

# Bikes in Schools 101

## Introduction

The Bike On New Zealand Charitable Trust is a registered charity whose main objective is to enable all New Zealand children to ride a bike on a regular and equal basis within school, through its national 'Bikes in Schools' project.

Since the first Bikes in Schools project was opened by then Prime Minister John Key in 2010, the Trust has worked with or assisted over 150 schools throughout New Zealand to implement a Bikes in Schools project.

## Why Bikes in Schools?

Over the last 25 years there has been a dramatic fall in biking by New Zealand children which has resulted in many children not being able to experience "the joy of biking" and the many positive social and health impacts that result from biking regularly.

## What are the outcomes?

By helping schools implement a complete biking package at schools, the Trust believes this is the most cost effective, time efficient and low-risk way to provide a wide range of positive economic and social outcomes to an entire school and wider community. These include:

- # Improved health
- # Better focus
- # Cycle skills
- # Increased Fitness
- # Greater confidence

## What's in the package?

The complete package implemented varies according to each school's requirements, but is typically a combination of:

- # A fleet of 30 to 50 new bikes
- # A bike helmet for every child or a set of shared helmets
- # A Riding track around the outside of the school field
- # Separate, or integrated, Pump and/or Skills tracks
- # Bike storage solution
- # Cycle Skills Training (usually provided free by local council)

All bikes, tracks and helmets are owned and maintained by the school and remain on the school property to be used as part of the school's teaching and physical education curriculum as well as often during break times. The tracks are built within the school property. The storage facility (normally a converted shipping container) is also owned by the school.

## How is a school's project funded?

Schools have typically received funding towards their Bikes in Schools from a wide range of funders including local Councils, NZ Transport Agency, Regional Sports Trusts, DHBs, PHOs, Ministry of Education, community groups, charities and local trusts, businesses, and individuals.



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## Riding Track

The Riding Track is where the greatest amount of riding (distance and time) is done. This circular track (2m wide) usually follows the outer edge of the school's playing fields, but this varies between schools. The length can be anywhere from 200m in length up to 600m. Most schools use the track for biking, walking, scooting, running, and cross country. Schools with swimming pools often also use it to run their school triathlons.



## Bikes and Helmets

Depending on the roll of the school, we recommend that primary schools purchase up to 50 bikes of four various sizes. This includes some step-through bikes for older students and teachers as these are easiest and safer bikes for bigger riders to use. It's a good idea to invest in high quality bikes as they will last longer and require less maintenance. Intermediate school often need just 40 bikes and only two different sizes. Some schools provide a helmet for every child or otherwise have a set of 100 shared helmets.



## Bike Storage Container

Bikes need to be stored in a safe and secure building within the school grounds, close to the actual tracks to allow easy access. Some schools store the bikes in a spare shed or an unused classroom. Most schools acquire a specially converted 40-foot shipping container that has two side-doors added to allow easy access for the bikes. A container usually does not require a building permit as it is not a permanent structure. Some schools have also added lighting, alarms, and power outlets to their containers.



## Pump Track

Some schools also build a Pump track (small BMX track) which is usually the most fun for children. Ridden correctly, the children don't pedal at all, but "pump" their bikes up and down the slopes to get around the track. The size of the Pump track depends on what space the school has available but on average is 25m x 25m. It can also be built as an off-shoot parallel of the main Riding track or even integrated with it.



## Skills Track

Again, some schools also build a Skills track takes the riders over a series of obstacles such as wooden skinnies and other skills related challenges. This track is often the most challenging and needs the rider to concentrate and ride very slowly. A Skills track usually occupies a separate area of around 10m x 30m. It can also be built as an off-shoot parallel to part of the main Riding track or even integrated with it.



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## Endorsements for Bikes in Schools

*“We think it is a great idea. It’s a great way of introducing kids to bikes and making sure every young New Zealander gets an opportunity to learn to ride a bike so it’s a programme we would like to see extended to other schools and it’s certainly going to make sure we’ve got fitter, healthier, more engaged young people.”*

Rt Hon Sir John Key  
Former New Zealand Prime Minister



*“I would like to see Bikes in Schools and cycle skills training available to every student in Aotearoa New Zealand. Putting bikes in schools, particularly schools where the kids may not have bikes at home, and teaching them to ride has got to be one of the best things we can do for the next generation.”*

Hon Julie Anne Genter  
Former Associate Minister of Transport



*“We know that cycle tracks have numerous benefits, including helping to develop safe cycling habits and building up confidence and fitness, I want to make it easy for schools that want to promote exercise to engage students in lifelong healthy habits that also help with their learning.”*

Hon Nikki Kaye  
Former Minister of Education



*“When I started riding at school it ended up crossing over towards my schoolwork. Because I was getting better at BMX, I started getting better at school because it just gave me a lot of confidence, so I was happier and got better at everything really.”*

Sarah Walker  
World Champion BMX Rider and Olympic Medallist



*“We really see this resource as something that we can teach with in an ongoing way. We want to be able to link the bike track to some worthwhile learning linked to the health curriculum and the social sciences – looking at how communities work together.”*

Kaylene MacNee  
Former Principal at Pinehaven School, Upper Hutt



**Below is a high-level project checklist:**



## 1. Welcome to Bikes in Schools!

Bikes in Schools is a complete [biking project](#) implemented within a school that enables all students to ride a bike on a regular and equal basis. You'll find much more info on our website at [bikeon.org.nz](http://bikeon.org.nz).

## 2. Get buy in and support

Get support for the project from the principal, teachers, Board of Trustees and parents. We can help by providing background info such as [research evidence](#). Or you can find out what other [schools think](#) by visiting or calling a school with a track near you. Appoint someone (eg Principal, teacher, BOT member, parent, friend of the school) to manage the project.

## 3. Decide what you need

Every BiS project is different. We can help you decide what would work best at your school given your needs and school environment. While some schools prefer limestone tracks, we recommend concrete or asphalt as these require much less maintenance and can also accommodate scooters. Having an asphalt or concrete track will increase the total project cost.

## 4. Set an opening date

It's a good idea to set a realistic opening date early on—this gives everyone (including funders) a target to work to and helps get things up and started much quicker.

## 5. Funding

Most schools we have worked with have secured the majority of [funding](#) from a wide range of sources including community groups, local councils, central government, and businesses. The MoE also allows some schools to use their [property budget](#) towards the total cost.

## 6. Supplier and contractors

We have worked with some with good suppliers that we're happy to recommend for [helmets](#), [bikes](#) and [containers](#). For some areas of the country we can also recommend contractors for [track construction](#). We suggest you also seek recommendations from other nearby schools.

## 7. Implementation

Our website has project related information to help you through the implementation process, as well as support and advice based on our experience at other schools.

## 8. Book in for cycle skills training

Book in for cycle skills training for your students (and staff). [See here](#) for details.

## 9. Opening day

Time to celebrate! [Track openings](#) often make the news.