

# Bridge of Don Academy

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## School Travel Plan

August 2024



Be Respectful 

Be Caring 

Be Honest 

Be Your Best 

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# School Travel Plan 2024-25

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## What is a School Travel Plan?

Bridge of Don Academy aims to work collaboratively with stakeholders to make the journey to school safer and healthier for pupils and their parents. Our School Travel Plan (STP) is a simple written document that has identified issues relating to the school journey, suggests ways of improving travel options for all and identifies measures to be taken to promote more sustainable travel choices for pupils, parents, staff and visitors to your school such as walking, cycling, public transport and lift sharing.

### Why do schools need a School Travel Plan

Over the last twenty years, the number of children in Scotland travelling to school by active modes of transport such as walking and cycling has fallen dramatically, with more children than ever before being driven to school by their parents or carers. ([Aberdeen City School Travel Plan Guidance 2021](#))

School Travel Plans will help to achieve the [Active Travel Framework](#) aims set out by Transport Scotland.

## School Travel at Bridge of Don Academy

### About Bridge of Don Academy

The current Bridge of Don Academy opened in 1979. It is a six-year secondary school which includes an Enhanced Provision Space for seven young people with targeted/specialist needs. Serving the area to the North of Aberdeen, it has within its catchment the communities of Bridge of Don, Balmedie, Potterton and Belhelvie. Young people living in the communities in Aberdeenshire are zoned for Bridge of Don Academy; approximately 350 learners are in our catchment but live in Aberdeenshire and require school transport. At our last census date (Sep 2024) our current school roll was 805. We have 48 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) members of teaching staff, including 4 probation teachers. We have 2 associated primaries from the City, Braehead and Scotstown, and 1 from Aberdeenshire, Balmedie. In 2024 we saw within our intake of S1 pupils, pupils coming from 18 different primary schools in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

### Travel Plan Aims

The overarching aims of our School Travel Plan are:

1. Reduce the volume of vehicles during the school run leading to a safer and less polluted environment for all;
2. Improve safety, confidence and resilience;
3. Encourage healthy and environmentally friendly travel choices.

Our School Travel Plan will also help pupils to gain a better understanding of the health, environmental and social benefits of more walking, cycling and the use of public transport as an alternative to unnecessary car usage. This will encourage the formation of active travel habits that can be carried through into adult life.

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## Location

Bridge of Don is now Aberdeen's largest suburb but collectively has the feel of a contemporary new town. Our school is situated in a well populated residential area. (see figure 1). The whole area is populated by approximately 18,883 people. Our school building sits in the heart of the community, beside residential properties, (see figure 1). The school building is surrounded on all sides by residential properties and is located on the same site as one of our associated schools; Braehead Primary. We continue to see housebuilding around the area which is adding to our school roll continuously.

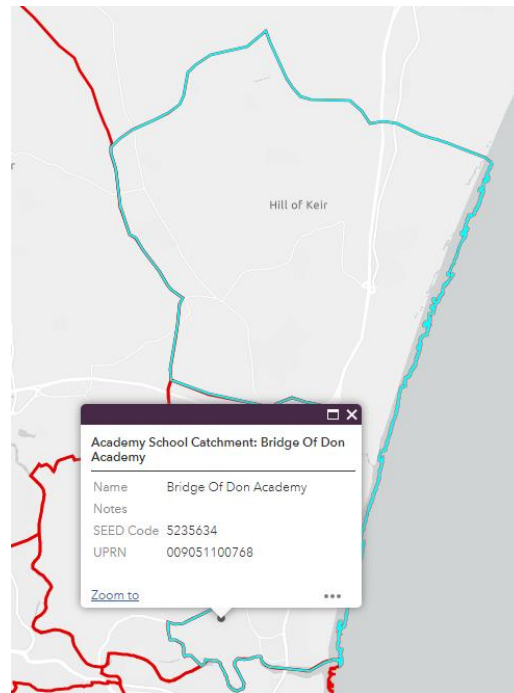


Figure 1: Bridge of Don Academy Catchment



Figure 2: Bridge of Don Academy Location

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## School Transport

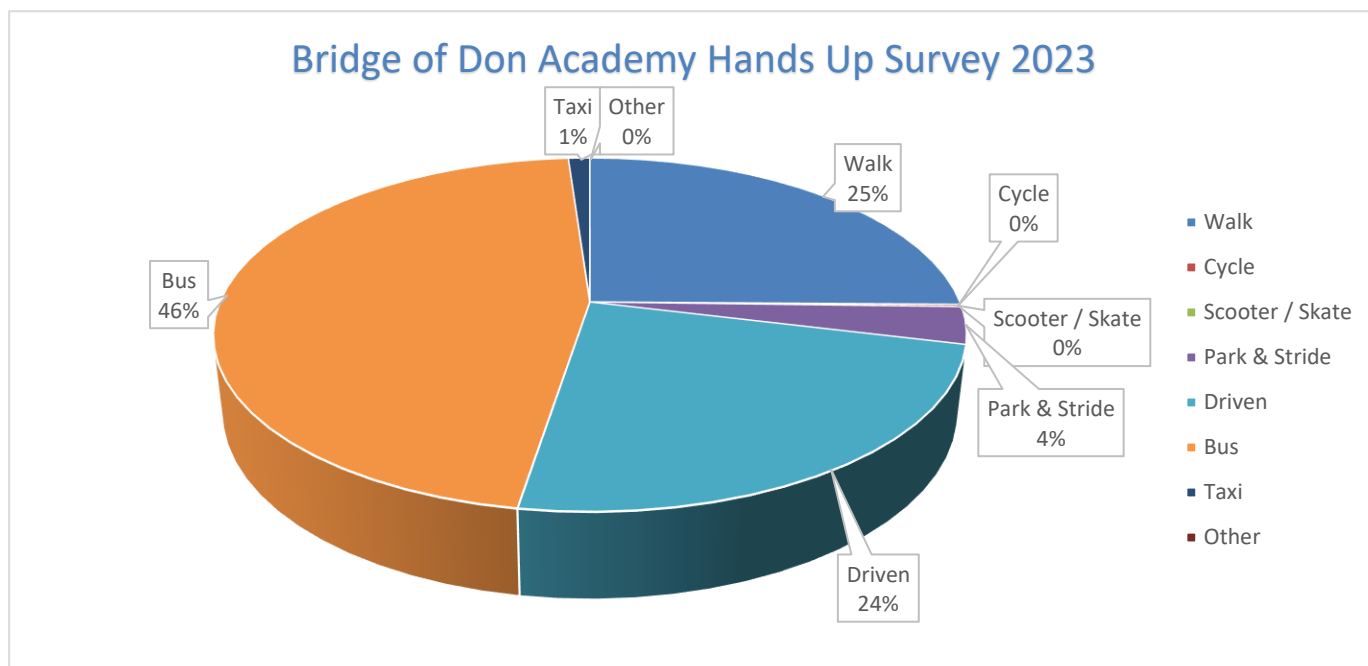


Figure 3: Hands Up Travel Survey Results 2023

The National *Hands Up Survey* that was carried out in 2023 showed that, only 25% of our young people walk to school. Previous figures show that around 40% used to walk to school, however this figures has steadily declined and is significantly lower than the national average of 41%. Certainly since the COVID pandemic we have seen a reduction in the number of young people walking to school. The next most popular mode of travel is bus where around 350 of our young people receive school transport due to living in our catchments areas within Aberdeenshire. We have a large number of pupils from across Aberdeen City who are out of zone but chose to come to Bridge of Don Academy resulting in them having to take bus transport to get to school. In total 46% of our young people take the bus. This is significantly higher than the national average of 16%. Our young people also have access and are entitled to free bus travel, making this a more convenient option. The number of young people who are driven to school was 24% in 2023. This, again is higher than the national average of 22.5%. We have seen an increasing trend of young people being driven to school from 33.7% to the current 46.3%. Only 3.4% of our young people travel to school by park and stride. This is below the national average of 9.7%. only 0.2% and 0% of young people indicated that they travelled to school by bike or by scooter/skate despite the national average being 4.7% and 3.3% respectively. Our school has provided bicycle shelters and lockable storage areas for pupils to encourage them to cycle to school (figure 4).

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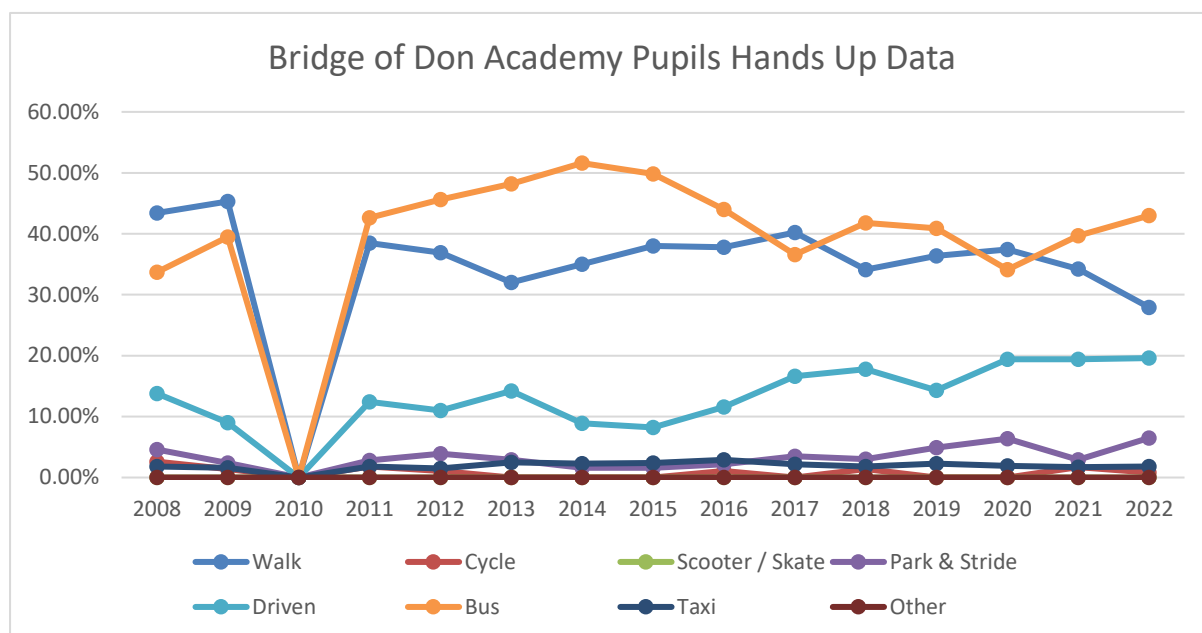


Figure 4: Hands Up Travel Survey Results Over Time

## Concerns about the journey to and from school

### Walking

Due to the fact we have a large proportion of our young people who are out with our zoned areas, the distance they live from Bridge of Don Academy prohibits them from walking to school. We have pupils coming from a range of catchment areas; Seaton, Northfield, Torry, Grey Hope. The walking times for these pupils is unrealistic. We do also experience a number of local pupils who don't walk to school and we would like to encourage them to consider how they travel to school.

Travel Time have been taken from Google.

From	To	Walking Distance	Time
Seaton	Bridge of Don Academy	2 miles	46 minutes
Northfield	Bridge of Don Academy	3.1 miles	1 hour 9 minutes
Grey Hope	Bridge of Don Academy	4.6 miles	1 hour 46 minutes
Torry	Bridge of Don Academy	4.8 miles	1 hour 50 minutes

### Cycling, Scooting or Skating

Given the busy nature of the main roads to travel to Bridge of Don Academy from across the city, many young people feel unsafe and don't have confidence to cycle to school. Many of the roads that would need to be taken by our young people are busy commuter routes used by all types of traffic.

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## Driven

During pick up and drop off times, the area surrounding Bridge of Don Academy is very congested. This is due to young people from both the Academy and Braehead Primary being driven to school, local residents commuting and school transport drop offs/pick ups. Some young people are dropped off on surrounding streets near the front of the school, with the presence of parked cars and high volume of vehicles causing a potential hazard when young people are crossing roads. Parents/carers are encouraged to use the community school car park to drop young people off. However due to the increased volume of traffic we are experiencing dangerous conditions and potential health and safety risks to young people and the community. Head Teacher at Braehead shares similar concerns and so we are working collectively to find a solution to the problem. Young people are also reminded not to loiter in and around the cars in the front car park as this can be dangerous.

## Bus

Bridge of Don Academy has bus bays, to the rear of the school, which serves as the drop off and pick up point for young people accessing school transport. The site for the buses is not fit for purpose and poses a safety issues to the young people and the community. Our transport is not always reliable and therefore some families opt to drive their young person to school as an alternative.

Typically, we have 4 coaches and around 4-5 smaller vehicles providing school transport. This increase traffic volume and contributes to congestion around the school. The presence of cars being parked in the marked bus bays causes concern and forces the buses to park in the flow of traffic causing further congestion.

Parents have raised various concerns including buses regularly being late, buses breaking down, conduct on the buses, driver's not turning up for work. This was feedback to the transport providers who agreed to work to address. This has been shared with Aberdeenshire Transport Unit as a concern.

# School Travel Plan 2024-25

## Action Plan

Expected outcomes (What will we change?)	Specific Actions (What will we do?)	Measuring Impact (How will we know?)	Responsible (Who will do it?)	Timescale (When?)
<p><b>Increase the number of young people using active or sustainable travel options</b></p>	<p>Gather pupil voice to better understand the reasons that young people do not choose active and/or sustainable travel.</p> <p>Deliver an assembly to highlight the options for and benefits of active and sustainable travel.</p> <p>Produce a resource for parents/carers to highlight the options for and benefits of active and sustainable travel.</p> <p>Focus Groups to gather feedback.</p>	<p>Our Hands Up Survey results will show a reduction in the number of young people being driven to school.</p>	<p>Global Goals/Eco/Student Council</p>	<p>By July 2025</p>
<p><b>Reduce traffic volume and congestion in and around the school. Improve safety for pupils, staff and visitors walking to and from school.</b></p>	<p>Complete a traffic survey to gather data on the number of cars accessing the school car park to drop off young people.</p> <p>Identify safe drop off zones nearby the school that can be used by parents/carers as an alternative to dropping off in the car park. Communicate these location to parents and highlight the rationale for using them.</p> <p>Liaise with Bus company and ACC as to reinstating the parking of buses outside the front of the school in the original laybys.</p>	<p>There will be a reduction in the number of cars accessing the school car park to drop off young people.</p> <p>Buses will be parking in a safer place for both pupils and the community</p>	<p>Geography classes/Eco/Student Council</p>	<p>By July 2025</p>



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	<p>Liaise with D Duncan, HT Braehead, to look at ways in which to reduce the risk and number of cars/traffic in the shared car park.</p> <p>Discuss at Parent Council. Gather feedback from parents to gauge their understanding of safe travel and use them to help promote walking to school where possible.</p>			
<b>Gather information to better understand how staff travel to and from school.</b>	Send to all staff to complete.		Student Council	By July 2025