviours.

On (insert day and date) the children will be taking part in a supervised local area path ride. This ride will include footpaths, bike paths and shared paths in the local area around the school.

This will give the children an opportunity to practise their skills in riding safely on paths. These activities will be supervised closely by trained instructors, other teachers and parent assistants. A map showing the route to be used for the path ride is attached.

At the completion of the local area path ride the Level 2: Bike Ed pathway cycling certificate will be presented to all who successfully complete the ride and demonstrate appropriate riding skills and behaviours and observe relevant road rules.

Please complete the form below to indicate your approval of and permission for your child to participate in the Bike Ed program local area path ride.

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 local area path ride conducted as part of the curriculum of (school name) Primary School.

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____________________

Sample: Letter to parents/carers
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<tr>
<th>STUDENT NAME</th>
<th>COMPETENCY OF STUDENTS</th>
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<td>Scan ahead to anticipate potential hazard</td>
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