

## Young Reporters Scotland 2019

### Stop Polluting the Air we Breathe with Car Fumes

By Senior Eco Hunters, Lawmuir Primary School

We all surely know that the most environmentally friendly way to travel to school is to walk, get on your bike or to scooter. Here at our school we try to promote this by using the Living Streets Wow Travel Tracker. Although it appears that more of us are travelling to school in an active way that doesn't cause air pollution there are still lots of cars around our school, making it a bit more dangerous to cross roads and get into school, as well as polluting the air around us. We wanted to find out why people are still using a car to get to school and how we can help change this.

Here in Scotland there are four main ways people come to school they are by car, public transport, by bike and by foot. In 2016 a survey found that most people travelled to school on foot (52%), public transport was next with 19% using this method, then came 26% travelling by car, 1 % came by train and too by cycling (Transport and Travel in Scotland 2016).

Travelling by car is the quickest and easiest way. It is convenient and keeps you safe and warm. But is this the best option? It is expensive to run a car. Fuel prices are high and cars produce fumes that are bad for our environment and health.

*"I get a taxi to school because we live too far away from school." (L. Mullen, p.5)*

*"I park and stride because it's sometimes too late to walk around but I would rather walk because it's healthy and I get to talk to my friends." (O. Grant, P5)*

Walking and cycling are healthy ways to travel to school as you get exercise and fresh air. You can also meet up with friends this is an added benefit because it's more fun to travel into school with friends. When the weather is bad it takes a bit more effort when you are walking or travelling by bike however if you are wearing suitable clothing it is not a problem.

*"I cycle to school because it is fun and gets you there faster." (S. McGowan, P6)*

*"I walk because it's healthier and fitter, like to get you there." (K. Bolton, P6)*

*"My gran only drives me in on special occasions if we are going somewhere... I would rather walk with my friends because we get to chat." (M. Blades, P7)*

Through our research we found that "air pollution causes over 2,500 early deaths in Scotland every year" (Friends of the Earth Scotland). This is because air pollution can cause cancer and therefore you might not live as long as you would expect. Air pollution is especially bad for children and the elderly who can be affected by it more.

We decided that we need to take action, so we are going to make posters to raise awareness of the effects of air pollution, we shall post these on our Twitter site @HuntersEco and place them around the school and community. We have already worked with our Community Development Officer Lucy and Cycle Scotland where we invited children and their parents to come to school with their bikes that needed fixed. The volunteers from Cycle Scotland fixed the bikes. We are hoping that this will encourage more of us to cycle to school. We are planning to meet up with Cycle Scotland again to talk about how we can make it safer to travel to school by bike.

We believe that our community and indeed the whole of Scotland and our entire planet should be a place where we all have safe paths to walk and cycle and scoot to school. If we did this would mean that there would be less air pollution, we would all be fitter, and we would all feel better and be happier. We are going to make a difference.

### Bibliography/References

- Friends of the Earth Scotland accessed at <https://foe.scot/campaign/air-pollution/>
- Transport and travel in Scotland 2016 accessed at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/39692/sct09170037961.pdf>