



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CONSULTATION ON SCHOOL SECURITY AT SGOIL LIONACLEIT ISLE OF BENBECULA AND CASTLEBAY SCHOOL ISLE OF BARRA.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is required to ensure the safety of school pupils, staff and those affected by its activities. The Comhairle's Education and Technical Services Departments have been working on a programme of providing secure entry systems in Western Isles schools but are faced with issues at Castlebay School and Sgoil Lionacleit. Of particular difficulty at both schools is the fact that community facilities are at the heart of, and integrated with, each building making the separation of pupils and members of the public difficult. School security considerations now require more explicit management of the interaction of pupils and members of the public which conflicts to a degree with the original principles of unfettered access underlying the design of community schools in the past.

The activation of door entry systems at both schools may be rendered less effective in both schools if, in practice, members of the public may still enter the school on an uncontrolled basis. Supervision (including specific authorised entry, signing in, and the wearing of visitor badges) of public using the facilities is likely to be the only solution to the difficulty but the volume of public usage presents potential difficulties and is of particular significance. To enable management of the public use of schools, it may be necessary to consider changes to past and current practice.

SGOIL LIONACLEIT

In addition to the normal school facilities, Sgoil Lionacleit currently houses the Lionacleit public library, the Lionacleit museum, public sports facilities and a cafeteria which is open to all members of the public. While solutions for separating public from pupils during daytime use of the sports facilities (primarily the fitness suite) are potentially identifiable due to their location, the museum, library and cafeteria are at the heart of the building and any public use will inevitably bring the public into contact with pupils during the course of the school day.

The solution most likely to be effective to meet school security considerations would be to manage the flow of public using the building by having proactive managed entrance to the building and supervised use of the public facilities with all visitors identifiable and signing in to the premises. However, the volume of public entering the building, particularly at lunchtime to use the cafeteria facilities, presents potential problems in terms of realistic supervision by staff.

The Education Department is therefore considering the withdrawal of public dining facilities during the school day and to allow the use of the facilities only to Comhairle employees, authorised school visitors, pupils and (subject to consultation) to identifiable students and staff (eg possibly with allocated passes) of the UHI premises situated adjacent to Sgoil Lionacleit. Such a move could allow the school to manage more effectively the number of visitors to the building and allow more effective security to be achieved once door entry systems are activated.

It is not proposed that the public be restricted from visiting the library and museum given the relatively smaller numbers of users of these facilities and the fact that they are not concentrated in particular times in the school day.

CASTLEBAY SCHOOL

The situation at Castlebay school is similar to that of Sgoil Lionacleit although the school has no museum facility and the level of usage by the public is lower than that of Sgoil Lionacleit. Future developments at the school may include revising access to public library facilities which could control effectively the interaction between school pupils and members of the public during the course of the school day. However, public access to dining facilities would still present security issues during the course of the day. It is similarly proposed therefore that consideration be given to restricting use of the facility to Comhairle staff, pupils and authorised visitors to the school.

Views from school staff and pupils and members of the community are sought on the above proposals. Views should be sent in writing, by 29 July 2005, to:

Jennet Gordon
Head of Educational Resources
Education Department
Council Offices
Sandwick Road,
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis HS1 2BW

Views can also be sent by email to securityconsult@cne-siar.gov.uk by the same date.

CNES Education Department
May 2005