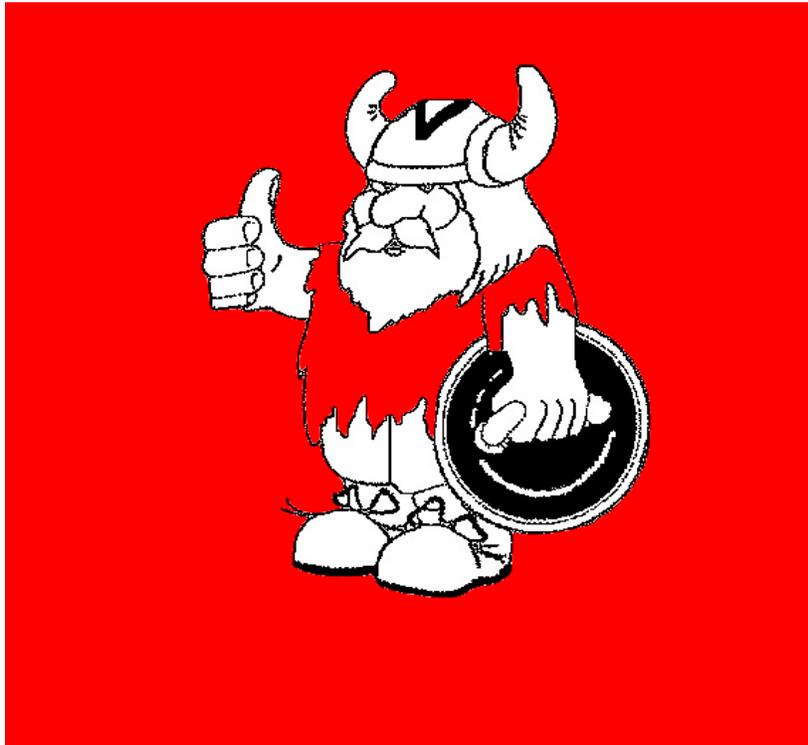


Vienna Elementary School

Parent Guide to Safe Walking and Bicycling

March 2014



Prepared by the
Vienna Elementary School PTA
in cooperation with the
Vienna Elementary School Administration
and the
Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

ABC Check

Every Time You Ride Your Bike

A – AIR – Check air in the tires. Pinch tires to make sure they are hard. If soft, add air.

B – BRAKES – Roll the bike forward and squeeze the hand brakes to make sure they stop the bike. **RULE OF THUMB** – When squeezing the brakes place your thumb between the handlebars and the brake lever. If your thumb does not fit, the brakes may not be able to apply full pressure in a panic stop. Bring your bike to a local bike shop to adjust the brakes.

C – CHAIN – The chain should be clean and lightly lubricated. If rusty, lubricate. If dirty, wipe down with a rag.

Bicycling on Roads

Bicycling on roads is beyond the scope of this guide. It is recommended that you contact one of the local bicycle shops for advice on learning the rules of the road for bicycling.

Children may safely bicycle on a road as part of a properly supervised adult led group. Some basic dangers to be aware of when riding in a group include:

1. The “door zone”. Make sure to ride at least 3 feet from parked cars. Passengers may not be aware of approaching cyclists and open the door.
2. Commercial entrances. Watch out for turning vehicles.
3. Wet or slick conditions. Brakes are not effective in the rain or on leaves.

General Biking Safety

Parents should ride regularly with their children to make sure that they are following safe practices.

1. Always wear a helmet. Children 14 or under are required to wear a helmet by law. Parents should wear a helmet for both protection and to set a good example.

Make sure your helmet fits to get all the protection you are paying for. A good fit means level on your head, touching all around, comfortably snug but not tight. The helmet should not move more than about an inch in any direction, and must not pull off no matter how hard you try.

2. Check your tires before riding. If they are not hard, you need to pump them up.
3. If wearing long pants, make sure your pants legs are secured so they cannot get caught in the chain.
4. Be aware that wet pavement, leaves, or sand can make it hard to stop. Ride slower during or after rain.
5. If your bike has both front and rear brakes, apply the rear brakes slightly before you apply the front brakes.
6. Always use a light and safety blinkers when riding at night so you can see and be seen. There are specific requirements for riding at night on the W&OD trail that are not covered in this guide.
7. Use hand signals to alert others of turns. Left hand out for turning left. Right hand out for turning right. Alternately, left hand bent up (like a waving gesture) for a right turn.
8. If you are in an accident where your helmet hits the ground, you should bring it to a local bike shop to be inspected and replaced if needed. Do this whether or not it is visibly damaged.
9. If your helmet is more than 5 years old, it is recommended that the helmet be inspected at a local bike shop to make sure that the helmet meets all current safety standards.
10. If you are in an accident that injures another person or their property, you should exchange contact information with the others involved.

Bicycling on School Grounds

1. Follow all Local School polices set for bicyclists. This may mean that bicyclist may be required to walk their bicycles on school grounds depending on pedestrian traffic considerations.
2. Ride slowly on school grounds. No faster than a jogging pace.
3. Secure your bike to the racks using a bike lock. For rail racks like the ones at Vienna Elementary, back the bike into the rack so the bike and frame are supported by the fixed rear wheel. This also brings the frame closer to the rack for easier to attachment. Make sure the lock goes through the frame of the bike. If you lock the bike with your front wheel in the rack and the bike falls, the front can be damaged.

Bicycling on Sidewalks

Adults are allowed to ride on sidewalks in Vienna when accompanying children. Sidewalks are often the safest place for children to ride when biking to school

1. Slow down and signal pedestrians before passing and always pass on the left. Use a bell or loudly announce "Passing On Your Left". If anyone is coming from the other direction, do not pass until you have a clear opening.
2. Cyclists should not ride faster than a jogger would travel even in the absence of pedestrians. Motorists expect to see pedestrians on sidewalks and so may not see cyclists when turning into driveways if they are traveling too fast.
3. Bikes must stop at all intersections. If any motorists are present make eye contact with every motorist at the intersection before crossing.
4. Pay attention to driveways – always stop at entrances to commercial buildings or multi-unit housing where cars frequently enter and exit.

Walking or Bicycling on the W&OD Trail

Special thanks Chris Pauley of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority for reviewing these recommendations.

Despite its tranquil appearance, the W&OD Trail is a potentially dangerous place. Be aware of your child's abilities and maturity when choosing to walk or bike on the trail. When walking or biking on the W&OD with children, keep the same level of vigilance as you would when walking or biking on a sidewalk adjacent to Maple Avenue. Make sure that children and pets do not stray or make unexpected moves into the oncoming lane where high speed users may come from behind.

1. Obey all posted trail and stop signs.
2. All trail users must travel in the right lane. Pass in the left lane only if it is clear and the center line is not solid. A solid center line indicates that passing is not allowed. This is the case in the area of the trail near Vienna Elementary and the Community Center.
3. Cyclists should travel in single file. Pedestrians should travel in single or double file. The trail is too narrow to safely ride double file or to walk three abreast.
4. Be predictable. Do not stop, change directions, or enter the trail without checking for oncoming bicycles from both directions.
5. If stopped, move off the trail away from traffic.
6. Pets must be kept on a short leash and controlled.
7. Cyclists must yield to pedestrians. Everyone must yield to a horse. If you encounter a horse wait for instructions from the rider before passing.
8. Slow down when passing a pedestrian. It is inconsiderate and unsafe to ride at road speeds when passing a pedestrian or when the trail is crowded on weekends or holidays. A leisurely pace is more appropriate.
9. Virginia law requires that cyclists audibly signal before passing. Use a bell or loudly announce "Passing On Your Left". Do not assume that the person you are passing has heard you or won't react in an unexpected manner.
10. No racing.
11. If using ear buds or headphones, keep one ear open to be able to hear other trail users.
12. **Do not assume that all trail users will behave safely. Remain alert.**

Bicycle Laws in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Rights and Duties

Every person riding a bicycle on a highway shall be subject to the provisions of the Code of Virginia section on motor vehicles and shall have the rights and duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle unless a provision clearly indicates otherwise.

Reference: [§46.2-800 ^TOPICS](#)

Where to Ride

- Bicyclists must ride with the flow of traffic on the right side of the highway.
- Bicyclists operating a bicycle on a roadway at less than the normal speed of traffic at the time and place under conditions then existing shall ride as close as safely practicable to the right curb or edge of roadway. Exceptions to this are when bicyclists are overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction, preparing for a left turn, avoiding unsafe conditions, avoiding riding in a lane that turns or diverges to the right, riding on a one way street where bicyclists may ride as near the left-hand curb or edge of roadway, or when the lane width is too narrow to share with a motor vehicle. Additionally, bicycles are not excluded from riding on the highway shoulder.
- Bicyclists must not ride between two lanes of traffic moving in the same direction unless one lane is a separate or mandatory turn lane.
- Bicyclists cannot ride more than two abreast on highways. When riding two abreast, bicyclists cannot impede the movement of traffic and need to move into a single file when being overtaken from the rear. On a laned roadway, bicyclists shall ride in a single lane.
- Bicyclists are not permitted to ride on interstate and certain controlled access highways, unless the operation is limited to bicycle or pedestrian facilities that are barrier separated from the roadway and automobile traffic. The restricted sections of the highways are marked with conspicuous signs.
- Bicycles may be ridden on sidewalks unless prohibited by local ordinance or traffic control devices. While on sidewalks and shared use paths, bicyclists must always yield the right of way to pedestrians and give an audible signal before passing a pedestrian.
- Bicyclists pulling onto a sidewalk or highway from a driveway must yield the right of way to pedestrians or vehicles already on the sidewalk or highway.

Reference: [§§46.2-802,46.2-808,46.2-826,46.2-903,46.2-904,46.2-905,46.2-907 ^TOPICS](#)

Helmet Use

Fairfax County and Town of Vienna require that every person fourteen years of age or younger shall wear a protective helmet whenever riding or being carried on a bicycle on any highway, sidewalk, or public bicycle path.

Passing

Bicyclists may overtake and pass another vehicle only when safe to do so. Bicyclists may pass another vehicle on the right or left, and they may stay in the same lane, change lanes, or ride off the road if necessary for safe passing. Please note that passing motor vehicles on the right side may be extremely dangerous if the motorist does not see the bicyclist and attempts a right turn.

A person riding a bicycle shall not travel between two lanes of traffic moving in the same direction, except where one lane is a separate turn lane or a mandatory turn lane.

Motorists must approach and pass a bicyclist at a reasonable speed at least two feet to the left of the bicyclist.

Reference: [§§46.2-839,46.2-907 ^TOPICS](#)

Changing Directions

Bicyclists must signal their intentions to stop or turn. The proper signals are made with the left arm as follows:

Right Turn, Left Turn, and Stop

A right turn may be signaled with the right arm. The signals do not have to be given continuously if both hands are needed to control the bicycle.

Bicyclists may make left turns as either motorists or pedestrians do. To make a pedestrian left turn, the bicyclist should continue straight across the intersecting road, obey the traffic signals, turn left at the corner, and proceed as usual. Bicyclists may also dismount and walk in the crosswalks of the two intersecting roads. If traffic control devices specify the method of crossings, these directions must be followed. Please refer to the examples shown here:



Reference: §§[46.2-846](#),[46.2-847](#),[46.2-848](#),[46.2-849](#) ^TOPICS

Safety Considerations

- Bicyclists must not carry articles which prevent them from keeping at least one hand on the handlebars.
- Bicyclists must not carry more people than the bicycle is designed to accommodate, except for adult bicyclists carrying a child, under six years of age, securely attached to the bicycle in a seat or trailer designed to carry children.
- Bicyclists must not attach themselves or their bicycles to any other vehicle on the roadway.
- Bicyclists are not permitted to wear earphones in both ears while riding a bicycle.

Reference: §§[46.2-906](#),[46.2-932](#),[46.2-1078](#) ^TOPICS

Accidents

Bicyclists must stop when they are in an accident involving death, injury, or property damage. The bicyclist's name and address must be given to the police and to any person involved in the accident or the owner of the property. If unattended property is damaged, the bicyclist must make a reasonable effort to find the owner. The bicyclist's name and address must be given to the owner. If the owner cannot be located, the bicyclist must leave a note in a conspicuous place at the accident site and report the accident to the police within 24 hours.

Reference: §§[46.2-894](#),[46.2-895](#),[46.2-896](#) ^TOPICS