# Supporting school issues through a whole-school approach

Travelling safely

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Police district | School name | School demographics | Submitted by |
| Auckland City | St Pius X School | Full primary Urban, mainly Pasifika  Decile band 1–3 | Const. G. Campbell School Community Officer |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Summary | Increasing students’ personal safety in vehicles by using correct child restraints. |
| Issue | The intervention sought to address the non-use of booster seats in vehicles by children under the age of 7 years, as well as other minor issues related to restraints. |
| Identification and prioritisation | The issue was identified by school staff, including the Principal, who witnessed numerous students being dropped off at school either not sitting in booster seats or not using any form of safety restraint. The SCO conducted an assessment of cars dropping students off and found that 75% (12 out of 16) of students in cars stopped were incorrectly restrained. |
| Short-term goal | The short-term goal was to educate parents/caregivers about their legal responsibilities to ensure that their children are safe and properly restrained in motor vehicles. |
| Long-term goal | The long-term goal was to greatly reduce (if possible, eliminate) the incidence of students arriving at and leaving St Pius X School while unrestrained in motor vehicles. |
| Prevention activities | Activities that occurred within a whole-school approach included: School ethos and environment  * The school incorporated Auckland Transport’s [Travelwise programme](https://at.govt.nz/cycling-walking/school-travel/travelwise-schools/) to make transport to and from school safer and to encourage walking and other forms of travelling to school. Older students were informed that they need to be properly restrained when in motor vehicles. * The SCO met with school staff to discuss a rationale for the intervention and the relevant legislation so that staff could correctly inform the students and their parents. * SCOs carried out checks of sample cars each term. The first check included a questionnaire about booster seats.  Community connections  * School consulted with Police, parents and Auckland Transport. * The school, the Board of Trustees, Police and Auckland Transport will work together to reinforce the message. * The school advertised the issue of children being properly restrained when coming and going to school in their school newsletter. Pamphlets about restraint in Tongan, Samoan, Māori, English, and Chinese were placed in the reception area. * A public meeting at the school addressed the issue of restraints, after the first check on vehicles found 75% of students travelling to and from school in motor vehicles were unrestrained. The meeting clarified the responsibilities of parents/caregivers and explained the penalties for breaking the law. Examples of booster seats were also shown, as many parents didn't know what a booster seat looked like.  Curriculum teaching and learning  * A school assembly, attended by the SCO, highlighted the issue to all students. * The school implemented [Road Safe for years 1–3](http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/personal-and-community-advice/school-portal/resources/travelling-safely/road-safety), including a learning objective about understanding car safety and the use of booster seats. * Students did drawings and displayed them around the school. These drawings showed proper restraints in motor vehicles. |
| Impact | The short-term goal was achieved as the messages given by Police, school staff, and church leaders appear to have been received. Meetings with parents/caregivers were well attended.  The long-term goal was achieved (see the table below below) with a turnaround from 75% non-compliance to 100% compliance. The challenge is to maintain compliance over future years. |
| Next steps | The school will continue to monitor compliance in 2016 with the assistance of Road Policing officers and the SCO. |
| Obstacles | The problem arose mainly when parents couldn’t drive their children to school because of sickness or work obligations and so asked other parents to take them. It is the nature of the Tongan community to help others out, so other parents transported the children to school without booster seats. Trying to get these parents to understand that they were both endangering the safety of the child and breaking the law was not easy, as they could see only the good they were doing in helping out another member of their community. |
| Improvements | The intervention was effective in achieving both its short-term and long-term goals. Education is the key rather than enforcement and ticketing. This issue is likely to recur if the school community doesn’t continue to monitor, educate and communicate. |
| Conclusion | The school is most proud of the way its staff, community, and church came together to realise the nature of the problem, and then work together to ensure the safety of their children. |

Data from checking cars during the year

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Time of check | **Number of cars stopped** | **Cars with correct restraints/booster seats** | **Cars without correct restraints/booster seats** |
| Term 1  Term 2  Term 3  Term 4 | 16  20  12  9 | 4  12  11  9 | 12  8  1  0 |