

School trips among young people in Viken county

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- About half the pupils in lower secondary school in Viken county are walking or cycling to school in the summer term. About 1/3 are using public transport, and a few (7 percent) are driven. In the winter term, fewer are cycling to school, and more are using public transport or are being driven.
- In upper secondary school, 6 out of 10 pupils are using public transport to school. Fewer are walking and cycling compared to lower secondary school. The seasonal variations in modes of transportation are less pronounced in upper than in lower secondary school.
- On average, pupils in upper secondary school have a longer commute to school than pupils in lower secondary school. The distance to school plays a significant role in how pupils travel to school.
- Most students perceive their route to school as safe in terms of traffic conditions. However, this perception has little impact on how they travel to school.

The National Transport Plan aims for 80 percent of the children between the ages of 6 and 15, and with a school commute of up to four kilometers, to walk or cycle to school. Travel habit surveys conducted among children, are revealing a significant increase in car usage for school trips among pupils in primary school, rising from 3 percent in 1997 to about 20 percent in 2020. This shift has primarily affected the proportion who are cycling and using public transport to school.

Analyses of young peoples' general travel habits indicate a decreasing tendency to cycle and a higher likelihood of being driven to various activities. However, there is limited knowledge about how young people are traveling to and from school. This project aims to gain insight into how youth in Viken county are traveling to school, their perceptions of traffic safety along the school route and factors influencing their choice of transportation to school. To achieve this understanding, we have conducted a travel survey among pupils in lower and upper secondary schools in Viken county.

Many pupils in lower secondary school walk or cycle to school

Among lower secondary school pupils, walking to school is the most common mode of transportation. Approximately 1/3 are walking to school, slightly more during the summer term than in the winter term. During the summer term, there are equal numbers of people

who cycle and travel by public transport to school (20 percent). About 10 percent are using electric scooters during the summer term. The percentage who cycle to school decreases significantly in the winter. The majority of those who stop cycling in the winter, choose to walk to school.

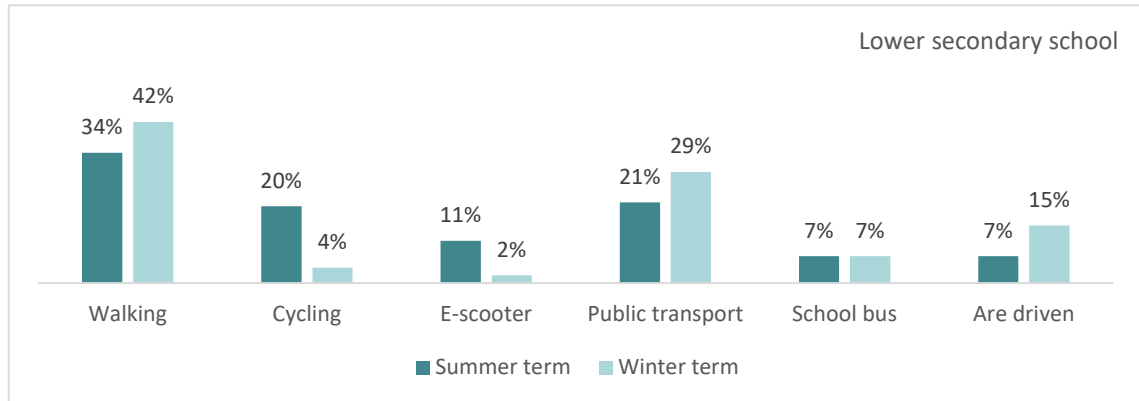


Figure S1: Modes of transportation to school during summer term and winter term, among pupils in lower secondary school in Viken county. Percent. N = 5358.

Most pupils in upper secondary school use public transport to school

Among pupils in upper secondary school, public transportation is the most commonly used mode of transportation for school trips. The percentage of students who are walking and cycling decreases significantly from lower to upper secondary school. This is, in part, due to longer commute to school among upper secondary school students. About the same number of pupils are driven to school in upper as in lower secondary school. Additionally, some students drive themselves, using a car, moped or motorcycle. The seasonal variation in the mode of transportation to school is less pronounced in upper than in lower secondary school.

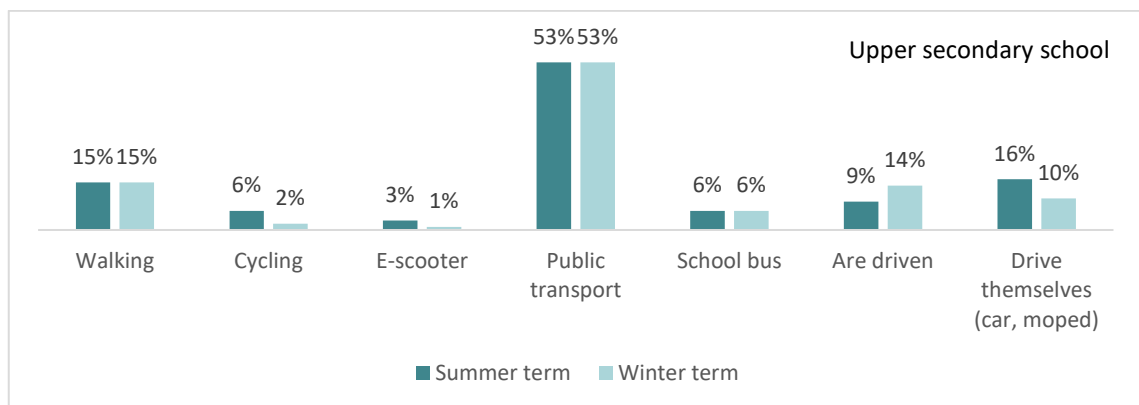
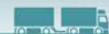


Figure S1: Modes of transportation to school during summer term and winter term, among pupils in upper secondary school in Viken county. Percent. N = 11463.

These figures apply to all students, regardless of the distance to school. Among those with a distance to school that does not qualify them for school transportation are the percentage of walking and cycling slightly higher: 63 percent of pupils in lower secondary school and 33 percent of pupils in upper secondary school walk or cycle to school, as an average of travel habits in both summer and winter. There is still a considerable gap to the goal of having 80 percent of those without transportation entitlement walking or cycling to school.



Most young people in Viken think their school route is safe

Most young people in Viken county perceive the school route as safe in terms of traffic conditions. About 2/3 find the entire school route safe, while 1/3 feel that parts of the route are unsafe. Very few (6 percent) consider the entire route or substantial portions of it as unsafe. This perception is consistent for both lower and upper secondary school students.

How one experiences various traffic conditions along the school route affects whether the route is perceived as safe or unsafe. This applies in particular if the roads to school are difficult to cross, if there is high-speed car traffic, and there is a lack of sidewalks and cycling paths. Additionally, the traffic volume near the residence and school affects whether the school route is perceived as unsafe or not, where traffic volume around school has more impact than the traffic volume around one's home.

Distance and gender influence mode of transportation to school

The pupils were asked to specify the main reasons for traveling to school in the way they do. Many were pragmatic, opting for the transportation method that efficiently takes them to school ("It is the fastest and easiest").

A multivariate analysis that consists of both individual characteristics, transport resources, and environmental factors as explanatory variables, shows that distance to school is one of the most influential factors in determining how one travels to school. With longer distances, the percentage of walking decreases, and the percentage using public transport increases. Car use to school is less influenced by distance.

Gender also plays a major role in how young people in Viken county travel to school, especially among students in secondary school. Boys are cycling more than girls, while girls are walking more, travel more by public transport and are driven to a greater extent than boys.

Access to different means of transportation also plays an important role in how one travels to school. If one has a bicycle, electric scooter, or a car, it is natural that this is used. What is interesting, is what this comes at the expense of. Those who own a bicycle are less likely to walk and use public transport to school, compared to those without a bike. Owning an e-scooter contributes to reduced walking and cycling, but not to a decrease in car usage (either as a passenger or a driver). Those with a driver's license and access to a car travel less with all other modes of transportation compared to those without a driver's license and a car. In summary, the results suggest that having access to electric scooters and a driver's license/car contributes to lower usage of active modes of transportation, such as walking and cycling.

Whether the school route is perceived as safe in terms of traffic, has little impact on how one travels to school. Among pupils in lower secondary school, this has no significant effect on the mode of transportation to school. Among pupils in upper secondary school, those with an unsafe school route are driven to school to a slightly greater extent, and they are using public transport to a slightly lesser extent, than those with a safe school route. This indicates that road safety measures alone will contribute little to more young people walking or cycling to school.

The analysis demonstrates that both the environment and individual characteristics and resources influence how young people in Viken county are traveling to school. However, there is also a significant degree of individual choice within this range of actions. Therefore, changes in transportation behavior involve making desired transportation alternatives slightly more attractive, making undesirable alternatives more cumbersome to use, as well as promoting awareness and shaping attitudes.