

4 CELBRIDGE SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Background

- 4.1 Scoil Na Mainistreach is a boys primary school located at the junction of Oldtown Road and Shackleton Road and was selected by the Steering Group for an in depth pilot Safer Routes to School (SRTS) study. It was opened in 1977 and currently educates 637 pupils from the parish of Celbridge with 53 members of staff. Much of the school's catchment is within walking distance, being to the west side of the River Liffey. The school has been proactive in managing travel to the school over a number of years, including being the first in the country to sign up pupils for cycle safety and skills training. This involves 4th year class pupils undertaking a six week course. Vehicular access is off Oldtown Road, cycle access is off Shackleton Road (Plate 1), and those on foot can enter using either entrance.



Plate 1: Shackleton Road Cycle and Pedestrian Access, Scoil Na Mainistreach, Celbridge

The Approach of Scoil Na Mainistreach

- 4.2 TPI met with the Principal and Deputy Principal of Scoil Na Mainistreach on 25th October 2007, to agree the approach to and limit of the safer routes to schools project. The meeting also provided an opportunity to review the school's current activities and approach, namely:
- the school has introduced the earlier opening of class rooms for younger children to promote staggered dropping off times. The school takes responsibility for pupils once they are within the school grounds, but there is a tendency for parents to enter the school yard and wait until classes start before driving away;
 - the school has a school crossing patrol on Oldtown Road but drivers have been know not to stop (Plate 2);
 - the school has introduced fluorescent/reflective strips into the school uniform;
 - the provision of a school bus was investigated, but would have cost €25 per pupil per week, with the parents paying in advance, and one parent having to travel on the bus. There was not enough interest to take the scheme forward;
 - it is thought that between 7 and 8 percent of pupils cycle to school, but many don't wear helmets or appropriate clothing;

- a walking bus has been considered, but there may be problems with commitment and getting parents to take responsibility for such a scheme; and
- cycle parking is provided, although this could be substantially improved (Plate 3).



Plate 2: School Crossing Patrol, Scoil Na Mainistreach, Celbridge



Plate 3: Cycle Parking, Scoil Na Mainistreach, Celbridge