A Parents' Guide to

The Safety of CHILDREN ON CYCLES

GEM
The Guild of Experienced Motorists
Children and Cycles

Riding a cycle can help your child develop a sense of balance, and will encourage an understanding of road safety rules, and the ability to judge speed and distance.

Every year an alarming number of children are killed or seriously injured whilst cycling, many of these accidents happening near to their home.

A cycle is very much more than a toy and it is worth emphasising this to your child, stressing the dangers of not using it correctly.

It is never too early to start teaching children about road safety. Very young children should never be allowed near the road on their cycle unsupervised, even children up to 9 years of age will have difficulty in understanding the problems of dealing with traffic.

Choosing and Maintaining Cycles

Like children, cycles come in many different shapes and sizes. Choose the cycle which best suits your child. A cyclist should be able to keep both feet on the ground when sitting on the saddle and to control the cycle without wobbling. Get advice from a reputable cycle dealer if in any doubt.

Check your child’s cycle regularly and pay particular attention to the condition of brakes, tyres, chains, lights and reflectors. Encourage your child to take an interest in the maintenance and cleanliness of the cycle. Further information about cycle maintenance can be obtained from your local road safety officer at the Council offices.

Training Your Child to Cycle Safely

When your child is able to ride without wobbling or losing control explain, and if possible demonstrate, the basic cycling skills, for example looking behind before any manoeuvre, using brakes safely and correctly, understanding traffic signs and signals, and wearing appropriate clothing. Only when these points are fully understood should you allow your child on to a road and then only under your supervision. Remind older children that cycling on pavements and footpaths can be dangerous and is often illegal.

The Cycling Proficiency Scheme is organised at most schools for children aged over 9. Encourage your child to take part and show that you take an active interest in the progress which is made.

Dressing for Cycling

A large number of accidents to cyclists occur because they are not seen by other drivers and riders. Explain to your child the importance of being ‘bright’ on the road and ensure that they wear fluorescent and reflective garments. Also make sure that if they are cycling after dark they have efficient front and rear lights on the cycle. It is advisable to fit a ‘Cycle Spacer Arm’ which not only makes the cycle more easily seen by other road users but encourages drivers to leave more space when overtaking.

Cycling helmets are an essential accessory. Children are more likely to suffer severe head injuries, even when merely ‘falling from a cycle’, because their heads represent a large proportion of their body weight making them more top-heavy than adults. Make sure that any helmet you buy is an approved type that fits correctly.

The Guild of Experienced Motorists is a 60 year old motoring organisation dedicated to road safety.

Here are just some of the benefits GEM members receive for only $13.50 per year.

- Road Safety advice
- Insurance advice
- Legal advice
- Technical advice
- Quarterly motoring magazine
- Free access to the H.P. Information register
- A wide range of specially negotiated motoring and insurance services at additional cost including GEM breakdown/recovery insurance. This special scheme costs only $27.70 per year and covers:
  - Freephone Helpline
  - Recovery to any selected destination
  - Roadside repairs (including running out of fuel and flat tyres)
  - Home Breakdown up to a limit of $40
  - Recovery from motorways, toll bridges and tunnels
  - Recovery following an accident or ditching
  - Recovery following theft or vandalism
  - Recovery if the sole driver falls seriously ill
  - Additionally, in certain circumstances, the cost of emergency overnight accommodation or alternative road or rail travel may be claimed.

Find out more about GEM Membership, Breakdown Recovery Insurance and other benefits by completing the section below and posting this pre-paid card as soon as possible.

Name
Address
Postcode
Tel. No.

The Caring Drivers Motoring Club
Your Responsibility as a Driver

Young cyclists can be unpredictable. As a driver you should make allowance for this by slowing down and giving them plenty of room.

- Keep a special look out for cycles. They are much smaller than other vehicles on the road and can be easily missed.
- Before opening car doors ensure there are no cyclists nearby.
- Allow cyclists plenty of room especially when overtaking in windy weather and on bad road surfaces.
- Be particularly careful when turning left that there are no cyclists on your nearside.

Remember cyclists are much less easily seen than other road users.

The Guild of Experienced Motorists

The Guild of Experienced Motorists has a history of motoring tradition stretching back to 1932 when it was known as the Company of Veteran Motorists with the famous V-badge symbol still retained today.

The name may have changed but the philosophy has not Care, Courtesy and Concentration when driving will reduce accidents. For over 60 years the Guild has actively promoted road safety through support and sponsorship of many road safety campaigns and initiatives.

Membership is available to anyone with a full driving licence free from endorsement for a serious motoring offence. When you become a member you know that you are helping to promote road safety for all road users and in return enjoy the many benefits and services on offer.

For further details of road safety cycling schemes in your area contact your local road safety officer at Council offices or David Williams, FIRSO, Road Safety Officer at the Guild of Experienced Motorists, Station Road, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5EN.