# Supporting school issues through a whole-school approach

Travelling safely

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| Police district | School name | School demographics | Submitted by |
| Auckland | Name withheld | Full primary  Decile band 1–3 | Const. C. Warwick-Ching  School Community Officer |

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| Summary | Increasing students’ safety while travelling in vehicles. |
| Issue | A disproportionate number of young/small students were being driven to school either not in a booster seat or not strapped in correctly. |
| Identification and prioritisation | The principal approached Police after teachers and parents reported seeing many students getting in and out of vehicles at school pick-up and drop-off times when no booster seat was visible.  When junior classes were asked by teachers who didn't have booster seats, a worryingly high number of students put their hands up.  A number of discussions were held about this issue between school staff, parents and Police. The school decided to address the situation. |
| Short-term goal | To increase parents’ awareness of the potential dangers of allowing children to travel in vehicles without appropriate restraints.  For parents to accept the vital importance of using booster seats at all times for children under the age of 7. |
| Long-term goal | To reduce the number of drivers who either do not use or incorrectly use booster seats, from approximately 70% (at the time of checks pre-intervention) to below 20% by end of Term 4. |
| Prevention activities | Activities that occurred within a whole-school approach included:  School ethos and environment   * Police worked in partnership with the principal, teachers and the Board of Trustees to come up with solutions to the issue. * Police (other than the SCO) were tasked to do spot checks on the use of booster seat throughout the intervention. Offending drivers were spoken to and made aware of the dangers.   Community connections   * All parents/caregivers of junior students were given leaflets that explained the laws on booster seats, gave useful information on how to get booster seats, and contained charts showing the height requirements and ages for booster seat use. * The principal and the SCO wrote articles for the school newsletter to educate drivers about the dangers and the need to change. * Auckland Transport was contacted and asked to assist.   Curriculum teaching and learning   * All junior classes were spoken to about the dangers of not being in booster seats. They were shown how to use them, and given examples of potential risks. Students worked together with Police to come up with ways to encourage parents/drivers to use them – for example, classroom activities explaining the need for booster seats and the consequences of not using them were shown to parents. * Students formed a task group and made large posters and placards that they held up and displayed outside the school during peak drop-off and pick-up times, chanting "Keep us safe, click us in!" Police also joined in and helped supervise the students. |
| Impact | This intervention has made the whole school community aware of this issue and the dangers it poses. During the chanting sessions there were many very positive comments from parents, and also horn honks and thumbs up from passing cars showing the support of drivers from the local community.  Regular checks outside the school at pick-up and drop-off times have shown a reduction of approximately 70% (at the time of the checks) in the targeted behaviour. It has been difficult to calculate an accurate percentage for the change, partly because of communication difficulties in getting this information to the SCO from the Road Policing Teams, but from observations by the SCO and school staff it seems clear that non-compliance has dropped by well over 50%. |
| Next steps | The school will continue to enthusiastically remind the whole school community of the dangers of this issue through newsletters, student tasks and Police presence when available |
| Obstacles | Much as we would like every driver to stop this unsafe practice, it would be unrealistic to expect this to happen.  Police and Auckland Transport resources have to be shared across the school, so are not available as often as we would like.  Another obstacle is the attitude of some drivers/parents, who may continue this unsafe practice. |
| Improvements | The school needs to acquire more data on the number of drivers who continue this unsafe practice. |
| Conclusion | The spot checks certainly seemed to show that offending had lessened, but the challenge will be to continue this in the long term. However, the positive responses are very encouraging. The school, with the support of Police, will continue to work enthusiastically to try to resolve this issue. All those involved, including offending drivers, were very positive about the intervention. This was largely due to the positive and friendly manner in which it was carried out. |