



Spaces for People - Preston Street Parent Council - March 2021

Retaining and improving Spaces for People measures

Background

Preston Street Primary is a friendly, inclusive and multicultural school in the Southside area of Edinburgh. The present primary school roll is around 300 children. The school is situated on the corner of East Preston Street and Dalkeith Road.

Parental and Children's Views

Preston Street Parent Council represents the voice of the parent body. We agreed to submit a response to the City of Edinburgh Council's stakeholder consultation on retaining Spaces for People infrastructure. To inform our response, parents were asked to submit their views on the infrastructure currently put in place outside school but also to provide comments about their experiences travelling to school. We used a [Padlet](#) allowing parents to share their views. Preston Street children have been asked their opinions and have contributed to the views expressed in this document. This paper provides a summary of the responses we've received. All comments in this document are reported in italics.

School Travel and Environment - Children's Views (March '21)



The 'green man' is too short and it means you have to rush across which is not safe.
Sebo P5

It is very noisy around school with cars and sirens. The bus stop is not in a good place for walking and cycling to school.
Sammy P5



I like the new bollards but we need a wider pavement. It is very hard to cycle safely to school.
Anna P5



Crossing at Salisbury Rd is dangerous because cars turn the corner fast without looking.
PIC•COLLAGE

Provision around Preston Street Primary School

Spaces for People provision: Protected areas were installed on Dalkeith Road and East Preston Street in Autumn 2020 to allow parents and children more space to congregate on the pavement and to use sections of the road to help social distance.

Parents strongly support the segregated space and would like to see the permanent widening of the pavement to two meters adjacent to the school on East Preston Street and Dalkeith Road. Additionally, the widened area should be extended to cover the corner where people crowd at the pedestrian crossing. We believe that continuous widened pavements should be built into all road corners in the vicinity of the school, to tighten the corners and reduce the opportunities for vehicles to take them at speed.

“The buffer between the pavement and road is great and I would like to see this space permanently given over to provide a safe, shared pedestrian/cycle area for accessing the school.”

“The buffers around the school are excellent, and should not be removed after the pandemic period. When they are formalised, the kerb should also curve around the corner at the crossing, where people gather at pick-up and drop-off times.”

“I would like to see the pavement widened permanently, as the current compromise means we are encouraging children to step off the pavement into the road.”

“I like the new bollards but we need a wider pavement. It is very hard to cycle safely to school.” - Anna P5

Further suggestions included the incorporation of a green buffer, of grass or trees, to give people space and to help improve local air quality.

“There is actually space (what was previously a second traffic lane) to incorporate a green buffer between road and widened pavement with grass and trees which would improve air quality at the school.”

Parkside Terrace bus stop

Parents commented on the location of the bus stop opposite Parkside Terrace. Its current position with the Spaces for People provision means that live traffic can back up across the *pedestrian crossing*.

“Locating the bus stop further away from the school would reduce the risks for children”.

“The bus stop needs moved to make the space more accessible for wheelchairs.”

A further reason to move the bus stop is that there is very little space on the pavement to socially distance when walking with children with people waiting at the bus stop. Parents feel they have to step into the road to pass safely.

“Bus stop outside school needs moving - since concrete blocks have been installed I’ve witnessed traffic backing up behind a bus and then moving forward, even though the pedestrian crossing has turned green (with children crossing!).”

Parking at school

Parents felt strongly that there should be no parking outside the school and that this should be enforced. Parking could be discouraged by extending the widened pavement from school to for example Oxford Street and Lutton Place. Families should be encouraged to travel by foot or bicycle as far as possible.

“There should be no parking outside the school”... and... “no parking within pick up/drop off hours.”

“The most useful thing with the current temporary measures is the way they prevent cars from parking in this area which is a real concern for road safety. I’ve seen [a member of staff] out moving cars on at the start and end of the day which is great but it would be nice if he didn’t have to do this.”

“It would be helpful to have traffic calming measures directly outside the school and no parking within pick up/drop off hours.”

Traffic

Parents felt strongly about the level of traffic and pollution around the school. We want to explore the possibility of calming the traffic and reprioritising traffic lights during school hours to give priority to pedestrians at each light phase. The aim is to help manage crowding of children and parents on pavements at peak times.

“It would be helpful to have traffic calming measures directly outside the school”

“The ‘green man’ is too short and it means you have to rush across which is not safe.” Sebo P5

“All roads in and out of Dalkeith road/East Preston Street junction could have lanes permanently reduced. Traffic should be calmed on approach to the school in all directions.”

“It is very noisy around school with cars and sirens. The bus stop is not in a good place for walking and cycling to school.” - Sammy P5

“Safer wider pavements would allow more children to walk and cycle to school safely but the amount and speed of traffic is a real worry.”

Active travel and improvements to local streets

There are currently no segregated bike lanes or quiet routes to Preston Street Primary School. The current Spaces for People provision at school is difficult for children and parents with bikes to safely stop off the road.

We would like to discuss the possibility of designing a safe quiet route which would be beneficial for all children wanting to reach school safely. We recognise that there are challenges linked to delivering this.

Children and families approach school from many surrounding streets, the majority by foot or by bicycle. Improvements to local routes. We have summarised the main responses from parents with suggestions to local routes. We note that the issues reported about local routes are as important to respondents as the infrastructure directly outside the school in terms of getting children to school safely.

Bernard Street Bernard Street has been a crossing of concern for families an issue which has been raised at Parent Council meetings.

“Zebra crossing / traffic lights needed at the Bernard Street crossing. Is the council waiting for a fatal accident to take place? It is unsafe for children to cross without the lollypop man.”

The Parent Council understands that a Zebra crossing is planned for Bernard Street

Lutton Place Parents highlighted that Lutton Place should have a pedestrian priority raised crossing. This is a key route for families walking from Hope Cottage nursery to Preston Street School.

Salisbury Road A crossing at Salisbury road is seen as important. There is no pedestrian phase built into the traffic light sequence. Sight lines are difficult and it is hard to anticipate if a vehicle is turning into Salisbury Road.

“The Salisbury Road crossing on Dalkeith Road is extremely dangerous. Many of us have seen cars braking suddenly when they come around that corner because a kid hasn’t seen them coming. There needs to be a crossing light there.”

“Crossing at Salisbury Rd is dangerous because cars turn the corner fast without looking” - Tabitha P5

“The junction outside the Salisbury Arms is dangerous and the reason I am uncomfortable with my kids walking to school alone - you cannot see cars coming up Dalkeith Road because you are looking from beyond the barrier so it's often a risky dash. “

“There is no pedestrian phase at the Salisbury Road junction. Northbound cars are signalled to turn left from Dalkeith Road, then southbound cars are signaled to turn right from Dalkeith Road, and there’s no clear space for kids to safely cross—they must hope for a gap between the two streams of

traffic. It's certainly not acceptable on a main route to school."

"The railings by the road at the crossing make for very narrow pinch points, a family with a buggy is unable to pass through easily. At peak times the pavement is very congested."

"Major safety improvements need to be made at Salisbury Arms junction."

Dalkeith Road / Priestfield Road Junction	Pavements here are narrow and include a high level of street furniture such as signs and bins. Clearer lights at the crossing would help pedestrians including the addition of green man on Priestfield Road / East Mayfield.
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"Much of the pavement on Dalkeith road is too narrow (sometimes due to clutter such as bins). The road should either be made a 20mph zone or the pavement should be widened, especially around the Priestfield junction. "

"The new crossing priority at the Priestfield junction is a great improvement for pedestrians. (The phasing is now set to car/car/pedestrian throughout the day.)"

"The junction at Dalkeith Road / East Mayfield / Priestfield Road need green men in all 4 directions. Pedestrians have priority in all directions at one point in the sequence, it's just not obvious as the council haven't fitted the green men."

Concerns about the impact of planned Low Emissions Zones

Low Emissions Zones are planned to be introduced into Edinburgh over the next decade. While these are welcomed, parents note that the current proposed plan has the potential to channel more heavily-polluting vehicles past the junction at the school. This is a serious concern to the health and well-being of children and staff at the school if the impact on air quality directly outside the school is worse.

Parents suggested more radical measures to follow-up on the first steps taken around Preston Street. these include, closing the street to motor vehicles or reducing the number of lanes on Dalkeith Road to vastly reduce traffic. This may help the Council achieve its aim of improving air quality, particularly around key sites such as schools.

The measures around Preston Street Primary are a reasonable first step but bolder long term action is required including the closure of East Preston Street to motor vehicles, allowing the extension of the playground and current measures; the closure of at least two lanes on Dalkeith Road and improvement to road crossings on main routes to school (Bernard Terrace, Salisbury Place).

An opportunity for rapid transformation

Parents support a complete rethink of the traffic and priorities in the general area, with the view that bold action should be taken quickly to safeguard our children's lives, health and ability to learn. The school is effectively marooned in the midst of several lanes carrying large volumes of alternately speeding or queueing traffic with the

associated poor air quality and noise having an adverse effect on health and children's ability to learn. There is plenty of unequivocal evidence about the detrimental impact of traffic on children's health - and these effects last for life - not to mention the very real chance of death or serious injury.

- East Preston Street should be shut to traffic at the east end, removing the left turn filter lane on Dalkeith road, and the road space outside should be given over to additional greenery and playground.
- Divert bus traffic to St Bernard's Terrace, or use a one lane bus gate if you must, or work with LRT to rethink the routing altogether.
- Dalkeith Road/St Leonards should become one-way (and one car lane only) in one direction, Minto St/South Clark St one-way (and one car lane only) in the other direction, with no room for parking - the extra road space should be given over to wide pavements, continuous protected bike lanes, bike parking, street greenery and parklets, with properly enforced short term spaces available for loading only, ideally only at certain times.
- All the minor side roads from Cameron Toll to the city centre should be continuous pavement and one way - or where required access only using filters to stop rat running - again with reduced car parking, more street trees, parklets, space for bike parking etc.
- Create a green active travel corridor sweeping from Holyrood park down East Preston Street past the school (incorporating the play ground, and play opportunities) all the way to the Meadows. Seek to establish a quiet route to connect with similar schemes so that this school could make the most of the wonderful green spaces so close and yet at the moment still so inaccessible).

Next steps

We aim to use this document as a start point to develop parent views and ideas around local road safety issues and build on the start point provided by Spaces for People. This document will be used to facilitate a conversation with City of Edinburgh Council and local Councillors to improve provision for children and families at Preston Street Primary school.