

Fiona Hyslop MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Education & Lifelong Learning
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

26 May 2009

Dear Minister

Re. Curriculum for Excellence and Active Travel

We are writing to you to express our concern that references to active travel in schools have been removed from the recently launched Curriculum for Excellence. This is a concern that is shared by the signatories to this letter - Sustrans Scotland, Cycling Scotland, Paths for All, Living Streets and Transform Scotland. Between us, we represent the leading charities working in the active travel field in Scotland.

We were pleased that the first draft of the proposed Curriculum gave a high priority to teaching young Scots the benefits of an active, healthy lifestyle. The published draft of the Health and Well Being Experiences and Outcomes - released in early 2008 for consultation - contained some very explicit references to active travel for school children, namely:

- ***“I know and can demonstrate how to travel safely whether on foot, on a bicycle, in a motor vehicle or on public transport.”***
- ***“I am encouraged and supported to travel actively and safely to and from my place of learning.”***

In spite of the above consultation process, in the current published version of the Curriculum for Excellence – launched on April 2 by you and the Minister for Schools and Skills – the above references have been removed without explanation and replaced with:

- ***“I know and can demonstrate how to travel safely.”***

(There is no relationship here between “safely” and “actively”, where there was previously.)

- ***“In addition to planned physical education sessions, physical activity and sport take place in the classroom, in the school, during travel, in the outdoor environment and in the community.”***

(In our view this statement hints at active travel only and makes no clearly understood reference.)

Successive surveys show that a majority of Scottish children walk and cycle to school currently and many more would like to do so. We hope you agree that it is important that the wishes of these children are supported within the educational system primarily for the sake of children's physical and mental well being, but also to support the Scottish Government's important strategies to tackle climate change, increase physical activity levels and reduce childhood obesity.

We are concerned to know the reasons for the removal of these explicit references to active travel within the Curriculum for Excellence and how active travel will now be approached and supported in schools.

We understand that Sustrans Scotland has already written expressing concerns on this matter to Scottish Government in February and March 2009 - when the content of the final document was made known to them - and while we are content for Sustrans to lead on this issue, we also wish to be kept informed of progress using Sustrans as the conduit.

For our organisations to work effectively with schools for the benefit of Scottish children we need to have a good understanding of current educational strategy. The potential confusion over active travel outlined above does not support this aim.

We understand that Sustrans will be writing to you requesting a meeting to discuss this matter.

We look forward to hearing the outcomes from these discussions.

Yours sincerely

John lauder
Director
Sustrans Scotland

Signed on behalf of:

(See over)

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