

# **Aith Junior High School**

## **Travel Plan**

September 2006

## Introduction

The Scottish Executive wish to improve the health and safety of pupils travelling to and from schools in Scotland.

As part of Aith Junior High School's Eco-School programme, the School's Eco Committee agreed to assist in the development of the Travel Plan. The Plan attempts to identify the safest routes to school and encourage exercise, therefore addressing both the Road Safety and Healthy Living areas of the curriculum.

## Aims

- To encourage pupils to travel to school safely.
- To improve the safety of our journeys to and from school.
- To have less traffic for the environment.
- To help stop congestion.
- To raise awareness of healthy, eco-friendly possibilities.

## School

Aith Junior School is situated in the village of Aith on the West mainland of Shetland, some 21 miles west of Lerwick. The school is located on the B9071, which links the A971, the main road from Lerwick to the west of Shetland to the A970, the main road from Lerwick to the North.

There are currently 92 pupils in Secondary 1-5, 90 pupils in Primary 1-7 and 14 pupils in the nursery. The majority of our pupils live between 3-15 miles from the school and are therefore entitled to school transport.

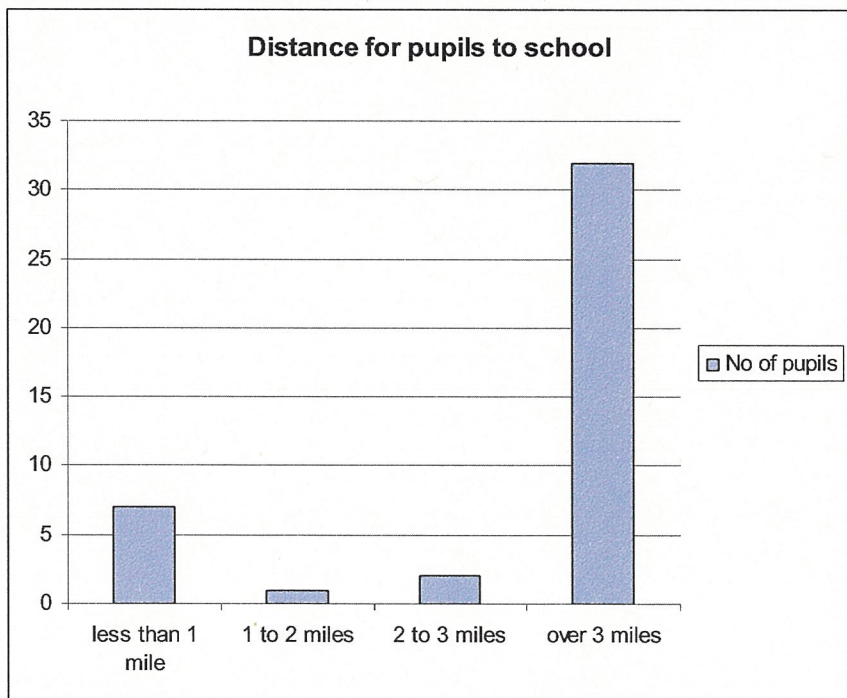
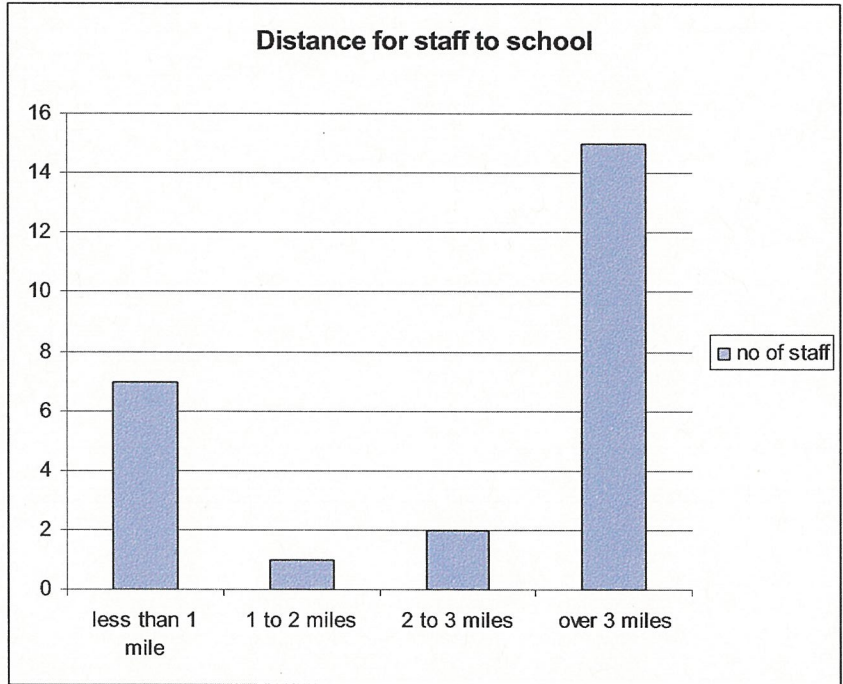




## How people travel to school

The Eco-Committee surveyed the parents and staff to identify how adults and pupils travel to school. We sent out survey forms to all families with pupils who attend the school and nursery. We had forms returned representing 37% of families with children in the school.

The findings were as follows:



All but four members of staff live out with the Aith community with very few public transport links; what exists is mainly appropriate for commuters from Aith to Lerwick, therefore commuting by car is unavoidable. Given that bus operators arrive and depart promptly means that agreeing transportation with them is not practicable. There are 6 teachers who travel to school from Lerwick and do share transport efficiently but all other staff have to take their own car. Staff parking is in designated areas in front and at the side of the school.





A typical school day finishes and pupils who live nearby prepare for the short trip home.

There is a congregation of pedestrians and cyclists waiting for the main movement of buses and cars to pass by.



When the rush passes by, pupils continue their journey

The road is never quiet for long and verges are likely to be difficult.





## **Travel/Transport Problems Faced by the School**

The school is located next to the road down to Aith pier which has substantial aquaculture activity. There are no pavements for pupils walking in from the Vementry and Bixter direction so those pupils have to negotiate a passage carefully in the mornings. There is also little verge at the side of the road from the Bixter direction so walking or cycling to school is not a safe option for pupils.

In the parents survey they were asked if they had any concerns over their child's travel to school. The following concerns were raised:

- Walking & cycling hazardous on dark winter days
- Wearing of seat belts and staying in seat on buses
- Busy narrow roads, no pavements in some areas

Parents were also asked what were the factors which determined the choice to encourage pupils to walk / cycle

- Light and weather were almost unanimously the chief factors in deciding whether to walk / cycle

Finally families were asked if they had any suggestions to make travelling to school safer. Main responses were:

- Provision of fluorescent arm bands for walkers
- Provision of flashing light to warn motorists when pupils are liable to be walking
- Encourage the wearing of light coloured clothing
- Escorts for pupils walking would be good idea
- Provision of seatbelts on all buses
- More road safety, advice on personal actions in adverse weather from school

## **Ideas for improving our problems**

- Pavement on one side of the road from the junction at the Aith shop to the Vementry junction at least.
- Possible widening of the bridge where the Mill burn runs.
- A 20mph speed limit outside the school at the beginning and end of the school day

## **What we are doing already**

Pupils starting nursery and school in primary receive lessons on road safety and the SIC road safety officer (Elaine Skinley) is invited to help provide information upon request. She visited the school in August 2006 and looked at the possibility of providing the 20 mph zone in the councils next installation round for Shetland schools.

In the school newsletters, families are reminded of the need to take care with traffic and to reinforce the Green cross code with their children. There are permanent posters in primary reinforcing the code as well.

Pupils who travel by bus are encouraged to do so safely and to always wear their seat belts. Primary assemblies have already focussed on bus behaviour and pupils have completed questionnaires to self evaluate their own behaviour and safety on boarding and disembarking from buses

The primary department has a supply of fluorescent armbands for use during field excursions with pupils.

We have established a good relationship with the bus contractors to ensure that the needs of pupils are met.

Pupils receive Road Safety education as part of their Health Education. For example, in late 2005, Elaine Skinley (SIC road safety officer) was invited in to visit Nursery, and P1/2 to consider road crossing with the pupils. A supply of fluorescent bands from the SIC was also supplied to the school for classroom outings.

The school now has two Junior Road Safety Officers who are active in promoting road safety to the whole school. This was set up in August 2006 and means that every season road safety literature will be sent to the school by the SIC road safety officer and the issue of road safety highlighted.

Pupils in P6 receive cycling proficiency training each year.

A bicycle rack is positioned at the front of the school to allow bicycles to be stored appropriately during the school day.

### **What the school can do**

The Eco-Committee can write to both the SIC roads department & Aithsting and Sandsting Community council regarding the identified road issues (Oct 2006)

The School Board and Head Teacher could contact the roads department regarding the speed of traffic on the road outside the school and express interest in the 20mph flashing arrangement as introduced at Whiteness Primary.

The school management will continue to be responsive to behaviour issues arising on buses.

### **What Parents can do**

Emphasise to pupils the importance of being aware of their surroundings  
Encourage use of the Green cross code and safety issues involving those travelling by bus  
Ensure that pupils attending after school clubs are met at the local dropping off points and that pupils are prepared for inclement conditions.  
Insisting on light coloured clothing for walkers when days are dark  
Escorting walking pupils  
Promote the use of cycle helmets and lights on bicycles

### **How the SIC could help**

Introduce the 20mph speed limit in the next round of installations.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Eco-committee will review the Travel Plan in May 2008