

Cycling Safety for Students

Let's stay safe together



Ride right – bike safety

Bike riding is fun and helps you stay physically fit and active. It's also a great way for family and friends to spend time together.

However, there is a serious safety side to bike riding. When you jump on your bike you need to be aware that you are sharing the road, tracks or footpaths with other people, bike riders or vehicles. Here are some rules for bike riders that will help everyone stay safe.

Follow the road rules

You might think that the road rules only apply to people who are driving vehicles such as cars, but this is incorrect. Even as a bike rider you need to follow the road rules. This means that you have to follow all the signs (e.g. 'Stop', 'Give way' etc.) and you have to stop when there is a red light. How well do you know the road rules?



Be ready to ride

Before you jump on your bike, there's a few things you should do:

- Make sure you feel ok. Check your balance, make sure you are not too tired and you can see and hear well.
- Wear comfortable clothes that are good for the weather conditions. You don't want to get too hot or too cold.
- If you are riding a long way, make sure you have enough food to eat and water to drink – this is the fuel for your body.
- Plan your ride and make sure someone knows where you are going and when you think you will be back. This is very important if you are old enough to go riding without an adult.



Wear a helmet

In Australia it is the law that every cyclist must wear a helmet. When you buy a helmet, check to make sure it meets the Australian standard, look for a sticker that says Australian standard. Make sure it fits you correctly, someone at a bike or sport's store should be able to help you. You should also replace your helmet if it gets damaged, is too tight or is just getting old.



Stay on the footpath

If there is a footpath available, it is often the safest place for you to ride. Of course you don't want to scare people who are walking so be careful not to ride fast. Keep to the left where possible, give way to pedestrians, and watch out for cars coming out of driveways – they can ruin your whole day!

In many States and Territories in Australia you can legally ride on the footpath, unless there are signs to say you can't. In Victoria and New South Wales, however, you are not permitted to ride on the footpath unless you are under 12 years of age, or there are signs that say you can, for example with shared pathways. So, be sure to observe road rules in Victoria and New South Wales, where children 12 years and older are not permitted to ride on footpaths, and pick a safe route for your journey.



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Maintain your bike

A bike is more than a toy, it is a vehicle. Just like any vehicle, you have to make sure your bike is in good working condition:

- Check your brakes.
- Check your bell or horn works.
- Check your tyres are pumped up.

There is more information about bike maintenance on the **'Ready to ride – looking after your bike'** fact sheet.



Be alert and predictable

When riding your bike it is important that you stay aware of your surroundings, ride to the conditions and be predictable in your actions. So what does this mean?

- Look for vehicles, other bikes and pedestrians – what signals are they giving?
- If you are riding on the footpath, always watch out for vehicles coming in and out of driveways and laneways.
- Watch out for hazards and obstacles such as potholes, rocks, tree branches or rubbish. What else can you think of?
- If you are riding on the road, be careful when going past a parked vehicle. Someone might not see you coming and open their door. Look to see if there is someone in the vehicle and be prepared.
- Make sure you use hand signals to tell other people what you are going to do. For example, use your hands to indicate when you are going to turn. You should do this well before you turn, not at the last minute.



Make sure you can be seen

One of the best ways to stay safe while riding is to make sure other people can see you. You can do this by following the tips below.

- If you are crossing a road or turning a corner, try to make eye contact with any drivers so you know they have seen you.
- Wear light or bright colours. If you're riding at night, wear highly visible or reflective materials.
- Have working lights on the front and rear of your bike. The lights should be visible for at least 200 metres. It's the law to have lights on your bike at night and low light times. And turning on your lights in the day can help other people see you. There are excellent daylight visible lights available which help you to be seen by other road users.

