

LCQ13: Safety of pedestrians in the vicinity of schools in the rural area

Following is a question by the Hon Lee Wing-tat and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (February 3):

Question:

In the middle of last month, a traffic accident occurred when a kindergarten pupil and his parent were crossing the road near his school in Ho Sheung Heung in Sheung Shui, resulting in one dead and the other seriously injured. Regarding the safety of pedestrians in the vicinity of kindergartens and primary schools in rural areas ("rural schools"), will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the number of traffic accidents which occurred in the vicinity of rural schools in the past three years, as well as the casualties involved;
- (b) of the number of rural schools without railings or road-crossing facilities outside their entrances and along the pavements in the vicinity; and
- (c) how the Transport Department and the Education Bureau will coordinate with each other and what road safety improvement measures will be taken, including whether speed humps will be added to the carriageways in the vicinity of rural schools to slow down vehicles, so as to protect the safety of the pupils, parents and teaching staff of the kindergarten involved in the aforesaid accident as well as other rural schools?

Reply:

President,

According to information provided by the Education Bureau (EB), there are currently 49 kindergartens and primary schools in rural areas (rural schools) in the territory. They are located in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, North District, Sai Kung and Islands Districts. My reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

- (a) During the period from 2007 to 2009, a total of 16 traffic accidents occurred near the 49 rural schools, of which 15 were minor accidents, and 17 persons were slightly injured. Three of the above accidents involved children aged 12 or below, and one child was slightly injured in each of them. The remaining one accident was fatal. It happened on Castle Peak Road in Yuen Long near San Tin and no pedestrian was involved in that accident. The above traffic accidents occurred on roads within about 50 metres from the rural schools. The persons involved in the accidents might just be

passing near the school, and might not be students, parents or staff of the schools concerned.

(b) Among the 49 rural schools, the Transport Department (TD) is responsible for the management of roads near 21 of them (Roads in the vicinity of the remaining 28 rural schools are village roads or private roads which are not managed by the TD). Out of the above 21 rural schools, crossing facilities or fences have been installed near nine schools. Six of the schools are primary schools or kindergartens on Peng Chau or Cheung Chau. The traffic condition on the outlying islands is different. Only a small number of village vehicles are permitted to travel on the roads. The traffic is light and the vehicle speed is relatively low. As the roads are designed for shared use by vehicles and pedestrians, crossing facilities and fences are not applicable. As regards the remaining six rural schools, "Slow" or "Children" road markings or signs have already been put up at appropriate locations to remind motorists to drive slowly and carefully. Both the vehicular and pedestrian flows at these roads are not high. TD will examine from time to time whether the road facilities in the vicinity of rural schools are adequate.

(c) The TD reviews regularly with relevant government departments the traffic management measures and pedestrian crossing facilities on carriageways near rural schools, and initiates improvement proposals as appropriate. According to TD's analysis, the behaviour of road users (including drivers and pedestrians) has been the contributory factor for about 90% of the traffic accidents. Therefore, apart from improving road facilities, we attach great importance to a multi-pronged approach in enhancing road safety, which includes education, publicity and enforcement. To build up school children's safety awareness, the EB has been promoting the importance of road safety to school children through the school curriculum, various teaching activities and learning experience, and instilling in them positive values and proper attitudes, such as compliance with regulations and fulfilment of civil obligations. The EB also encourages schools to set up road safety patrol teams to help students cross the roads safely before and after school. Separately, to enhance school children's awareness of road safety, regional road safety teams of the Police hold safety talks and distribute promotional leaflets at schools and community centres regularly and conduct various activities such as visits to the "Road Safety Town". Apart from initiating prosecutions against offenders, the Police also launch their regular campaigns on safe driving and pedestrian safety to remind motorists and pedestrians to take heed of road safety.

Ends/Wednesday, February 3, 2010

Issued at HKT 17:04