



## **Safe Routes to Schools *Rodeo* Manual (or all you need to know to be a fantastic coach)**

Revised by Jason Agar 2006

### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### **What is Safe Routes to Schools?**

We are happy to invite you to be a part of the Safe Routes to Schools Program. Safe Routes to Schools in Marin County works with over 40 schools providing education and support for infrastructure changes that create safer streets to walk or bike to school.

Thirty years ago over 66% of all children walked to school (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Walking or biking to school gives children a taste of freedom and responsibility, allows them to enjoy the fresh air and the opportunity to get to know their neighborhood, while arriving at school alert, refreshed and ready to start their day. Yet most American children are denied this experience --today, only 13% of America's children walk or bike to school (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

You can help change this and reduce the frustration of morning traffic jams all around Marin!

#### **What is the Bicycle Rodeo?**

The goal of the Rodeo is to teach children the importance of seeing, being seen, and remaining in control, at all times when riding a bike. This is achieved through a series of bike handling drills and the simulation of traffic situations. This activity is a follow up activity to two classroom lessons focusing on helmet usage, basic safety strategy, laws and regulations.

#### **What do I need?**

You must bring a bike, helmet, water, snack, hat and sunscreen.

#### **Managing 4<sup>th</sup> Graders**

The Bicycle Rodeo is certainly a dance with chaos. However, SR2S is a professional program, teaching safety and we need to present ourselves with confidence. The students arrive excited and ready to participate but are easily distracted because there is so much happening at once. Participation in the rodeo is a privilege, we explain this at the beginning of the event and we are very clear about the behavior we expect. As coaches you should not tolerate disruptive or disrespectful behavior. Students respond well to "Time Outs" where they are off their bikes until allowed to participate again. Consult the Safe Routes lead staff or school teacher for additional support if unsafe or disruptive behavior continues

#### **Communication Tips**

- **Require Respect** for yourself as an instructor and for one another as students. Do not tolerate or ignore disrespectful behavior. Use the specific language "I expect you to respect me/one another". Don't allow disruptive students to ruin the event for everybody. "Participating in the rodeo is a privilege and riding on your own is an important responsibility".
- **Be enthusiastic**, use this as a tool to engage them. Build on their enthusiasm.
- **Set high performance standards**. Many children genuinely lack confidence and this can be a valuable confidence building experience. Many youth think these

exercises are too easy. If you explain the stations correctly and provide them with **feedback** that is positive and encouraging, you can challenge their ability. If they are working hard they won't get bored and they will be easier to manage.

- **Keep an open ear.** Youth are constantly being told what to do by adults, so keep an ear open to what they have to say. You must balance being firm and clear with your expectations and instructions with being welcoming and friendly.
- **Breathe!** Especially when total chaos breaks out; smile and remember to BREATHE! Think about what needs to happen and act to make sure that it does. Ask for help. Improvisation is healthy.
- **Modeling.** You should model (on bike) what you want them to do.
- **Ask a lot of questions.** Rather than telling them, ask them, prompt them to provide the answers about how and why we do things.

## What is my job?

### 1. Set up and Break down.

We will need help loading and unloading the rodeo supplies and setting up the stations. All four stations and the orientation/debriefing area are set up as described below. You must place a white sandwich sign with the name of the station beside each of the four courses. Students will gather for start and finish of rodeo in a central area from which other stations are visible.

**Notes:** After deciding on the general layout, first chalk the slalom course, then chalk Safetyville. Incorporate the van/trailer into the Safetyville course and leave it parked. Leave Safetyville materials in van until course is chalked. Remove equipment for other stations and continue setup. During orientation: if there is a large number of scooters- keep them in the same group.

#### 1. Initial Orientation with Students.

When students initially gather there will be a large number of bicycles needing minor adjustments. We will need your help with pumping up tires, checking brakes, adjusting seats and helmets and other details. Someone will be assigned to help students that don't have bikes and helmets. Safe Routes to Schools has extra bikes and helmets to lend out. Staff will be responsible for sizing the students for the right bikes. Two students can share a bike but not a helmet. Please remember to work quietly during these tasks as other instruction will be happening concurrently.

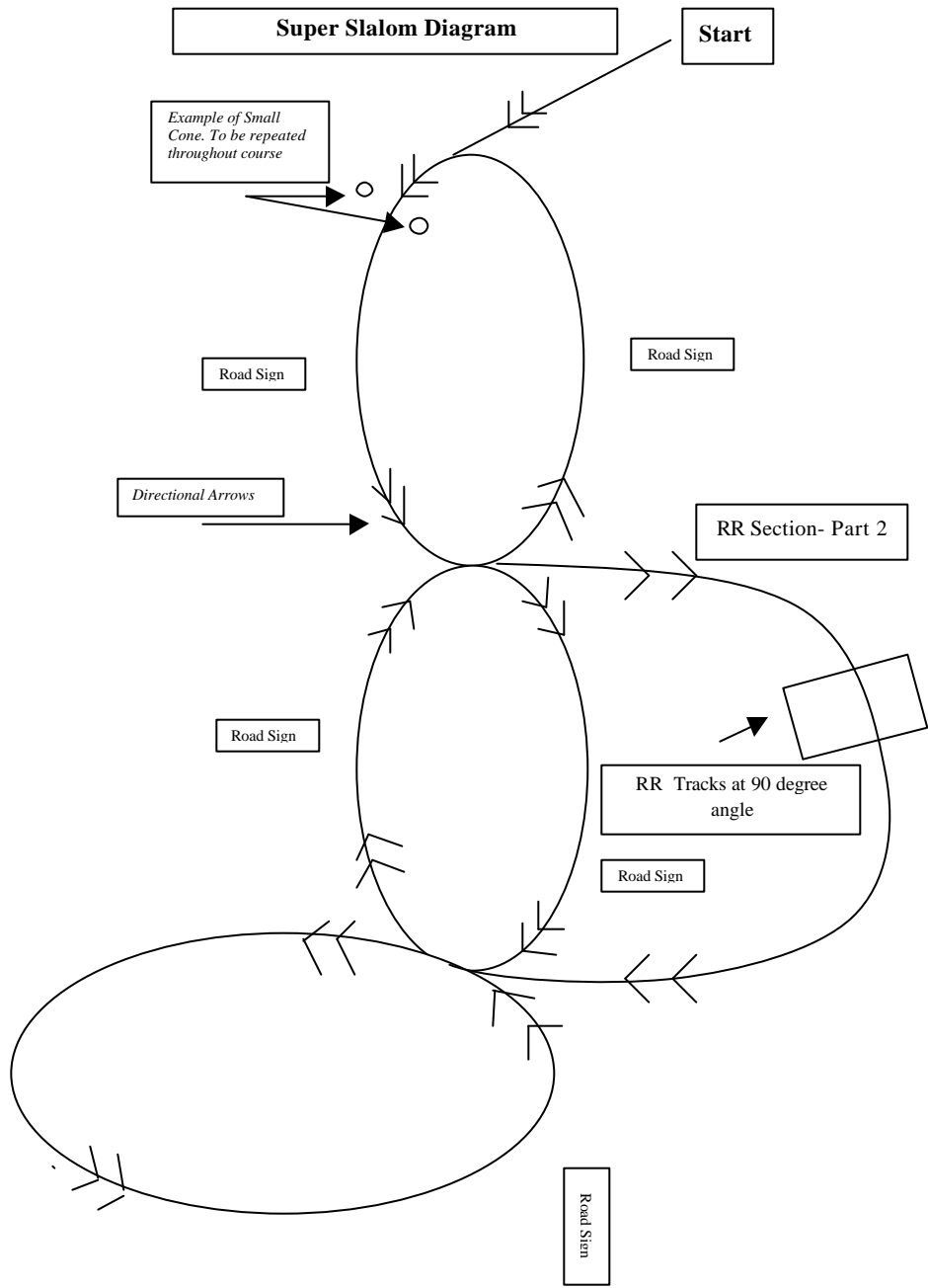
#### 2. Running the Stations

Each station has specific teaching objectives. Use this manual to orient yourself with these objectives. Every teacher has his or her own style and ways of communicating with youth. Don't be hard on yourself the first few times explaining the stations. This manual will explain how many volunteers you need for your station and what to expect them to do. Just remember that keeping it simple and **modeling** instructions on your bike will always help.

## Super Slalom

**Set up** The course consists of a circuitous chalk line, which winds and turns tightly then opens up into straight away sections. The line crosses itself at several points creating intersections. Think of a triple figure 8. Use arrows at crossings to indicate the direction riders should follow. The chalk line is outlined by traffic cones. The traffic cones are placed far enough apart that any child should be able to navigate the course while remaining between the cones. Traffic signs (supported by sawhorses) are placed to the left and right of the course so that students can use their peripheral vision to read them.

On separate section, place railroad crossing bars perpendicular to direction of rider.



**Super Slalom Course Objectives:**

Bike handling  
Smooth stopping  
Peripheral vision  
Yielding to cross traffic  
Navigating obstacles (Railroad Tracks)

**Instructions:****Ride the course once and demonstrate.**

The object is to follow the chalk line drawn on the blacktop with their front wheel. Cones are set up to mark the course and they must stay within the cones. Keeping their tire right on the line will be very difficult (impossible actually) to do, but everybody should be able to stay within the cones. As riders practice this course, suggest that they pick up their speed

**Teaching Points:**

**Peripheral Vision Demonstration.** Have students hold their hands out in front of them at shoulder level and wiggle their index finger and thumb. They are easy to see in front of us. We are used to seeing this way, but we are going to learn about how much we can see on either side. Have students look forward while moving their arms at shoulder level out to the side. Find out how far you can hold your arms out to the side and see your wiggling fingers. This side vision is called Peripheral Vision. *Explain that is “what we see out of the corners of our eyes”; we can see things without looking directly at them.* Use this vision to help you read the street signs (out loud) on either side of the course and to watch for things out on the road. We always want to focus on where we are going, so instruct them to follow the chalk line but also to be aware of the other riders, they must avoid collisions at each intersection and avoid running into the rider ahead of them.

**Crossing at Intersections.** Students will need to slow down where the paths cross. The goal is to take turns. Explain that slowing or stopping to let someone else go ahead is the best way to stay safe and the kind, courteous thing to do. The Concept of “Yield” or surrendering your right of way will be introduced in Safetyville.

**Crossing Rail Road Tracks** is an important skill. Start the course with the railroad track section closed off. After students are comfortable with the triple figure 8 course, open the RR section. The railroad track unit can be turned over and the height adjusted or surface to be crossed changes from metal to wood to increase or decrease the difficulty of crossing. Initially angle the railroad tracks to be perpendicular to the slalom course line. As the course is being run, they will get used to crossing on this angle. Later on, change the orientation of the tracks and have students adjust their crossing angle to be perpendicular. Feed the riders onto the course one at a time, several seconds apart.

**Volunteer Jobs** Volunteers can be used to clean up knocked over cones and to help students navigate through intersections .

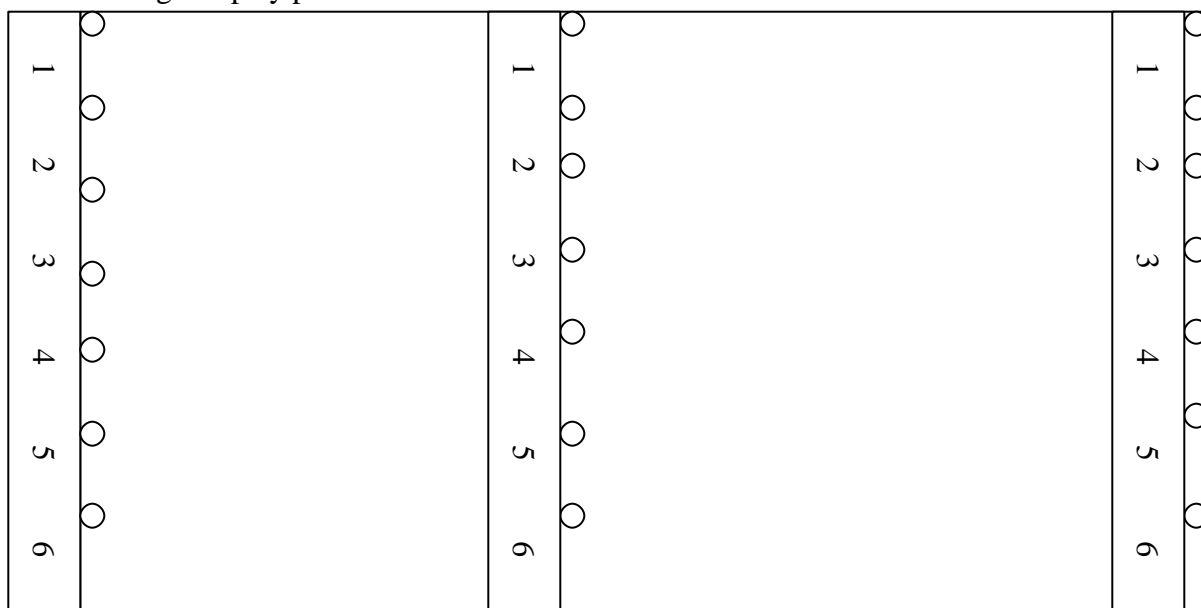
**Things to watch for:**

Talk to the riders, offering positive and encouraging feedback but holding riders to the goals of the exercise. Keep the riders at a safe speed and do not allow passing. Replace cones when they get knocked over.

## Turtle Race

### Set Up

The course consists of 6 (or more) lanes about 3 feet wide and 75 feet in length. Mark the start, middle and finish with medium sized cones. You will need at 21 cones for 6 lanes. It helps students to mark lane numbers 1-6 in front of the cones. This station will need the red, yellow and green poly/plastic dots.



### **Turtle Race Station**

#### **Objectives:**

Balance and control  
when riding slowly  
Quick stopping  
Shoulder check

### **Instructions for stage one, Turtle Race; how slow can you go?**

Ask the riders if they find it harder to control their bikes at slower speeds. They will most likely agree. Explain that this is a balance exercise, that we want them to practice controlling their bikes at slow speeds. \*. *The objective for kids on scooters is to coast as much as possible, pushing off with their foot the least amount of times. Group all the scooters in the same heat.*

- The last person across the finish line is the winner
- Try not to put your foot down and stay in your lane.
- Start the riders by blowing the whistle, coach the riders, offering positive and encouraging feedback and challenging them to stay in their lanes. Cheer the riders enthusiastically

### **Teaching Points**

**Power Pedal:** Starting from a stop with your pedal up in a 2 o'clock position gives cyclist a strong start. Demonstrate what a "scooter step" looks like and contrast it to a strong "power pedal position".

- Staying in your lane is the most important thing because you never want to swerve out in front of a car

### **Things to watch out for:**

If a child is having difficulty going slow without swerving into other lanes, encourage them to put down their feet if they have to.

### **Instructions for stage two, Braking**

Explain that now that we have mastered straight-line riding we will be adding a new challenge, this time they can pick up some speed but the marshal will be standing at the end of the lanes and will hold up a "stoplight" There are three circles, red, green and yellow. Review what each color means at a stoplight. As they ride down the lane they must do what the card means. (Slow down for yellow, stop for red or keep going for green.)

### **Teaching Points:**

- Breaking evenly to keep from going over the bars
- Shifting your weight back, over the rear wheel to maintain control

### **Instructions for stage three, Shoulder Check**

Increase the challenge by looking over your shoulder while riding in a straight line. Model this by riding up the lane and scanning back to the right and the left without swerving. Explain that the natural tendency when we look back is to swerve in the direction we are trying to see. When riding on the street this can put you in the path of traffic. *This exercise is easiest if students can take one hand off the handlebars when peering behind them.*

Riders proceed down the lane one at a time, the Marshal stands behind the rider and randomly calls out either "check right" or "check left" and holds up one of the big red, yellow or green colored circles which tells to slow, stop, or keep riding.

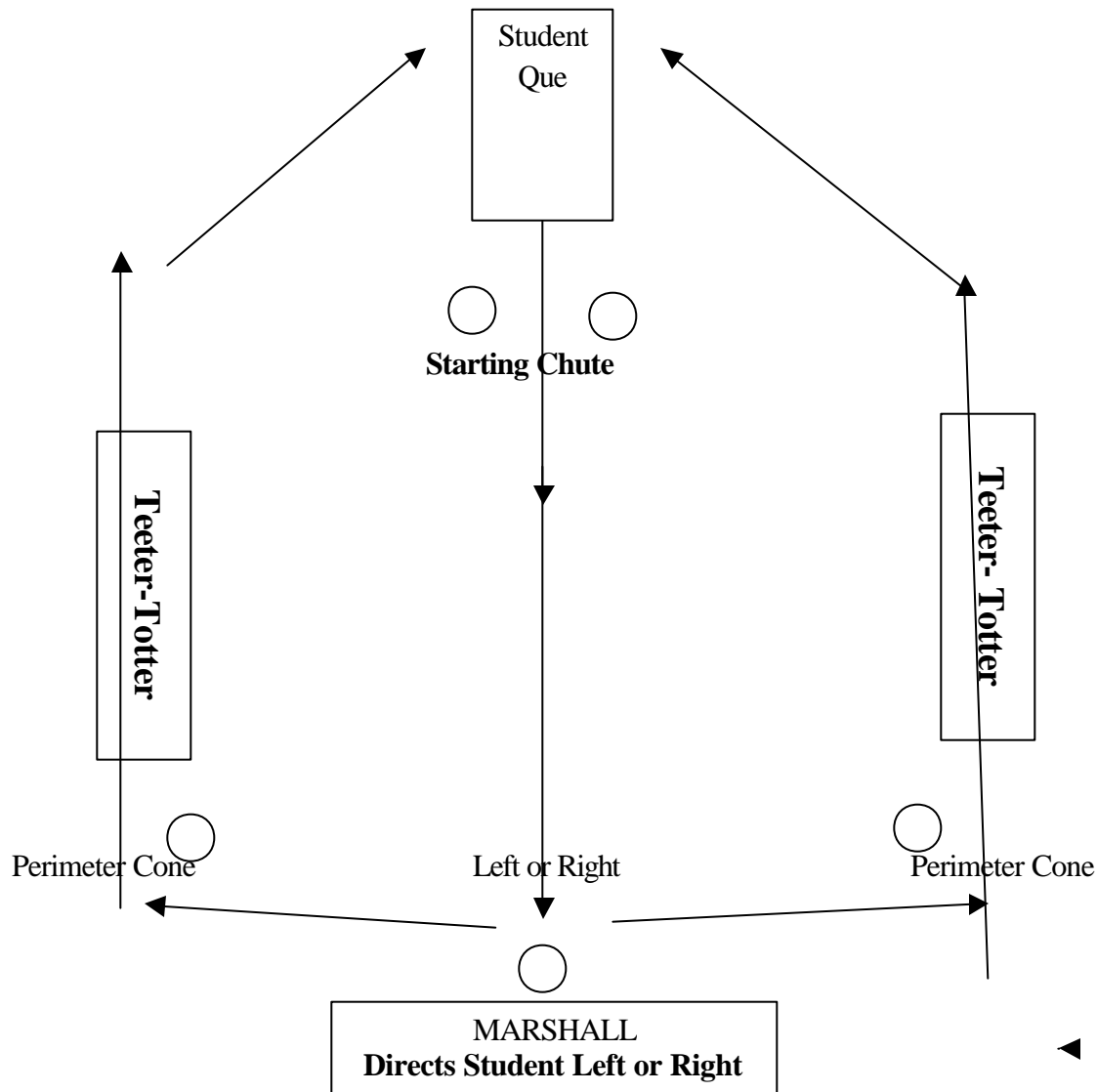
### **Volunteer Jobs**

Volunteers can be used as cheerleaders and to help kids move from the end of the race back to the starting point efficiently and safely.

## Quick Turn/Fast Dodge

### Set up

The course consists of a starting chute marked with chalk and/or cones. One at a time students will cycle toward a Course Marshall who will direct them to turn either left or right. Students will cycle around a perimeter cones and ride over a teeter-totter obstacle on their way back to the student line to try it again. An area of at least 100 feet by 40 feet is suggested; it works best when riders have the opportunity to build up speed.



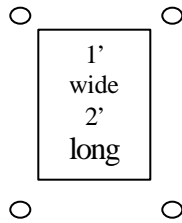
### Quick Turn/Fast Dodge Objectives

Quick decision making  
Fast turning  
Balance and control  
Dodging an obstacle (optional)

### Instructions stage for stage one, Basic Route:

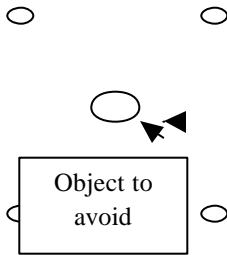
Instruct the riders to line up at the top of the course (designated by the sandwich board) and ride through the marked chute toward the Marshal at the other end of the course, just as the rider reaches them they will direct the rider to turn right or left. Instruct them to then ride out between the marker cones and circle back to the top of the chute and repeat the drill. **Demonstrate this.** Encourage them to build up speed as they become comfortable with the activity. Have students ride the teeter-totter on the return trip, as they are comfortable.

### Instructions for stage two, the Chute (optional)



On the way from the Marshall create a small chute 1' x 2'  
Instruct students to ride through the chute on their return to the top.  
Demonstrate this.

### Instructions for stage three, the Rock Dodge (optional)



Place the obstacle in the center of the chute. Instruct the students to continue to stay within the chute but flick their front wheel around the obstacle. **Demonstrate this.** This practices dodging road hazards like glass and rocks.

### Teaching Points:

- Why is it more dangerous to hit something with the front wheel but not such a big deal if you roll over something with the rear wheel?  
*Hitting something with the front wheel affects steering, the rear does not steer. Hitting things causes flats.*
- Why is it more dangerous to get a flat on your front tire?  
*A front flat makes it harder to control because you are steering with the front. A rear flat is not so bad because our weight is over the rear and this helps to stabilize the bike.*

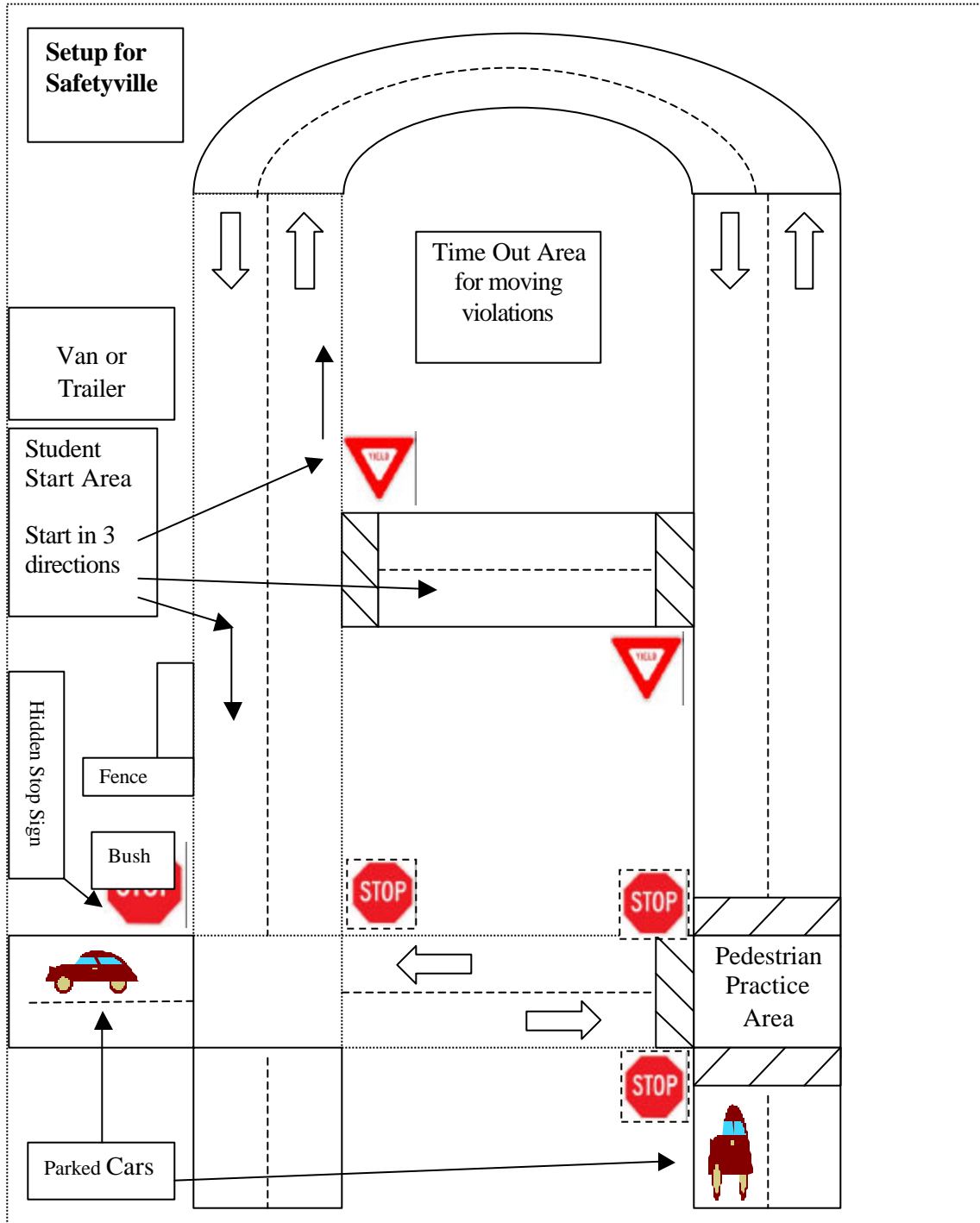
### Volunteer Jobs

It is extremely useful to have one or two volunteers at this station. Since the course is long, it is useful to have the instructor starting kids at the chute and providing feedback near the teeter-totters. A volunteer can act as the marshal signaling the turn directions to students. It is useful to have someone stationed at the chute to pick up cones and fix the teeter-totter, etc.



## Safetyville

**Set up** Safetyville is the most complicated course in this program. Please consult the picture below. Use the chalk cart and props to set up a street course as pictured below. The basic idea is to create a course, simulating traffic patterns. Each intersection is a little different. Some have a barrier that covers a stop sign, others encourage yielding and communication among bikers/drivers. Rules of the Road are reinforced by giving bikers a Ticket/time out when they break the rules.



**Safetyville Objectives:**

Learning hand signals  
Practice stopping at edges  
Learning to Yield  
Judgment and Bike  
Handling Skills

**Instructions**

Instruct the students to line up behind each other in groups of three. They will be pulling out of their driveway and entering into the roadway. The student on the left hand column will turn left out to the driveway, the student on the right column will turn right out of the driveway and the center column will cross the road and continue straight. Tell the students that Safetyville is a place where bikes get to take over the road,. Since bicycles and cars are both vehicles, bikes need to follow all the rules of the road. Students will get a ticket ( placed into the middle of the route for 1 minute) if they break a rule

- All students will demonstrate peeking around the fence barriers and looking left, right, left before pulling into the course
- At stop signs and intersections, students should demonstrate appropriate hand signals and yielding practices. They should also practice looking left, right and left before proceeding through the intersections.
- Students can get a ticket for speeding and passing.

**Teaching Points**

- Teach students hand signals.
- Review stopping at edges and looking Left, Right and Left and using hand signals.
- Introduce the concept of “Yield.” It means to surrender of give up your right of way. When you see the Yield sign you let other people go first unless there is no one there. At intersections you yield to pedestrians and the other riders who were there first.
- Pedestrians have the right of way (right to go first) at intersections. Pedestrians can practice in the marked crosswalk areas.

**Volunteer Jobs**

Volunteers can be used as police officers in this course. They should be placed at intersections to reinforce the use of hand signals and looking left, right and left before proceeding through intersections.

Students can be used as pedestrians at cross works to reinforce the idea of pedestrian right of way.