

Draft Climate Change Plan

Connect is a long-standing independent parents' organisation and the only Scottish charity which is dedicated to supporting parental engagement in education. We provide membership services to almost 2500 Parent Councils and PTAs, as well as offering advice and information to individual parents/carers about any aspect of the education of their child or the wider education system. Our evidence-based approaches reflect the recognised significant role of families in the learning of their children and young people, and in their expertise and knowledge of their own child.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Draft Climate Change Plan, and our response will focus primarily on question eight 'How can the Scottish Government support communities to participate in planning of local sustainable infrastructure (such as, walking, wheeling and cycling routes)?' and the need for better public transport, in order to reduce the necessity of car travel for families where possible.

We welcome the updates to the School Transport guidance made in December 2025, and feel these will go some way towards increasing uptake of active travel for children and families travelling to and from school. However, our 2025 survey on [Travel to School](#) has highlighted several areas for further improvement:

- Most parents we surveyed report that active travel infrastructure in schools is robust (77% of those surveyed reported their child's school had parking facilities for bikes and scooters). While physical infrastructure in schools exist, other measures must be taken in communities in order to ensure safe travel for all children and young people going about their day
- Parents must feel confident in their child's safety to allow their children to travel actively – 40% of parents surveyed reported their child is usually driven to school, and 28% of those parents answered that it was due to safety concerns. Over a third (37%) agreed that safer walking routes would motivate them to travel actively to and from school, 28% cited safer cycling routes as motivation. Updates to the School Transport guidance made in late 2025 give more detailed criteria for assessing safety of walking/wheeling/cycling routes, and we at Connect hope that this will empower more families to feel comfortable with active travel
- Road safety education is less widespread than in school active travel infrastructure, with only a third (34%) of those answering reporting that their child's school offers education. In order to increase confidence in active travel and instil lifelong habits in children, there must be a consistent national entitlement to road safety education. This



is particularly crucial during secondary school years, at a time when young people start to experience greater independence. This education should also include education on the health and environmental benefits of sustainable travel

In addition to our recommendations for increasing active travel for children and young people, the importance of sustainability education cannot be understated. In January 2024, Connect released the survey report [Learning for Sustainability](#), which includes further recommendations of how schools can lead learning on sustainability and the environment. While two thirds (65%) of parents surveyed reported being aware that their child learns about the environment in school, less than half (45%) receive information about the content of this learning. Informing parents on this would help to reinforce learning at home, and allow for greater embedding of sustainable learning and behaviour across the family. There was also a desire for parents to be informed about and be involved in whole school initiatives. Whole family engagement in sustainability can only provide greater benefits, and parents welcomed the opportunity for greater awareness and involvement in their child's school and community initiatives.

Connect believes that education and family engagement are crucial to improving sustainability in Scotland, and hope that this will be given greater prominence in future iterations of the Climate Change Plan.

Connect

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