

Parking Outside Schools

A Self Help Package

This booklet is aimed at giving you advice and guidance in dealing with issues related to parking around schools. It is not exhaustive but outlines the main areas that you can use to affect the levels and location of car parking at the beginning and end of the school day.

The local authority do not have the power or indeed time to deal with all perceived problems outside schools and the Police also have limited resources to put into this area, therefore your own efforts are an important part in managing the use of cars at the school.

It must be remembered that we currently live with a car culture and freedom of choice in schooling means some children now travel from a much wider area. Removing all the vehicles taking children to school is therefore an unrealistic target. The fact that cars are parked does not necessarily mean there is a parking problem. It is only a problem if the parking is illegal or causing a danger to pedestrian movement. It is, however, regarded as important to reduce the number of vehicles making the school run as this is now seen as a major contributor to congestion on the roads, environmental pollution and a hindrance to a child's development as a road user.

Walking or cycling rather than using the car has a number of benefits:

- Cheaper – cold engines use more fuel
- Better for the car – short journeys/cold engines are not good for the engine
- Environment – short journeys/cold engines produce more air pollution
- Healthier – walking provides much needed exercise
- Road safety education – children learn to use the road as a pedestrian under a parent's supervision.

You should also refer to your copy of: *A Safer Journey to School – a guide to school travel plans for parents, teachers and governors* published by the DfEE.

Walk to School Campaigns

Regional campaigns are currently run by the local authority Road Safety Team each autumn, however local top-up campaigns by individual school are a good way of maintaining momentum.

- Plan ahead so that parents have plenty of notice and you can seek their co-operation and involvement
- Ensure that children understand the issues and are “on board” – their influence on parents is important
- Create an image that can go from one local campaign to another.

- Identify issues that prevent some people from walking and target these e.g. personal safety advice, safe route trails, pedestrian skills training.
- Walk to School campaigns do not mean that children should be walking alone. Parents should be encouraged to walk with their children – those that currently drive to school already accompany their children and should be encouraged to do so on foot.

Walking Bus

These are escorted walking groups using parent volunteers to supervise the children along a particular route.

- Recruit volunteers – enough to cover the routes you want to use, for absence/illness and for a safe ratio of adults to children. Carry out the appropriate checks on those volunteers.
- Plan the routes and times of the walking buses
- Purchase high visibility clothing and appropriate trolley for carrying bags (your Road Safety Officer should be able to help with suppliers)
- Ensure you have parents consent for their children to use the walking bus and obtain any necessary insurance.
- Volunteers should be trained – again the Road Safety Officer should be able to advise
- Consider a reward system for those taking part.

Walking Zone

- Create a zone around the school, the outer edge of which is approximately 5 minutes walk from school.
- The outer edge of the zone can be signed “5 minutes walk to school”
- Encourage parents to park outside the zone and walking the final part of the journey with their children
- Other journey lengths can be used (e.g. 7mins, 10mins).

Car Sharing Schemes

- Make sure parents and children are aware of what you are trying to achieve and why.
- Create communication between those that drive their children to school and pass on appropriate contact details to interested parents that live close to each other.
- You should leave actual arrangements and decisions to the families.
- Encourage involvement of new parents at induction events

Parking Charter

These are aimed at managing the parking that is around the school site. Parents sign a charter promising to park in a defined way or place for the safety and benefit of the school community. Although this may not reduce the numbers of vehicles, it should put the onus on parents to behave in a particular way.

- Identify safe and preferred locations and behaviour.
- Put this in written form

- All those that drive their children to and from school should be encouraged to sign up to the charter.
- Where possible some form of sticker for the car window should be given to all those that sign. Parents are more likely to adhere to the charter if they have some visible indication that they have signed.
- Encourage involvement of new parents at induction events

Site Specific Leaflet

This is a leaflet designed for and about a particular school site. Advice and information in the leaflet is specific to that site.

- Identify issues that need to be addressed regarding the site. You might want to give general advice on areas such as use of seat belts – keep to a maximum of eight points in all and keep them realistic.
- Design a cover – try to make it identifiable with your school. You can use a photograph, logo, design by pupils etc.
- Print and distribute. Depending on the issues and available resources you may wish to distribute to the whole school or target a particular group.
- You may wish to seek advice from other agencies such as the local authority or Police.
- These leaflets can be produced as part of a school project or involve the North Lincolnshire Council Road Safety Team.

Publicity Campaigns

These can be produced in school as part of a project or in conjunction with the Road Safety Team.

- Identify the issue you need to address and the target group.
- Keep the message simple and brief – be focused
- Don't try to include lots of different ideas/messages at the same time.
- Decide on the form you want your publicity to take e.g. poster/leaflet/newsletter/drama etc.

Engineering Solutions

- Traffic Regulation Orders – in other words parking restrictions. These may prevent parking or waiting between certain hours of the day or at all times. The needs of the local community as a whole will be taken into account before any order is made. As they are legally enforceable the process that is required to make these orders takes around 6 months to complete and costs a considerable sum of public money. Putting parking restrictions in near a school will only be effective if the Police are willing to enforce them, and even then a problem may just move to a different location rather than solving it.
- Traffic Calming – a variety of methods aimed at slowing traffic. It may involve signs, lines on the road, reduction of the speed limit, speed humps or tables, islands, chicanes, pinch points or a number of other methods. These will only be applied; where appropriate as they affect traffic 24

hours a day; within a priority system; subject to available funding and enforcement agreement from the Police. You should also bear in mind that a certain level of parking around a school at the start and end of the day can act as a temporary traffic calming measure. If you feel the area around your school may need new parking restrictions or other measures you should contact the North Lincolnshire Council Traffic Team.

Enforcement Solution

- Where parking restrictions are being ignored or there is obstruction of the highway it is the Police that are responsible for issuing parking tickets or reporting offenders.
- Putting in parking restrictions will not in itself solve a parking problem as any restrictions do need to be enforced. The co-operation of your local Police Officer is the first step in finding an enforcement solution to any parking problem, however you should bear in mind the Police do have other priorities.

School Policy

- Within your school policy you can include school travel plans, expected behaviour from both parents and children with regard to how they travel to school and their behaviour in around the school grounds. Make sure parents are clear about what you are trying to achieve.
- Issues such as driver behaviour, parking charters, car sharing, walking buses and any other policy issues to do with road safety can also be included in induction work with both children and parents.
- A programme of road safety education integrated into the schools long term plan is an effective way of developing a child's knowledge and understanding as they mature. This work can be very flexible, is based in the national curriculum and can be developed to meet the needs of individual schools. The Road Safety Officer is your first point of contact in establishing this work in your school plan.