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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

As part of the national Safer Routes to School initiative for 2001 / 2002 Torbain primary school has been selected as one of six primary schools in Fife to develop a Safer Routes to School (SRTS) Plan. A project team was therefore set up to carry out research and organise the formulation of an SRTS plan for Torbain. Members of the project team were: - Headteacher, Ishbel Kerr; Project Teacher, Barbara McConnell; Project Engineer and Plan Author, George Adamson and Road Safety Officer, Don Yard. The team have carried out a number of investigative surveys to identify road safety issues around the school and after analysing the results have put forward a list of initiatives to be considered for funding and implementation. The children from all classes across the school have been involved in the project and have made valuable contributions to the Safer Routes to School Plan for Torbain.

1.2 SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA

The school serves the north west part of Kirkcaldy. The housing area is relatively modern and densely populated. The school currently has a roll of 602 pupils, including 72 children in the nursery school, which now includes 3 year olds. Due to parental placing requests, approximately 40% of the pupils live outwith the catchment area. There are 5 school crossing patrols operating within the catchment area.

1.3 ACCESS TO SCHOOL & ACCOMMODATION

The children are accommodated in two buildings within the school grounds at Blairmore Road; the main school building and the nursery. There are two main pedestrian accesses to the school from Blairmore Road, one for each building and a further one from a pathway at the rear of the buildings, through West Torbain. School crossing patrols operate at both the Blairmore Road entrances. Vehicle access to the school is from Blairmore Road, by a driveway between the school building and the nursery. This driveway gives access to the staff car park and allows lorries to make deliveries to both buildings. A footpath within the school grounds links the school and the nursery.



2. PLAN AIMS & CHARTERS

2.1 AT TORBAIN OUR SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN AIMS TO:

- Improve the safety of pupils on their journey to and from school
- Encourage more parents to allow their children to walk or cycle to school
- Raise awareness of the local traffic problems near the school
- Reduce congestion on Blairmore Road at the school gates
- Reduce the number of car trips to and from school
- Promote better "traffic awareness" in pupils
- Develop improved fitness in the pupils
- Demonstrate a commitment to the community by improving the local environment
- Reduce the consumption of fossil fuels, saving energy and pollution

2.2 CHARTERS FOR SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The pupils, parents and staff at Torbain together with Transportation Services have signed charters pledging support and commitment to achieving the aims of the Safer Routes to School Plan.



3. DATA ANALYSIS & TARGETS

3.1 QUESTIONNAIRES

Parents and pupils were asked to complete questionnaires as part of the consultation and information-gathering exercises carried out during the summer term of 2000-2001 and the autumn term of 2001-2002. Parents were given questionnaires at the summer term parents' evenings and asked to complete them on the night. This proved a successful way of ensuring that the views of as many parents as possible were included in the survey. There are 300 families at Torbain and 220 questionnaires (73%) were returned. The pupils completed their questionnaires during the autumn term. Infant classes did this as a class exercise, whilst older pupils were able to complete the questionnaires individually. A total of 500 pupils returned questionnaires. Mrs Kerr completed the headteacher's questionnaire and also provided other helpful information. A specific questionnaire was created for the School Board. The Board had been dealing with road safety issues prior to the Safer Routes initiative. It was therefore important to include their views.

Pupils from primary 6 and 7 collated the figures from the questionnaires and the results have been summarised in the main report. The full results and examples of the questionnaires can be seen in appendix B.

3.2 SAFER ROUTES

The project team carried out class interview exercises, interviewing the pupils about the routes taken to school and the method of transport used. The children marked their routes to school on plans, showing the catchment area, with pens colour-coded according to the mode



of transport used. The main routes were able to be established from the marked plans and were then audited for particular problems or improvements required. See plan of safer routes in appendix A.



3. DATA ANALYSIS & TARGETS

3.3 CLASSROOM SURVEYS

More general views were sought from the pupils in a series of classroom interviews, taking in all classes from P1 to P7. The children were asked how they travel or would like to travel to school, what the problems were and what improvements they would like.

As a class exercise, the pupils from P6 & P7 were also asked to write letters about the Safer Routes to School project and how they have been involved. Some examples of the letters can be seen in appendix B.

3.4 TRAFFIC SPEED SURVEYS

From the speed measurements carried out on Blairmore Road at the school it was found that 85% of northbound traffic was travelling at less than 33mph and that 85% of southbound traffic was travelling at less than 32mph.

The speeds quoted are only slightly above the speed limit of 30mph and, even with the lower threshold for prosecution under the Schoolspeed initiative, would not normally justify Police enforcement action or speed reduction measures. However, the speeds are considered inappropriate for outside a primary school at school times. Consequently consideration should be given to some measures to help reduce traffic speeds at the school on Blairmore Road.

3.5 CRASH STATISTICS

The road crash statistics within the school catchment area for the 3 year period from 1997 to 1999 were analysed.

Although there have been 6 child pedestrian crashes and 2 child cyclist crashes within the catchment area in the 3 year period, only 3 of the 6 child pedestrian crashes were injury crashes. No children have been injured going to or from school.

Given the above therefore, the 3 year crash record during school times does not give rise to serious concern. However, specific road safety concerns around the school have been identified and need to be considered independently of the crash record.



3. DATA ANALYSIS & TARGETS

3.6 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

3.6.1 Summary From Parents' And Pupils' Questionnaires

- Most parents (65%) would prefer their children to walk or cycle to school
- Most children (77%) would prefer to walk or cycle to school
- Approximately 60% of children already walk to school and nearly a third of these walk alone
- Three quarters of the children who walk to school feel their routes are safe
- Two thirds of the children live within half a mile of the school
- Over one third of the children are brought to school by car
- More than half of parents' car journeys are solely for transporting their children to and from school
- Three quarters of the parents who responded would be happy for their children to use a walking bus, however only one third would be willing to supervise such a scheme.
- Most children in the school own a bicycle and a significant number have expressed an interest in cycling to school

3.6.2 Summary From Parents' Comments

- Congestion due to parents picking up children in cars
- Inconsiderate parking causing danger to children crossing Blairmore Road
- More effective enforcement of parking restrictions required
- Traffic calming measures required on Blairmore Road

3.6.3 Summary From Classroom Surveys

- As pupils move up the school, less travel by car and more walk to school
- The overall feeling of pupils is that their routes to school are safe
- Over one third of children would like to cycle to school



3. DATA ANALYSIS & TARGETS

3.6.4 Summary From Headteacher

Specific Dangers Observed Outside School:

- Parking on double yellow lines
- Vehicles blocking school gate
- Parents using school staff car park and driveway
- Double parking

Actions Already Taken to Improve the Situation

- Newsletters to parents
- Signs outside the school
- School gate now policed daily by the janitors
- Article in Fife Free Press
- Traffic warden and Community police involvement

Dangers within School Catchment Area

- Fast, heavy flow of traffic on Broom Road and Chapel Level
- Traffic speeding down the hill passed the school on Blairmore Road

Suggestions for Safer Routes to School

- Walking Bus
- Pedestrian Crossings
- More effective enforcement of parking restrictions
- Use of speed traps from time to time

Pedestrian and Cycling Training

- Compulsory pedestrian training is in place for P1 - P3
- The headteacher is keen to introduce cycling proficiency for P6 - P7

Headteacher's Overall Views

- The main issue for Torbain is congestion around the school gates due to inconsiderate and illegal parking. Attempts have been made by the school to promote more considerate parking and walking to school but these have done very little to change the situation. The headteacher is keen to develop new initiatives, to encourage children to walk and cycle safely to school.



3. DATA ANALYSIS & TARGETS

3.6.5 Summary From School Board

Road Safety Issues at the School

- Congestion caused by too many parked cars on Blairmore Road. This obscures visibility for children crossing at the crossing patrols
- Parents persistently bringing their cars into the school grounds although being told not to
- Children crossing where they shouldn't
- Busy bus route past the school

Traffic Problems Outside the School

- Parents ignoring the school keep clear lines (zigzag lines)
- Car owners parking at the school gate
- Parents parked illegally

Suggestions for Safer Routes to School

- Encourage children to walk to school (with or without parents)
- Use of drop off points
- Restrict parking further around the school gates

Dangers within School Catchment Area

- Parked cars in front of the school blocking visibility for the school crossing patrols on Blairmore Road
- Blairmore Road passed the school is very busy with buses and traffic

School Board's Overall View

- The main issue to be resolved is the congestion around the school gates and the dangers it causes to children crossing the road.



3. DATA ANALYSIS & TARGETS

3.7 CONCLUSIONS

3.7.1 Promotion and Improvement of Existing Walking Routes

Most pupils already walk to school and even more would wish to do so if the routes were improved. Most parents wish their children to walk to school. Of those pupils who already walk, most feel that their routes are safe. Effective promotion and improvement of the existing extensive network of remote footways within the catchment area should therefore encourage more children to walk to school and fewer parents to drive them to school.

3.7.2 Main Road Safety Concerns

It is clear that the main issue of concern is the traffic congestion around the school gates before the school starts in the morning and when school closes in the afternoon and to a lesser extent at lunchtime. The use of "safe parking" areas away from the school gates would therefore be of benefit.

Other concerns include the speed of traffic on Blairmore Road and Broom Road and the need for more effective parking restrictions.

3.7.3 Walking Bus

The questionnaire results showed that 77 % of parents would be happy for their children to use a walking bus and 54 parents expressed an interest in helping to run one. Consequently, a meeting to inform people how to set up and run a walking bus was advertised by letter in November 2001. The letter invited parents, grandparents and any others interested. The response was disappointing with no one turning up on the day. Only one parent expressed interest but could not attend. Unfortunately therefore, it is not currently possible to organise a walking bus for the school.

3.7.4 Cycling Proficiency

Over one third of the pupils expressed an interest in cycling to school. However, despite attempts to encourage interested people to come forward to help establish and run a cycling proficiency scheme, no one has yet volunteered. Unfortunately therefore, as with the walking bus, it is not currently possible to run cycling proficiency for the school.



3. DATA ANALYSIS & TARGETS

3.8 TARGETS

3.8.1 Traffic Congestion at School Gates

To address the single main issue of concern at Torbain the target is to reduce the number of parents parking around the school gates by 50% in the first year, rising to 80% reduction in 3 years.

3.8.2 Park and Walk Scheme

The target is to promote the park and walk scheme to achieve 80% usage within 3 years by parents who drive their children to school.

3.8.3 Car Journeys to and from School

A target has been set to reduce car journeys to and from school from 40% to 30% over 5 years.

3.8.4 Walking

About 60 percent of pupils already walk to Torbain school. We need to build on that and target an increase in walking trips to school of 10% over 5 years.

3.8.5 Walking Bus

To assist the walking target, a further target is to pursue the organisation and running of a walking bus for the school within one year.

3.8.6 Cycling

The cycling target is to further pursue the establishment of a cycling training scheme for the school within one year.

3.8.7 Traffic Speed on Blairmore Road at Torbain

To address the existing level of inappropriate traffic speeds outside the school on Blairmore Road the target is to reduce the 85%ile speeds to 25mph within 3 years.

3.8.8 Crash Statistics

The target for crash statistics is to maintain the existing level of zero child casualties travelling to and from school.



4. PROPOSED INITIATIVES

4.1 PROMOTION OF EXISTING FOOTWAYS AS SAFER ROUTES

There is already a very good and extensive network of footways within the catchment area, which are remote from the busy main roads. Therefore use of these footways has road safety benefits. Most of the children that already walk to school on them think they are safe. The main safer routes have been identified and shown on the plan in appendix A. To encourage more children to walk to school using these footways, it is proposed to highlight them with appropriate new road markings and signs. It is also proposed to distribute information leaflets and publicity to promote walking to school and organise Walk to School days.

4.2 UPGRADE FOR SAFER ROUTES

A910 pedestrian overbridge - More winter gritting of ramps needed and more guardrail is needed at the east ramp. Ditch needs to be piped to solve drainage problem at the remote footway south of Glen Isla Road.

4.3 PARK & WALK SCHEME

To address the traffic congestion on Blairmore Road at the school entrances, at the beginning and end of the school day, it is proposed to promote the use of Park and Walk areas close to the school but away from the entrances. Parents who drive their children to school should use these areas for parking and walk the remaining short distances. Publicity encouraging parents to use the Park and Walk areas will be undertaken using information leaflets and by a badge scheme for children whose parents use the Park and Walk areas. Direction signs will also be used to guide parents to them.

The designated Park and Walk areas are: -

- The car park off Birnam Road (for parents who live east of the school)
- The service area for Nos. 96-178 West Torbain
(for parents who live west of the school)
- The service area for Nos. 49-95 West Torbain
(also for parents who live west of the school)
- The service area for Nos. 1-48 Torbain
(for the nursery and parents from south of the school)



4. PROPOSED INITIATIVES

4.4 NEW FOOTWAY LINKS

To encourage walking to school it is proposed to construct some new footway links as follows: -

- A new footway linking the car park off Birnam Road, across the grass, to the school crossing patrol at the school entrance.
- Extension to footway on radius at entrance to above car park.
- A new footway link from the school crossing patrol at the school entrance, to the footway at the Blairmore Road underpass.
- A short section of new footway, to the north, outside the back gate.
- A new footway between the back of the school and the back gate, across the grass and away from the drive of the janitor's house.

4.5 NEW ZEBRA CROSSINGS

To help the school crossing patrol officers make it safer for the children crossing the busier roads it is proposed to install 4 new Zebra crossings. Two on Blairmore Road and two on Broom Road, all at the existing school crossing patrol sites. The Zebra crossings will also help to keep traffic speeds low.

4.6 TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS & WAITING RESTRICTIONS

As a further measure to address the traffic congestion on Blairmore Road at school times and to encourage the use of the Park and Walk areas, it is proposed that Transportation Services introduce appropriate traffic regulation and waiting restrictions on Blairmore road as follows: -

- Progress the making of a legal Order to make the 'school keep clear' markings enforceable. (need to co-ordinate with zebra zigzags) - This could be part of a Fife wide initiative.
- Introduce advisory no waiting on Blairmore Road in the vicinity of the school, at the start and end of the school day.

4.7 SCHOOL CAR PARK / PLAYGROUND SEGREGATION SCHEME

Vehicles can freely access the main school playground and do so to gain close access to the main entrance of the school building when making deliveries etc. It is therefore proposed to implement measures to make a much clearer distinction between the general playground area, that vehicles should not enter when the playground is in use, and the area of the driveway where vehicles are permitted.



5. PROPOSED WORKS & FUNDS REQUIRED

5.1 UPGRADE FOR SAFER ROUTES & GENERAL SIGNS & MARKINGS

Extra guardrail at the A910 pedestrian overbridge ramp -	£ 800
Piping of 100m of drainage ditch south of Glen Isla Road -	£ 2500
General signs and markings for Safer Routes and Park & Walk -	£ 5000

5.2 UPGRADE FOR CAR PARK OFF BIRNAM ROAD

Patching and resurfacing of carpark -	£ 5000
Car park to be re-lined with parking bays and drop-off point -	£ 500
Car park lighting to be assessed for upgrade (provisional sum) -	£ 5000

5.3 CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FOOTWAY LINKS

New footway link from Birnam Rd car park to Blairmore Rd -	£ 5000
Lighting for above footway -	£ 4000
Extension to footway on radius at entrance to above car park -	£ 800
New footway link from Birnam Rd, opposite school pedestrian gate to Blairmore Rd underpass -	£ 5000
Lighting for above footway -	£ 4000
A short section of new footway outside the school back gate -	£ 700
New footway from the back of the school to the back gate -	£ 4000

5.4 INSTALLATION OF NEW ZEBRA CROSSINGS

Install 2 new Zebra crossings on Blairmore Road -	£20000
Install 2 new Zebra crossings on Broom Road -	£20000
(all at the existing school crossing patrols)	

5.5 TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS & WAITING RESTRICTIONS

Share of cost to progress and make a Fife wide traffic regulation Order for 'school keep clear' markings -	£ 200
Introduce advisory no waiting on Blairmore Road in the vicinity of the school, at the start and end of the school day -	£ 1500

5.6 SCHOOL CAR PARK / PLAYGROUND SEGREGATION SCHEME

Design and implement measures to segregate the general playground area from that where vehicles are permitted -	£ 3000
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5.7 PUBLICITY & PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

Provisional sum for Publicity & Promotional Material -	£ 1000
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5.8 TOTAL FUNDS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT PLAN -	£88,000
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