

18. Riding with other riders

National Standard reference: 4.1, 4.2.1

Instructing points

- Plan and agree the speed and route with the group.
- Arrange who will lead and support on the ride. The more confident rider should either lead or remain towards the rear. For larger groups, consider exchanging contact details in case someone splits off from the group. Do this with adults only.
- Agree on the space between each rider when cycling (and stopping) in the group. Ensure the gap between riders reflects the speed that you are cycling.
- Support each other by sticking together and calling out hazards to each other.
- Ensure that riders know that they need to carry out their own observations. They should not simply follow the leader but should make their own informed decisions (with your support if necessary).
- Riders may ride doubled-up to shorten the length of the group. This can be helpful when moving through junctions too.
- When changing lanes or moving into primary position, the rear rider moves first, creating space for the riders in front to move. The front rider signals early to move, giving enough time for the rear riders to move.
- Parents riding with their children normally ride behind them to keep them in sight. If doubling up, the parents normally do so on the right-hand side, and dynamically move up alongside to offer support when needed.

Additional resources

[▶ Video – Snaking](#)

[▶ Video – Shepherding](#)



Activity ideas

You may want to introduce aspects of this topic (such as the active learning approaches to group riding) earlier in your course.

Explain to the riders that effective group riding techniques will enable them to support each other when cycling in a group (such as when riding to school). Also, explain to them how you will support them when riding together as a group. This may be through positioning yourself behind the first rider in the group, or by dropping right back and then dynamically moving up alongside them if they need support. Explain that when you ride behind the group, they will need to check back regularly to ensure that you are there.

Make sure all riders are aware of their responsibilities to each other before they ride as a group on the road. Practise the group riding techniques (such as doubling up) in a traffic-free environment before attempting them on the road.

Rather than simply following the person in front, riders should all make independent decisions. They should understand that sometimes this results in the group splitting up. Discuss what they should do if this happens, for example the front riders pull in to wait for those behind.

Give riders the responsibility to lead the group when they are ready to do so. If they need support to lead the group through a junction, consider dynamically moving up alongside or just behind them to offer support, before then dropping back again.

When working with two instructors, consider splitting into two smaller groups with each instructor riding behind. You can each dynamically move up alongside the riders when they need support.

Sample questions to check understanding

- Q. How will you know if the riders behind are keeping up?
- Q. What will you do if you can't see riders behind?
- Q. How else can you support each other when riding in a group?

Differentiation

Inclusion

Riders who use non-standard cycles may be slower. Consider riders' position, in the group in relation to their speed.

Non-standard cycles may be wider and require more frequent use of the primary position. In this case, all the riders should ride in the primary position.

Differentiation (continued)

Avoid filtering through queueing traffic when riding with riders on wider cycles or in situations where it is important that the group does not split up.

Paired riding is a good way to support riders with special educational needs and disabilities. By riding close behind or alongside them you can provide reassurance and help them to develop as confident riders.

Extension

Simplify

Consider starting with more experienced riders doubling up on the right of riders who are less confident.

Challenge

Give riders the opportunity to experience riding in different positions in the group, including at the front.

If riding with more experienced riders, consider riding in more complex on-road environments.

Consider dropping back from the group (while keeping the riders in sight) to create a more independent riding experience. By talking and prompting less you can also transfer more decision making to the group.

Risk benefit assessment

Risk

- The group becomes split and you lose sight of some of the riders.
- The rear rider cannot signal and this causes a driver behind to misunderstand the group's intentions and they overtake.

Mitigation

- Ensure the front rider regularly checks behind to try to keep the group together. Also ensure that each rider takes responsibility through making their own decisions at junctions. Before the session, explain that if the group splits up, the front riders should pull over and wait.
- If a rider cannot signal, think about where they should go in the group (you would not want them to be the last rider in the group if clear communication is needed). Advise them on other ways in which they can communicate.

Benefits

The group should stick together where necessary. But if the group does split up, this can be a good learning opportunity. It helps all riders in the group to experience independent decision making at junctions.

All riders also develop their techniques in communicating with other road users.