Bikes in Schools Guide

A guide for teachers and bike monitors. Helping schools get the most out of their bike track, gear, and programme in a safe, fun, and sustainable way.

Bikes in Schools

Christchurch City Council

Welcome!

This guide is designed to support teachers and bike monitors with the safe and effective use of the school's bike shed, bikes, helmets, and bike track.

It includes helpful guidance, suggestions and examples that can be adapted to suit your school's setup, needs and routines.

Find additional resources at **ccc.govt.nz/bikes-in-schools** including:

- Traffic light poster
- First aid tags
- ABC-Q poster

Any questions? Contact us at **SchoolTravel@ccc.govt.nz**

Contents

1. Day-to-day use of the track

This section includes some great tips and tricks for the smooth day-to-day operation of your Bikes in Schools track. It aims to help your programme run smoothly and safely, with a strong focus on empowering bike monitors to take on responsibility and leadership.

Bike monitors

We encourage schools to select bike monitors to help with the day-to-day operations of the bikes and track. Bike monitors are typically students who have shown interest in the bikes or tracks. Becoming a bike monitor is a great way to develop leadership, teamwork and problem-solving skills. This role empowers students to take charge of the daily management of the school track and bikes with minimal staff supervision.

After completing training, bike monitors should be able to:

- Issue bikes
- Fit and check helmets
- Supervise the track and encourage safe riding practices
- Store bikes correctly and keep the shed tidy
- Identify when maintenance is needed
- Seek adult assistance for bike repairs or safety concerns when needed.

Beyond the track, bike monitors can help raise funds and awareness by organising events such as bike–a–thons, making bike–powered smoothies, or reaching out to local businesses for sponsorship and support.

Tip:
Select monitors from different year levels to help share and pass on knowledge across the year groups. To keep everything running smoothly it is recommended that the lead teacher and the bike monitors conduct a bike shed and equipment audit once a term.

Track checks

Before the track is used, especially after weekends or holidays, check the track for sticks, rubbish or anything else that could be a hazard.

Bike checks – putting them away

1. Check all bikes are accounted for and put away in their correct places.
2. Do a quick ABC–Q check. If anything needs fixing, bike monitors should tell the lead teacher.
3. Check that all helmets are accounted for and are in their correct place.
4. Check that all tools are accounted for and put away in the correct place.
5. Make sure the container is closed and locked securely.

Tip:
Keep a maintenance log to note issues and place a first aid tag on bikes that need fixing. Printable first aid tags can be found at **ccc.govt.nz/bikes-in-schools**

The ABC-Q check (Quick and easy)

Monitor tip: Each time a bike is taken out of the shed, give it a quick ABC-Q safety check:

A

Air – Make sure there's enough air in the tyres. Give them a squeeze with your fingers – they should feel firm, not soft. If they need more air, use a pump. You can find the right pressure on the side of the tyre (look for a number with PSI or bar). Also check that the wheels look good, spin smoothly without wobbling, and that no spokes are broken.

B

Brakes – Roll your bike forward and back and squeeze each brake lever one at a time to make sure they work. The right brake stops the front wheel, and the left one stops the back. Brakes can come loose when moving your bikes, so always check that the brake cables are connected and working before anyone rides.

C

Chain – Check the chain has clean oil on it and is rotating freely, check for and remove debris such as flax and grasses. The chain should be black, or silver and a small amount of oil should come off if you touch it.

Q

Quick releases – Check these are done up correctly and tight. Quick release levers are found near the wheels and seat post. They should curve in around the seat post or towards the centre of the wheel.

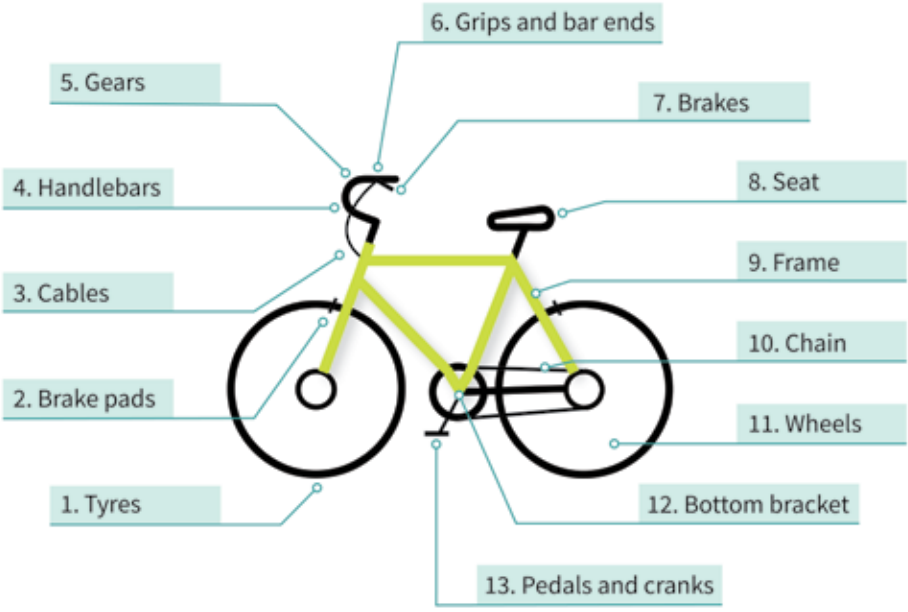
2. Maintenance and safety

Maintaining bikes helps keep riders safe and ensures your fleet lasts. This section introduces simple checks that bike monitors and staff can do regularly.

Regularly checking bikes and catching maintenance issues early will save time and money.

Check every term

Each term, it's important to perform a more thorough check of the bikes. Start from the frame and work through each component to ensure nothing is missed. For guidance, use the handy checklist on the next page. For extra support, watch the handy video at **ccc.govt.nz/bikes-in-schools**



Tip:
If you discover any adjustments or repairs that are needed to fix the bike/s after doing this check, we recommend getting in touch with a local bike mechanic or someone who has bike maintenance skills.

Check	Description
1. Tyres	Inspect tyres for any slits, punctures, or baldness. Check the tyre pressure – the maximum recommended pressure is printed on the side of the tyre.
2. Brake pads	Inspect brake pads for wear. If they're too thin or uneven, they may need replacing.
3. Cables	Check all cables and their protective casing (the housing) for rust and fraying, and replace if required.
4. Handlebars	Ensure handlebars and stem are tight and properly aligned.
5. Gears	Shift through all gears to ensure smooth operation. Inspect derailleur for any visible damage or wear. Ensure it is properly aligned and moves smoothly when shifting.
6. Grips and bar ends	Check handlebar grips for deterioration and that handlebar ends are in place.
7. Brakes	Ensure both brakes are working properly and are correctly aligned. Roll the bike forward and squeeze the right brake to test your front brake. Then roll your bike backwards and squeeze the left brake to test your back brake.
8. Seat	Check seat is in good condition and secure, and the seat post height is not over extended past the line on the seat post.
9. Frame	Inspect the bike frame for any visible cracks or damage. Clean the frame using a rag, bike wash and water. Dry thoroughly to avoid rust. Avoid wetting the breaks and rotors.
10. Chain	It is spinning freely and free of debris. Does it need oil, or adjusting?
11. Wheels	Spin wheels to make sure they free flow and that all spokes are connected. Check for any wobbles, this may indicate that the wheel is buckled.
12. Bottom bracket	Check the bottom bracket for any signs of looseness or unusual noise such as clicking or grinding.
13. Pedals and cranks	Ensure pedals are properly attached and not broken. Check that crank arms are secure.

Traffic light system

The traffic light system helps determine if a bike is ready to ride. Schools can display the traffic light posters in a visible area in their bike sheds.

Download a printable pdf of this pdf poster at ccc.govt.nz/bikes-in-schools

Green light = Good to go

Orange light = Needs an adult

Red light = Needs a mechanic

Helmet checks

Helmets only work if they're in good shape. If they're cracked or damaged, they won't provide acceptable protection.

Keep helmets in good shape by:

- Checking them often: Look for cracks or damage, especially if they've been dropped or in a crash.
- Treating them with respect: Don't throw them or hang them on bike handlebars.
- Replacing them if needed: Even if they look okay, if they've been in a big crash, it's best to get a new one.
- Replacing them every 3 to 5 years. Don't keep them forever!

"3-S Method" – Shell, Straps, Styrofoam

Shell (the outside bit)

1. The outside should be smooth so it can slide and help to protect riders neck in a fall.
   - Look for lifting and cracks.
   - If the helmet doesn't have a hard outer shell, it's not safe.

Straps

2. Straps are important because they help keep helmets in the right place when riding and in case of a fall.

Styrofoam (the inside part)

3. The compressed Styrofoam inside the helmet helps absorb the impact of a fall. It's soft enough to feel comfy when worn, but hard enough to protect a rider's head and brain during a fall.
   - Look closely for cracks, dents, or deep scratches. Sometimes cracks are hard to see. Sit the helmet on your lap and gently pull it apart with your hands to check if any cracks show up. If you see any, the helmet needs to be replaced.
   - Look around the edges, vents, and straps to see if anything is splitting or damaged.

3. Getting ready to ride

This section is all about helping yourself and others feel safe, comfortable and confident on the bike before getting going.

Helmets

No helmet, no bike!

Wearing a properly fitted helmet is not only a legal requirement in Aotearoa, it's also one of the best ways to keep safe on a bike. It sets a good example and shows others that riding safely is part of being a responsible rider.

As a teacher or bike monitor, your role might be to check and adjust helmets with students, or to support them to do it themselves. Here's a simple step-by-step process:

Fitting the helmet

Before adjusting the helmet, check that nothing's underneath it – no hoods, hats or high ponytails – as these can affect how well the helmet sits and works in a fall.

1. **Position the helmet**
   - Sit the helmet level on the rider's head so it's 2 finger widths above the eyebrows.
   - It should feel snug and level – not tipping back or forward.

2. Adjust the fit system

- If the helment has a dial or adjuster at the back, use it to tighten or loosen the fit around the head.
- The helmet should be snug without causing pressure points or discomfort.

3. Adjust the side straps

- The side straps should form a "V" shape just under the ears.
- Adjust the straps until the "V" sits just below the earlobe.
- Ensure that the straps lie flat and are not twisted.

4. Adjust the chin strap

- Clip the chin strap under the chin and adjust until you can fit 2 fingers between the strap and chin.
- Do a quick "yawn test" – ask the rider to open their mouth wide. If the helmet presses down gently, the fit is about right.

Adjusting the bike seat height

Making sure a bike seat is set to the right height makes a big difference to how easy and enjoyable it is to ride. A well-adjusted seat can help riders feel more in control – especially if they're new to biking, or building confidence.

Tip: Have the bike seats adjusted to a mix of positions. This saves time and reduces the amount of adjusting.

Adjusting a bike seat and finding the perfect fit:

1. **Start with a quick visual check**
   - Get the rider to stand next to the bike. A good starting point is to set the seat roughly level with the top of their hip.
2. **Use the quick-release lever (if the bike has one)**
   - Find the quick-release lever just under the seat.
   - Open the lever to loosen the seat post, then slide the seat up or down to the right height.
   - Close the lever firmly to lock it in place. If the lever is too loose, open it again, twist it a bit tighter, then close it firmly.
3. **Sit and check**
   - Ask the rider to sit on the bike with hands on the handlebars and fingers over the brake levers.
   - Then check their feet:
     - Beginners should be able to get both feet flat on the ground – this helps with confidence and balance.
     - More confident riders should be able to touch the ground with their tippy toes while sitting on the seat.
   - Encourage them to test and adjust as needed – it can take a few goes to get it just right.

4. Supporting beginner riders

This may be some riders' first opportunities to ride a bike. Keep it fun and try not to let them get tired or demotivated. Encourage them to keep going if they have a mishap.

Depending on their age and ability, here's how to break it down into manageable steps:

1. **Set up the bike**

   While they're learning riders should be able to reach the ground with both feet flat while seated and reach the hand brakes comfortably. Instead of training wheels, encourage riders to try a balance bike – this will help them with their balance.

2. **Getting on and off the bike**

   Find a flat, open area with a smooth surface, so that riders can practice getting on and off the bike. Use the LLL method (Levers, Lean, Leg). This is where the rider should apply the brake levers (L) and lean (L) the bike towards them. Then they should be able to swing their leg (L) over the seat, not through the frame. Apply the brake levers when getting off too.

3. **Braking**

   Walk next to the rider, pushing the bike, and practice how to stop using both brake levers. Encourage them to use the 3-2-1 technique – applying both brake levers slowly, rather than engaging both suddenly at once, to ensure a smooth stop.

   3 – Gently squeeze the brakes to start slowing down.
   2 – Press a bit harder to slow down more.
   1 – Squeeze firmly to come to a smooth stop.

4. **Scooting and coasting** *(for students struggling with balance)*

   Before they start pedalling, take the pedals off the bike (if possible) and encourage them to scoot the bike with both feet. This helps them get used to the balance, steering and brakes. Aim to have them lifting both feet off the ground for longer and longer periods. Once they feel comfortable balancing, they can try 'coasting' on the bike – pushing off the ground with both feet, and letting the bike glide forward, focusing on maintaining balance. They can use the handlebars to steer the bike in the direction they want to go. Put the pedals back on once they are scooting and coasting for longer distances.

5. **Pedalling**

   "Pedal ready" is an important position for a learner rider to start riding on their own. This position is what will give them momentum and power. When the left foot is on the pedal in line with the bike frame – this is called "pedal ready position". Encourage them to push downward on the pedal with power to get moving – keeping balance while riding slowly is much harder. As the rider pedals, they need to focus on maintaining a steady rhythm and keeping the body centred over the bike, while looking forward and keeping their eyes on a focus point. It may take them several attempts to glide and get the second foot on the right pedal.

   Once they get the hang of riding by themselves, introduce some gentle turns, and practise stopping using both brakes levers.

5. Teacher resources

Curriculum-based learning helps young people place their bike riding in a wider context of participation in a safe transport system.

Bike games

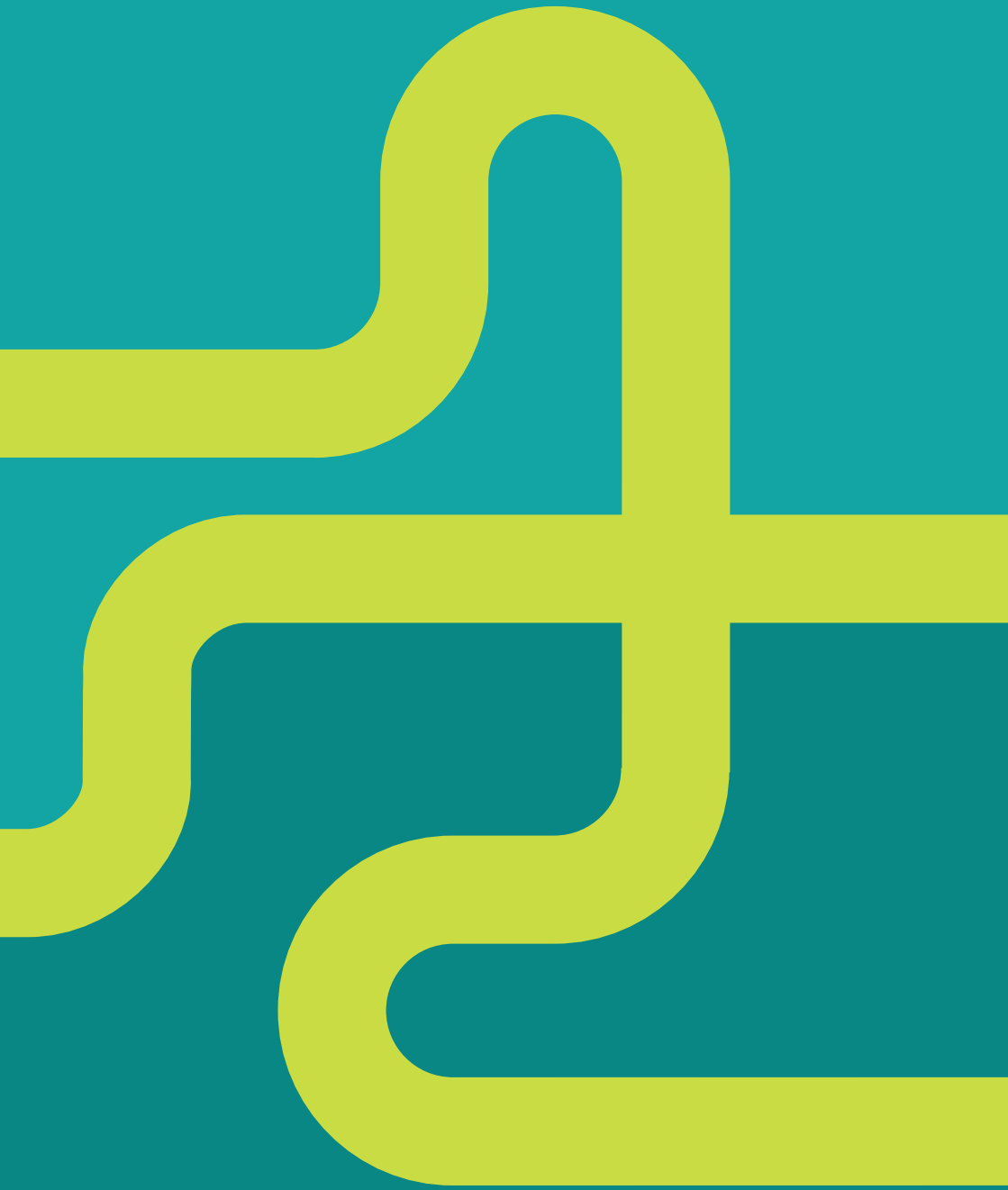
Bike Ready offers excellent resources in their game booklet. You can check it out online at **BikeReady – Bike games** for schools or email us at **schooltravel@ccc.govt.nz** to order a hard copy.

Curriculum alignment

BikeReady have great resources for schools on their website **BikeReady | Education Portal**.

The following resources can be found on the BikeReady site. We recommend these lessons for getting the most out of your bike fleet and aligning to the New Zealand Curriculum:

- **BikeReady Lesson 1: Checking bikes**
- **BikeReady Lesson 2: Start, ride along and stop**
- **BikeReady Lesson 3: Gears**
- **BikeReady Lesson 4: Hazards**
- **BikeReady Lesson 5: Signalling**
- **BikeReady Lesson 6: Emergency stopping**



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