

FLAME.



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PUBLIC PERCEPTION TANNOY



By Cally Gillard

A tannoy system at Meadowhead School has recently been put into place. It has been put in place for the new lockdown policy because of recent incidents that have occurred in places such as Yorkshire, London and Wales in the last year.

Another reason Meadowhead has implemented the tannoy is that studies show that tannoy systems help the flow of movement around a school.

The tannoy, as mentioned before, was put in place for the new lockdown policy, so every student knows when a lockdown is happening. However, in the previous lockdown, the tannoy was not heard. Currently, we do not know why it wasn't heard during the lockdown but it has been suggested that a reason might be that it gives a student more fear when both an alarm and a tannoy is playing.

Some students have stated that the tannoy system is useful and student 'x' said "I like it. It is helpful and it helps students get to where they need to be.", however, some students don't like it or find it distracting. One student stated "It disrupts lessons." and another said "It is useful but it can scare you."

Some teachers have told us that the tannoy system is useful to those who need it and it tells students when to go to lessons. Since the implementation of the tannoy, there has been less consequences handed out for lateness. It also gives teachers a warning to when students are coming. However, some teachers think it is irritating and disruptive. One teacher said "It is dystopian and disruptive." and another stated "The delay is annoying and S.E.N. students who are sensitive to noise are affected by the tannoy." A couple of teachers also mentioned that they would rather prefer a person or a live voice to make it friendlier and not just a robotic sounding voice.

After interviewing staff at Aldi and staff at Meadowhead, I have been informed the tannoy system can be heard quite clearly inside of Aldi and in that area of the retail park. Furthermore, it is said to be heard as far as Jordanthorpe and Lowedges. This could be a safeguarding issue if students' names can be heard on the tannoy, which needs investigating further. With these issues in mind, why weren't parents and students told? Overall, the tannoy system has proved to be very useful when moving students around the school. It also helps teachers know when students are coming in from break or lunch. However, it also distracts from lessons and it can affect those who are sensitive to noise.

WHEN THERE'S THERE'S A CHA

By Marissa Tekalign

As a representative of a Year Nine form, who is in Student Parliament and also in Student Cabinet, but most importantly, a student from Meadowhead, I know I'm not the only one affected by drastic changes that were made to our school over Easter break last year. We came back with mirrors removed from all toilets, and a new policy stating that all toilets were to be locked during lesson, with only the one next to the Languages corridor being open. This, alongside the introduction of the tannoy system being used for announcements, has had mixed feelings among the student body.

The issue surrounding schools and toilets has become so serious in the UK that the Department for Education had a spokesperson say:

"We expect schools to have clear behavior policies that help all children get the most out of every class and have a positive experience in school. Schools have a responsibility to balance children's right to access clean and safe toilets when they need, alongside keeping schools safe and calm."

The reasoning behind the removing of mirrors at Meadowhead, was a response to the Year Sevens who felt overwhelmed with the number of students compared to Primary School, and wished for more space and time to use the toilets. The locking of the doors was implemented to stop truanting and to help with punctuality. After the change there was a dramatic fall in lates and truancy. Students feel like movement to breaks and lunches is much smoother than before, and they are getting to lessons quicker than ever between changeovers. The rule about the stairs heading to Humanities being down and the one going to English being up has also been credited as a major help. One student from Year Eight mentioned

"It's nice getting to lessons quickly, and I haven't got a late mark all year"

As a student body representative, I have spoken to students about the change. Felicity in Year Nine points out the disadvantage to taking away mirrors as it will encourage phone use as "cameras are their new mirrors". While, also noting that the mirrors were removed to stop big groups in the toilets there are however "groups there anyway". On the other side of the coin, we have Year Seven students who have come from primary schools that have had mirrors. One Year Seven noted the oddity of not having mirrors by saying *"In my primary school, we had mirrors, and this was really good because we could see if we had anything on our face. Everywhere else you go there are mirrors in the bathroom, so it's really weird to come to school and not see your face for the whole day."*

There have also been questions about the effectiveness of the new policy. If toilets are locked during class times, the upside is that students will spend more time in lessons, wouldn't you agree? However, the downside is the queues at break and lunch. One Year Nine echoed this sentiment, who had to wait "10 minutes out of a 15-minute break" to queue and use the bathroom. It also hasn't deterred students from loitering around the bathrooms.

"It's the small changes that make us upset" Jumah from Year Nine points out which seems that the overall consensus in the student body. It was not that the changes that have caused unrest, but the fact that there was no communication between faculty and students. Student Parliament and Student Cabinet were not made aware or given time to prepare for the aftermath, and there was a feeling of discontent with the minimal and vague information we were given.

"Pupils have a voice at this school" OFSTED 2022. Was this the case in this scenario? Moving forward my hope for the school is that there is clearer communication about actions that revolve and affect the student body.

CIVIL ENGINEERING TRAIL AND WALKABILITY

By Reuben Rose

If you live in an Urban area, your safety could be at risk due to outdated infrastructures and are the cause of a high percentage of infant fatalities. Walkability is a system that has the ability to change this.

To understand urban development we need to start with civil engineering. To put it simply, civil engineering is a form of engineering that creates infrastructure. This infrastructure can be as little as where to put signs on a road to leading the drive for sustainable transport. However, no matter how small or large the projects undertaken by civil engineering are, they all affect how we live our lives and the journeys we make.

Engineering has a multitude of effects on transport, these include increasing the safety of pedestrians. This has been achieved with the implementation of tree-lined streets; these vastly increase a street's safety for pedestrians by making cars slow down using the edge effect. The edge effect works by using a driver's psychological feeling of a wall on the side of the road thus slowing the car. Another effect of engineering is the implementation of separated bike lanes, these increase the safety of bike riders and promote sustainable transport. A separated bike lane includes a bike lane either with pylons or uses parked cars next to the road and the bike lane between parked cars and pavement. Would you ride to school with these measures?

In an attempt to make urban areas safe, walkability could replace ineffective planning from the past. In layman's terms, walkability is the capacity to walk around an urban area. This means prioritizing pedestrians and slowing down vehicles, since the speed of a car is a large factor in the fatality of a crash especially with pedestrians. An article by Break 2024 stated "Every 17 minutes someone is killed or seriously injured on UK roads."

Want to hear another scary statistic? A study by the Department of Transport (2021) found that "Seventy-four percent of the child pedestrian fatalities (from cars) occurred in urban areas," this shows the urgent need to redevelop and stop using outdated and unsafe automobiles and move to safer and cheaper public transport. Furthermore, this highlights the usefulness of bikes and shared walkways. But, the car does have some positives since it creates more freedom in the way people travel. This freedom of travel would include being able to go where you want and when you want. However, if walkable cities are executed and public transport is improved, cities could become a safer and cleaner space for generations to come.

Cities can become walkable using three key steps: "prioritize, reduce, and improve." To put it simply, this means prioritizing pedestrians since if pedestrians are safe, then more people are likely to walk. Reduce means reducing traffic by using measures similar to narrowing lanes, which creates an unsafe feeling while going faster. Therefore slowing down the speed of cars. Moreover, improving means updating and revamping the public transportation system. This could be completed using more funding and schemes such as having buses come more regularly and improving trams and trains with more lines.

The progress of walkability and safe travel has come a long way however, there is a substantial way to go to safe and sustainable transport in Britain. I think by utilising the technology stated in this article there is a possibility to become the walkable city of the future.

IS PUBLIC TRANSPORT MEADOWHEAD AS GOOD AS IT SHOULD BE?



By Cara Bell

Public transport is essential as it reduces congestion, is environmentally friendly and helps those who are unable to drive.

According to Travel South Yorkshire, at least five different buses make their way to a bus stop near our school each morning and afternoon to help transport students to and from their homes. If the buses ran according to their timetables, each should arrive every ten to twenty minutes, however, there are some pieces of evidence which imply this may not be true. So, is public transport in the south of Sheffield as good as it should be, or do we need to be more realistic in our expectations when it comes to transportation?

In February 2024, a letter was sent to parents, stating that the times of the school day were changing in accordance with the government guidelines on how long a child should spend in school. However, an email from June 2024, informed parents that the decision would be reversed due to “unforeseen complications with bus schedules”. This begs the question- why are there conflicts between bus and school timetabling, when buses are supposed to run every 10 to 20 minutes?

Buses are vital for travel to and from school, especially when students’ parents are not able to take them by car. Therefore, when a bus doesn’t arrive on time, it can be a big issue. I asked students at Meadowhead School what their experiences were like when using public transport every day to get to school. One sixth form student said “Buses are regular however some bus drivers can be quite rude and disrespectful to students”. A year 10 said that when it comes to arrival times of buses “I think the timing is inconsistent”.

But what do the figures show? In December 2021 only 75% of buses in Sheffield were on time, compared with April of the following year, when 83% of buses arrived on time. These figures may not seem too bad, but they show that on average, for every 4-6 buses, one bus is late. This would mean that students would arrive late to school, impacting their attendance and could receive many C1s over the course of the academic year, through no fault of their own.

In the summer of 2022, First Bus announced that they would stop running the 725 service from Bradway to Meadowhead at the start of the academic year, this led former head student Lexi Walker to begin a petition to reinstate the 725 bus. This caused Meadowhead School to start a temporary bus service using the school Minibuses. On 22nd September 2022, Meadowhead School shared that Stagecoach would take over the running of the 725 school bus from 3rd October.

On 1st November 2023, Travel South Yorkshire changed the price of child single fares from 80p to £1, while this may sound like a small increase, in a week, if a child were to take the bus to and from school every day, they would spend a total of £2 more per week. Over the course of the academic year, a child could end up spending up to £76 more on bus fares (from £304 to £380). However negative this may sound, from the October 2024 budget, the government will spend over £650 million for local transport, to improve connections between towns, villages, rural areas and as well as major cities.

This begins to answer the question in our title, no it’s not as good as should be, but there is hope for our city yet.

FLAME.

EXPLORING SCHOOL AND THE WORLD
AROUND US!



WE WANT YOU
IN OUR
TEAM!

Do you have good communication and listening skills?

Are you interested in sport, music entertainment?

Are you inquisitive? Opinionated?

**Are you interested in social media, public relations,
editing, photography, graphic design?**