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Date: Sunday, 03 March 2024



### **Education and Families**

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Dear Parent/Carer,

### **SAFETY IN THE SCHOOL CAR PARK**

Over the last few weeks, a number of people have complained or brought to my attention the situation in our school car park. I say, "over the last few weeks," but this has been an issue since the school was built. We are, however, no different to the vast majority of schools in the country. We have too many drivers and vehicles for the size of car park we have. There is nothing I can do about the physical size of the car park!

I note that there was a comment made online that the school "doesn't care" about what happens in the Car Park. It is also suggested that the Car Park should be patrolled. I would like to clarify:

1. I have repeatedly appealed to Parents/Carers to make better decisions about their parking and the poor choices some make when parking on double yellow lines or double parking whilst blocking others in.
2. The Car Park is a regular feature in our Newsletter. I continually appeal to the better nature of our Car Park users.
3. Some people make every effort to park safely or, better still, away from the school altogether. Others are simply blind-sided by their own needs and their own journey, making unsafe choices when entering the school grounds.
4. Even when the car park was patrolled by myself and Junior Road Safety Officers, we were often met with hostility and disregard.
5. Even when the car park is practically empty (especially before school) people still do not park in allocated spaces!

I would further clarify that:

1. I am first and foremost a Head Teacher. Not a Traffic Warden, nor a Police Officer. Whilst I take the safety of our children very seriously, I cannot make grown adults change their behaviour. I can only ask and hope that people see that it is their shared responsibility to ensure the safety of all, especially our children.



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2. It is not only St. John Paul II Parents/Carers who use the Car Park. Families from Laburnum Family Learning Centre are equally at fault for abandoning cars on the double yellow lines or using disabled spaces when they should not.
3. There are around 500 children within our campus at any one time. This is a large number and therefore many of those children will arrive or be collected in a vehicle.
4. Some people who travel by car do not necessarily need to do this! Many could actually walk.

As recent as last Friday, we had a near miss where one of our children was almost knocked over by a car which was actually on the pavement in front of the pupil gates. This is the second such incident in recent weeks.

I am certain that you do not need me to list the behaviours which we are talking about and which we need drivers to change. However, I have had staff members as well as Parents/Carers report to me that they have been verbally abused and sworn at when they politely ask a driver to move their car in order to allow the person to pass safely or even get out of a space that they are parked in. This is intolerable and should never happen.

I am in the process of taking the following actions:

- ✓ Sourcing a large number of traffic cones to block off areas in the car park which should not be used to park.
- ✓ Seeking advice from North Lanarkshire Council Health and Safety and Police Scotland.
- ✓ Seeking Support from Local Elected Members (Councillors) to review the layout and use of the Car Park.

#### **WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP IF YOU ARE A DRIVER AND ENTER THE CAR PARK?**

1. **Always park in an allocated space. If there are no space, park in the overspill or park further away and walk for the last part of your journey.**
2. **Only drive to/from school if it is completely necessary.**
3. **Keep the double yellow lines clear AT ALL TIMES!**
4. **Only use Disabled Spaces if you are a Blue Badge holder.**
5. **Keep to the 10mph speed limit in the Car Park.**
6. **Keep CALM! If YOU are causing an obstruction, it is YOU who is at fault and not the person you are blocking or the person who politely asks you to move! You should not be there in the first place.**
7. **Remember that there are children all around you. As an adult, you are an example to our children. Do you really want to be an example of aggression, anger and bad language? Is this the message we want our children to receive?**
8. **Share this information with anyone from your family who is involved in the school run. We know it is not always parents who do the school run!**

I hope that all users will reflect upon this appeal and, if you need to make any changes to your behaviour within our Car Park, you will do so swiftly and with the safety of our children at the fore.

With renewed good wishes,

**Kris Thomas**  
**Head Teacher**