

School Crossing Patrol Policy

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Background

The overall management of the School Crossing Patrol Service comes under the council's Road Safety team.

This policy serves as an update from the previous 2016 edition.

SCPs were recognised in the UK by the School Crossing Patrol Act 1953 and instituted on 1 July 1954, through the School Crossing Patrol Order 1954. This allowed local authorities to provide School Crossing Patrols to assist children to cross roads on their way to and from school, between the hours of 8am and 5.30pm. Previously police authorities and traffic wardens were responsible for this service. The act enabled these professionals to concentrate on their other duties.

However this is not a statutory duty and remains a permissive function, which means that it is carried out at the discretion of the Highway Authority - Medway Council.

The School Crossing Patrols are employees of Medway Council.

Authority to stop traffic

The Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 (sections 26 and 28) defined the criteria for which a SCP has the power to stop vehicles. Since that time legislation has been updated and while very similar to the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, the Transport Act 2000 "*allows school crossing patrollers to cross any pedestrian who offer their selves to cross the road during patroller's duty times*". It also allows operating times to be determined by each authority providing the service.

If drivers do not stop, the penalties may include:

- a fine of up to £1000;
- three penalty points;
- disqualification.

Failing to stop for a uniformed School Crossing Patrol warden is an offence contrary to section 28(3) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Schedule 2 to the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.

Section 270 of the Transport Act 2000, which came into force on 30 January 2001, amended the 1984 Regulations to allow SCPs to operate "*at such times as the authority thinks fit*". Therefore, SCPs may now work outside the hours of 8am to 5.30pm and can stop traffic to help anyone (child or adult) to cross the road.

PLEASE NOTE: Provision of a school crossing patrol facility does not remove parents' or carers' responsibility for their child's safety when traveling to or from school.

Supervision of the service

All School Crossing Patrols [SCPs] are employees of Medway Council; contracted as members of the Road Safety Team.

The Road Safety Team manages the SCP service by:

- Risk assessing new sites.
- Risk assessing existing sites annually.
- Advertising and recruiting site-specific staff for priority SCP sites.
- Training and monitoring new and existing SCPs.
- Completing and managing all personnel issues in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any reports regarding drive-throughs or abusive behaviour are reported and recorded.
- Ensuring that all SCPs are properly equipped to carry out their work safely and in accordance with local and national guidelines.
- Liaising with schools in all matters relating to the service that SCPs provide.
- Reviewing and publishing service policy, handbook and procedure documents ensuring that all relevant staff are aware of these.
- Promoting the service to raise public awareness.

Schools with a serving SCP in place can support the provision of the service by:

- Assisting in the recruitment process by advertising posts within the school community on behalf of the Road Safety Team and an option to provide a senior staff member to be a part of the interview process.
- Enabling communication between the patrol and the school as needed, including the Council website for personal administration.
- Informing the Road Safety team of any concerns related to the SCP concerning sickness, absence, timekeeping and competency.
- Dealing with any behavioural issues raised by the patrol concerning children.
- Providing the child protection contact for the patrol to report safeguarding concerns to.
- Notifying the Travel Initiatives Supervisor if their patrol hasn't received child protection training.
- Liaising with the Travel Initiatives Supervisor in all concerns relating to the service that the SCPs provide.
- Providing a means of communication between SCPs and the Road Safety team by email, telephone or otherwise.

Who's who in the Road Safety team (also refer to contact details on page 13)

Leanne Adams – Travel Initiatives Supervisor (School Crossing Patrol Service). Responsible for supervision of the School Crossing Patrol Service and active travel to school.

James Sutton – Principal Road Safety Officer. Responsible for Road Safety education, school travel planning and active travel to school schemes within the Safer Journeys Team.

David Warner - Acting Road Safety Manager. Responsible for all aspects of Road Safety, including engineering schemes.

Corporate employment issues

The Travel Initiatives Supervisor will be the first point of contact for day-to-day reporting and providing support and handling of any immediate concerns the SCP may have.

All formal disciplinary action will be managed as per any other Medway employee. Medway Council policies are available via the Medway Council websites or by contacting the Road Safety Team.

Recruiting and employing the SCP is the responsibility of the Road Safety Team. However, the schools involvement can be crucial for the SCP to nurture a sense of belonging within the school community. The school Headteacher or their representative may assist in the recruitment by advertising the role within the school community and attending the interview.

Safeguarding of children

All SCPs will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check before employment and updated every three years. It is the SCP's responsibility to ensure that their DBS status does not lapse. The SCP should notify the Road Safety Team if they require an updated check.

All patrols will receive safeguarding advice as part of the initial training provided by the Road Safety Team. As soon as practical after employment, all SCPs will receive Safeguarding Training as provided by Medway Council. It is recommended that School Crossing Patrols complete Safeguarding Training every 3 years.

Attributes of a patrol

The following section outlines the purpose of the job, and the physical requirements and working conditions it entails, to help individuals and professionals make a decision about a person's ability to carry out the role of an SCP.

Purpose of job

To ensure control and safe passage of pedestrians, including children, across the road at designated locations.

Requirements

- To be physically able to move on to and off the road. (Average walking speed of three feet per second);
- To be able to work in all weather conditions;
- To be physically fit and able to deal with emergency traffic situations, putting the safety of pedestrians and themselves first;
- To be able to operate switches, keys etc on traffic light control boxes, pedestrian crossings and other equipment where necessary.
- To have the capacity to judge and deal with, as best as possible, potentially dangerous traffic situations;

- To have the required level of hearing to judge potentially dangerous traffic situations that be beyond their immediate field of vision and take appropriate action;
- To be able to hold in one hand, in all weathers, an STOP sign weighing up to two kilos.

Age

Minimum age of 18-years. No upper age limit applies, but SCPs have to fulfill the capability requirements as listed above.

Working conditions

- Working alone;
- Required to stand throughout duty period (average duty time is one hour a day, 2x 30 minute duties);
- Exposure to all weather conditions;
- Exposure to live highway environment

Appearance and behaviour

- SCPs must be neat and tidy, and are responsible for maintaining their uniform and STOP sign.
- SCPs are expected to display high standards of road-crossing behaviour.
- The STOP sign must always be used when stopping traffic. It must be clearly displayed to the traffic and the sign face kept clean and free of stickers and obstructions, as set out in the RSGB national guidelines.
- An SCP's child or children must not be present at the place of duty unless they are on their way to or from school.
- It is essential for the patrol to remain alert. Distractions, such as talking to friends or the use of any mobile device is not permitted unless in the event of an emergency.
- The patrol must not smoke while at work and must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- The patrol must not bring pets with them to their site whilst on duty.

Control of children

Instructions to children must be given in a clear and firm manner. It is important that the SCP always communicates with pedestrians, i.e. wait on the footpath and call for pedestrians to cross. Any behaviour problems must be reported to the school for action. The SCP must only use verbal communication and it should never be necessary to make physical contact with any child except in an emergency. Note: Friendly gestures can be misinterpreted.

Uniform and equipment

The Road Safety team will provide the SCP with the correct uniform. The SCP must ensure it is used while on duty. This will be routinely monitored via the Road Safety Team. This uniform complies with Home Office Circular 3/1989 and the Health & Safety at Work Act on Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992: (PPE) e.g. BS EN 471 2003 class 3.

Uniforms are supplied by the Road Safety Team at training, and replaced when deemed necessary.

The correct uniform is (see appendix 1):

- A peaked hat in bright yellow fluorescent material; summer and winter versions available.
- A waterproof, padded coat (long-sleeved) that is suitable for inclement weather and a lightweight, full-length coat (long-sleeved) for summer (*note: Fluorescent materials fade with exposure to daylight. Storing them in darkness helps maintain their brightness* Coats must remain fastened at all times while on duty.

- A STOP sign (available from the Road Safety Team). The sign may only be used by an appointed SCP at the designated site at contracted times.
- Mittens and over-trousers may also be worn but are not provided.
- Closed, flat, sensible footwear.
- A Medway Council ID badge; it is a requirement for SCP's to carry a Medway Council photographic ID badge including their name and job title.

Unless these steps are followed the SCP may be deemed to be operating illegally and may be held personally responsible for any claims in the event of an incident. A fluorescent waistcoat or similar short jacket does not meet regulations and will not be covered by Medway Council's insurance. The compulsory hat and coat must be obtained from the Road Safety Team. Under no circumstances will schools be reimbursed for purchasing uniform items for patrols.

Please refer to appendix 1 for further details regarding uniform.

Training

Training will take place on the first shift and be delivered by a member of the Road Safety Team in accordance with the SCP Training Policy. Upon completion of the session, the SCP will sign a receipt to acknowledge that they have received training and a copy of the operational guidelines.

Monitoring

The Road Safety Team carries out monitoring of patrols, with visits taking place throughout the academic year in accordance with the operating hours of the SCP. A monitoring visit is usually impromptu; however they can be requested in advance by contacting the Road Safety Team. The monitoring visit serves as a chance for the SCP to ask any questions they may have and receive feedback regarding their role or any site issues. Engineering issues, such as faulty lights etc, can also be reported.

A monitoring form is returned to the Road Safety Team and the information is recorded. Any issues are raised with the appropriate person or team. Only SCPs that have been trained and recruited by the Road Safety Team are allowed to work on Medway's roads. Refresher training sessions are delivered upon request or when there is a recognised need.

Monitoring visits are prioritised according to a Red, Amber and Green rating system as specified in the table below.

| | Concerns | Monitoring visit timescale |
|-------|--|---|
| Red | High priority: A serious concern is brought to our attention. Incidents (including multiple drive-throughs) have taken place. School reports a serious issue with the patrol. Patrol raises a serious concern. Temporary road works are affecting the site. | Visit immediately: We are aware of the concern and will monitor until the concern is reduced. Visiting frequency intensified as required during this stage. |
| Amber | Medium priority: School or patrol raise a minor concern about the site or patrol. Single drive through reported. Site move request. Additional and/or new patrol. | Visit within a week of becoming aware of the concern and then monitor until the concern is reduced. |
| Green | Site/patrol with no concerns. | Monitoring between three and six times per year. |

Absence and time keeping

Hours of duty

You must arrive at the crossing point on time and remain there for the agreed period. Remember, children are sometimes late for school and latecomers are more inclined to take chances.

Typically a morning session is 8.30 to 9.00am and an afternoon session is 3.00 to 3.30pm. However, it is the Road Safety team's responsibility to decide the SCP's operating times, based on the school's pedestrian footfall and opening times. These will be agreed with the school and adjusted where necessary.

Under no circumstances must the SCP or the school change the hours of duty or location of operation without the Travel Initiatives Supervisor's agreement.

SCPs can be appointed to operate at any agreed time and may now stop traffic for all pedestrians, not just children on the journey to and from school.

Absence

As the SCP is a member of Medway Council staff, they must ensure the Road Safety Team is aware of their absence from day one and when the patrol returns to work. All absences must be reported via a telephone call (see page 13), with a voice message left if necessary.

The Road Safety Team will notify the school of any absence and keep them updated with any long term sickness issues.

Relief

Some SCP sites do have a relief patrol, as agreed by the Travel Initiatives Supervisor. All relief patrol's must be appointed and trained by Medway Council's Road Safety Team, and have access to full uniform. Medway Council follows the same recruitment procedure as for a permanent SCP.

Extreme weather conditions

If the wind speeds are extremely high, it may not be possible to operate at all. SCPs should be aware of possible severe wind and weather warnings by monitoring weather forecasts. Hurricane force is rare in this country, however, if conditions such as this are experienced it may be that schools will close and therefore the SCP may not be needed. However, when schools are open despite the weather, SCP staff must attend work unless told otherwise or report any concerns to the Travel Initiatives Supervisor in the first instance. During such conditions it may be agreed for the patrol to act as a crossing marshall to assist pedestrians on their journey without a STOP sign, however it should be emphasised that SCP staff will not have the authority to stop traffic in the absence of a STOP sign.

In extremely hot weather patrols are expected to wear the full summer uniform correctly and take a supply of water and sun cream on site with them.

Rain/Snow and ice can severely affect a driver's visibility and patrols need to exercise extra caution in these weather conditions. Patrols will also need to be aware of slipping or falling, especially if there is snow or ice on the road.

In wet weather, stopping distances will be at least double those required for stopping on dry roads and can increase ten-fold in ice and snow. Patrols should wait on the pavement with their sign up, and only move into the road to help pedestrians to cross once traffic had stopped.

Hazard Warning Lights (Wig Wags)

When hazard warning lights protecting crossings are installed, it is the SCP's responsibility to switch them on and off in line with the agreed time, using keys or other devices approved or supplied by Medway Council.

It is very important that the lights are switched off immediately after each shift, to avoid diluting their impact. Some lights are operated via a timer and will switch off automatically after the set time.

Faults should be reported to the Road Safety Team on 01634 333333 or by email to crossing.patrol@medway.gov.uk

Working at a Crossing Location

It is important to ensure that SCPs are decisive when indicating that they wish to stop a vehicle and they should be trained to make eye contact with a driver. SCPs should use their STOP sign from the pavement to inform drivers they must stop, but not step into the road until they are sure that approaching vehicles have stopped. SCPs should ensure that they position themselves in the centre of the carriageway when crossing pedestrians.

Whenever possible, SCPs should avoid stopping large vehicles for example buses and lorries, as they can take much longer to stop. SCPs should be aware of, and look for, motorcyclists or cyclists, which may approach the crossing point on the inside or outside of a lane of traffic that has stopped.

Operating on light controlled crossings

It is not necessary for SCPs to work on pelican, puffin or toucan crossings (unless there are exceptional circumstances), as they are, by definition, safer crossing facilities.

Working on Pedestrian Islands (Central Refuges)

At some places where wide roads are divided by central refuges or dual carriageways by central reservations, crossing procedures can only be carried out in two stages and pedestrians must wait in the centre until the SCP has stopped the traffic on the other half of the road.

However, sometimes the central refuge or reservation is not large enough to contain a group of pedestrians, in which case, the crossing procedure will need to be completed in one action.

In some locations two SCPs are needed and they will have to work together to control this situation. Supervisors should judge the number of SCPs needed based on the capacity of the refuge and the volume of pedestrians and traffic.

On roads where there is a speed limit of over 40mph, providing an SCP is considered to be inappropriate, and providing a light-controlled facility is recommended instead.

Working at Zebra Crossings

SCP staff who work on zebra crossings should follow their normal working procedure, using the STOP sign to stop drivers.

Reporting incidents

If an on road collision occurs:

- Patrols must continue to ensure the safety of the children in their charge. This is their main priority.
- If possible they should protect the scene, making sure the incident does not become more serious.
- They are not expected to administer first aid and should instruct a by-stander to telephone the emergency services and contact the school for assistance.

- They must not move seriously injured casualties unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- They must not become involved in arguments or make statements to any person other than the police. Refer enquiries to the Road Safety team.
- They should note the registration number of the vehicle(s) involved and names and addresses of drivers and, if possible, independent witnesses.

Statements

In the event of an incident ideally a member of school staff should assist at the side of the road, to alleviate pressure on the SCP – this also helps with the incident report, as an independent witness gives the case more substance. These statements should be reported to the police on scene (if called) or the incident room (on 101). The patrol must inform the school Headteacher or their nominated officer as soon as possible and follow this up with a report to the Road Safety team.

SCPs should not give statements to any person except a police officer. If any statement is provided to a police officer, their name and number should be taken and provided to a member of the Road Safety team so that contact can be made, if required.

The SCP's remarks or statements made on the spur of the moment may involve both the patrol and the council in serious legal commitments. SCPs should not make statements on working conditions to anyone, e.g. the press or other bodies, without first discussing the matter with the Road Safety team.

Reporting other incidents

If someone fails to stop for, or verbally/physically abuses the SCP, the incident should also be reported using Kent Police's non-emergency contact number 101 by the SCP or via the Travel Initiatives Supervisor. The police will provide an incident number. The Police will make contact with the patrol and any witnesses. Parking and other traffic violations are not the responsibility of the SCP but should be noted during monitoring visits, for the attention of the Travel Initiatives Supervisor.

It is the patrol's decision as to whether to report non-emergency incidents to the police. However it is important that all incidents are reported to the Road Safety team so that they are aware of safety issues at each site.

In the event of a prosecution arising from a statement being made, this is only likely to be successful if:

- All the required details are completed and accurate on the police statement.
- The SCP is correctly dressed with the correct uniform.
- An approved STOP Sign, in a good state of repair, is used.
- The SCP provides sufficient notice to the driver of their intention to stop the traffic according to the road conditions at the time.
- The STOP Sign is correctly displayed and used as required by the Highway Code when in the road (including having the opposite arm extended as in figure 1).
- The SCP's actions have not caused any misunderstanding between themselves and drivers.

Figure 1



Risk assessment and risk management

Risk assessments must be conducted by an appropriate and competent, trained person (for example, a Road Safety Engineer, Travel Initiatives Supervisor, or a Road Safety Officer). They should be regarded as a means of identifying ways of providing the Service safely and written records must be kept.

Site Specific Risk Assessment Monitoring

Individual SCP locations and SCPs have site-specific risk assessments, which are carried out annually and in the event that the road situation changes. Individual SCP sites and SCPs are risk assessed by an appropriate and competent trained person. The risk assessment is carried out when the SCP is on duty and assessed as part of this process. SCPs must also tell their Supervisor if they have any concerns about their fitness to carry out their duties.

A risk may be assessed as higher at some sites than others, and therefore, it may not be appropriate for the same risk control measures to be adopted everywhere.

SCPs are asked to alert their Supervisor if any changes at the site affect its safety, and the Supervisor should record any problems noted during site monitoring visits. Simple guidance should be provided to SCPs on possible issues that may make a site temporarily unsuitable (road works, for example).

If there is a major obstruction at the site, such as road works, an alternative site from which the SCP should operate must be identified. If the operation of the SCP needs to be suspended temporarily (during the obstruction) alternative arrangements must be made for the children's safety.

Covering Vacant Sites

An important aspect of risk management is the procedure for responding to sudden absences at sites where an SCP normally works. It is essential that swift action is taken as failure to provide an SCP at a crossing used regularly by children may expose them to unexpected and unnecessary risk.

SCPs must be aware of the importance of giving as much notice as possible to the Supervisor that they will not be present at their site and give enough time to enable the school to inform the school community that the site will not have an SCP and that parents/carers should consider alternative arrangements to ensure the safety of their children. However, sites sometimes become vacant at short notice and it may not always be possible to secure a replacement.

Therefore, it is important that the school(s) concerned are told the SCP will be unavailable, so the school may notify parents/carers as soon as possible.

Requests for New Sites

Requests for new SCP sites come from various sources: schools, education offices, Elected Members, local communities, members of the public and local organisations. Often, several of these individuals and bodies make requests for the same SCP site.

Investigating a request for a new school crossing site is carried out as quickly as possible and measured against our adopted criteria. Once the decision to reject or approve a request for a new SCP site has been made, responses are sent to the relevant parties to notify them of the outcome. When turning down an application, the reason for the decision is clearly explained.

Approving New Sites

Sites should be approved only if they meet the criteria but must not be established until a suitable person can be recruited and trained to fill the post. There is no point in establishing a site that cannot be staffed.

Other departments are consulted to see whether there are any proposed changes to the road itself, including introducing other pedestrian crossings. Any measures identified by the risk assessment, for example, warning signs or flashing lights, must be completed, where practicable, before the site becomes operational.

It is recommended that SCP sites are not located on roads with speed limits greater than 40 mph. Communication with the schools being served by the new crossing patrol will take place to ensure that everyone is aware of when the SCP will begin working, the hours of operation and any other relevant information. The decision to progress new SCP sites is that of the Acting Road Safety Manager, however new sites should only be approved if they meet the criteria.

Please note that the council's Road Safety team adopt the following procedure when assessing sites.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3814/ltn-2-95.pdf
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3815/ltn-1-95.pdf

However if further investigation is required the use of the assessment procedure as indicated in the National Guidance will be implemented.

Reviewing Existing Sites

Medway Council undertake regular reviews of all existing sites whereby the Travel Initiatives Supervisor undertakes an annual site assessment. It is recommended that sites are reviewed when circumstances change. For example, school closure, road or traffic changes or retirement. Introducing a Safer Routes to School project or a traffic management scheme should also prompt a review.

A review may suggest that an SCP site should be replaced by other measures, such as a light-controlled crossing, particularly where Medway Council has previously chosen to authorise a Patrol site on a road with a speed limit of over 40 mph. The Travel Initiatives Supervisor should alert a Road Safety Engineer and request a review of the sites against the Local Authority's adopted criteria and conduct a new risk assessment if necessary.

Disestablishing Sites

A review may reveal that a site no longer meets the criteria or that it has been vacant for a long period and it has proved impossible to find someone to work as an SCP at the site. In this case, Medway Council may decide to disestablish the site. Sometimes, a site may be disestablished because it is being replaced by a zebra or light controlled crossing or other engineering measures, or by changes related to a Safer Routes to School project. If an SCP is working at the site, Medway Council will consider whether it is possible to relocate the SCP to a different site.

Safer Routes to School

Where the site does not meet the criteria, other funding may be sought to keep or appoint SCPs to encourage pupils and parents to walk to school, particularly where schools have introduced a school travel plan and identified a need.

Contacts

Medway Council: 01634 333333

Training and site Issues:

Road Safety team, Level 3 Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR
Email: crossing.patrol@medway.gov.uk

Please note: This policy follows the national guidance for the SCP service, produced by Road Safety GB, revised April 2018.

Appendix 1

Uniform

Correct clothing examples:



STOP Sign:



Hats:



NOTE: All clothing to be supplied by the Road Safety team. Forage and hostess style caps (as worn by police officers) may also be used but MUST include high visibility yellow in their design.

Appendix 2

Personal Specification - School Crossing Patrol

To ensure their own and others safety, it is essential that all SCPs are fit enough to carry out their duties and have the skills required for safe operation. These are listed below.

Although the final decision for employment rests with the school's Headteacher, a member of the council's Road Safety team is available for advice or participation in the selection process if required.

| | Essential |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Communication skills | Is he/she able to read, recall and write basic information clearly (e.g. vehicle details)? |
| Physical fitness | Is he/she able to stand unaided for the duration of the duty and walk at a brisk pace for short distances? Can he/she hold both arms horizontal repeatedly for 30 seconds at a time? |
| Medical conditions | Does the applicant meet the eyesight requirement for drivers (i.e. able to read a number plate from approximately 67 feet / 20 metres)? |

| Attributes | Essential | Desirable |
|--|--|---|
| Qualifications | | |
| Vocational training | | Driving licence First aid |
| Work-related experience (paid and unpaid) | | Previous experience of working with children and/or the public. |
| Specialist knowledge | Good understanding of road use and traffic awareness. | |
| Job-related skills | Punctuality | |
| Personal skills | Dependable Honest Smart appearance Good communicator Good community spirit Reliable | |