

PE1223/CCC

Petitioner Letter of 29 July 2014

PETITIONS COMMITTEE

Dear committee members

This ongoing saga continues, & we thank the committee for its work & help so far, but this work is not finished, safety still a huge issue.

I spent the last while touring most of the east coast & highlands of Scotland, before the schools went on holiday.

I am aghast at the situation re school bus safety signs, I did not know it was so bad, in fact, seems to have actually got worse.

It's very apparent that the recommendations by Transport Scotland are ignored. I cannot believe this will be allowed to continue, I cannot believe our government can continue to allow pupils to be injured or sadly killed.

Transport Scotland cannot be allowed to say its working, when it's obvious its not, cannot be allowed to leave this situation as it is.

My presumption is & I only see a small minority, unless travelling in other parts of Scotland.

After contacting many bus ops, they simply tell me they are working within the law & have no need to adhere to Transport Scotland's guidelines, as they are simply guidelines.

We actually give wild animals more legislative protection than our school pupils, how can this possibly happen

I refuse to accept nothing can be done, as a parent or grand parent ask yourself this, what if your door is knocked by two police officers, with the worst news you could possibly hear, ever want to hear?

I ask you to focus on that thought as you read on.

My presumption is every bus company will have safety assessment in place for its passengers, yet for some reason it must exclude the school bus safety sign & bus visibility, safety must surely be blown out the window by this!

Dft has stated there are changes that can be made, yet only a tiny minority of bus ops have adopted some, most will cost little to implement .

How can we make sure the school bus is visible as one, not through Transport Scotland's recommendations that no LA pays any attention too.

Recommendations are not working, wont work.

Roads vehicle lightening regulations already state, Additional high level hazard lights can be fitted.

Illuminated signs can be fitted, these could scrolling type signs, there is no definition of size, etc. – see my earlier responses.

The sign removed ensuring drivers see the school bus for what it is. Yet no bus op has done so.

Stalemate it seems & an utter waste of time by Transport Scotland .

There has to be something that can be done to change this, this could be your child's school bus, **because each LA interprets this in its own way, meaning pupils are safer in some parts of Scotland than others, can this be right !!!!**

Fife Angus & Highland regions

In Ross & Cromarty & Sutherland I saw School buses running with NO safety signs visible, some with only Front signs & none showing to the rear with the same size sign to front & rear, this being the smallest sign. also illegal.

Of course the norm, which is the safety sign left on, & in fact in some instances the adhesive kind is used, ensuring that regardless of the buses job at that time, it is displayed, rendering the effect useless.

Like road traffic signs left after the job is completed, we have all seen this. We as drivers then ignore it.

This last month I have seen wedding , sporting outings & tour coaches, all involved in anything but the school run, but still showing the school bus sign. Some over a 100 miles away from their base.

As common the front sign is not fully visible, its placed anywhere that's handy. the law states both signs should be clearly visible, **after all its sole function is to warn drivers, nothing else, nothing more.**

I was told drivers don't like getting wet removing or placing the sign !!!!!

Some placed so far down on the bumper its invisible to other traffic behind or approaching, some placed so high virtually invisible in the newest of coaches because the window is at the top of the coach, it's out off a drivers line of sight.

It's placed behind on the rear of the bus/ coach behind tinted glass, ensuring the reflective & refraction quality is destroyed, this is a professional opinion from the Road Transport Laboratory.

It's the reflection & refraction, plus placement that saves lives.

The police are powerless according to the Procurator in my area, because the laws are to loosely framed for any court case!!

How do we ensure every child has the same right to safety on the school run, why should pupils in Aberdeenshire, have more right to safety than any other area within Scotland, & its still not perfect with them as a LA.

I am at a loss that our parliament & Transport Scotland cannot ensure our children's safety.

It's too late for my grand daughter, for Robyn Oldham & Alexander Milne, for all those injured & brain injured & there are many, plus smaller accidents still happen & are unrecorded.

There are many great drivers & companies I know, many I work with, who fully understand what is involved, many don't including some of the larger operators in the country.

This has been ongoing since the petition started in 2008, plus one in 2006, the only improvement has been, eventually seat belts.

Yet these measure cost less than any seat belt fixture, it needs a change of mind set that is not happening.

All that is needed is ,Simply show the correct signs, ensure they are placed correctly to reflect in the dark mornings & evenings, work & reflect as intended & removed at the end of the school journey.

That they are not used for any other purpose, is this to much to ask, in reality !!

Safety is a chain, take out a link & it breaks, it quite simply does not work.

Have you ever looked at the school bus your child travels on?

Our procurator fiscal cannot prosecute as the law is to loosely legislated on, I have tried to involve Police Scotland, the same problem.

It is too late for those killed & injured over the last 40 years.

But its not to late to save other children's lives & injuries & until you have been involved with these families, including my own, when a driver passed a school bus at speed because of the abuse off signage over the years & took a perfectly fit, happy, active wee girl at 8 years old to be placed in life, in a wheel chair, brain injured , sadly death to others , some left with a 5 minute memory span, you will never realize how lives are tragically changed for ever.

Think about your own family now.

There has to be some way Transport Scotland can ensure local government has an obligation to ensure pupil's safety.

Once again I beg you, as a committee to ensure this stops, because if this continues, there will be other deaths & sadly children left in wheelchairs.

For some ones child, the next accident will be there last, or will leave them severely disabled.

I ask you & Transport Scotland, to accept this needs change , legally & fight for it, not simply accept Westminster's rulings, because it will come back & haunt you, I pray it is not your own family then involved.

www.schoolbus.org.uk