



William Gilbert Endowed

(Church of England)

Primary School & Nursery

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Headteacher: Mrs E H Britten



15th June 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: VEHICLE USE & PARKING ON VICARAGE LANE/ST. ALKMUNDS CLOSE

This letter is for parents who bring their children to school by car and particularly those who continue to ignore our previous requests to park safely and courteously.

We regularly receive complaints from parents and neighbours about inconsiderate and dangerous parking around school.

Yesterday was a particularly difficult day with two near misses.

The following incidents occurred yesterday, which have meant me taking time away from leading the education of your child to bring them to your attention:

- A parent walking down the pavement on St Alkmund's Close was confronted by a black SUV driving towards her on the pavement. A stand-off ensued, and words were exchanged. This parent was then extremely distressed.
- Attempting to visit our school, a senior school improvement officer, who works for our academy trust, witnessed first-hand the issues we are dealing with. She described them as 'chaotic and dangerous'.
- At the end of the school day, a child was inches away from being hit by a car. This incident was witnessed and reported to one of our school governors. The child was seen running along the pavement and then straight between the cars parked all around the junction and onto the road. The car performed an emergency stop and narrowly missed the child. The driver had no chance of seeing the child coming due to the inconsiderate and dangerous parking of many vehicles waiting to collect their children.
- Residents witness these incidents all the time and express their concerns to the school. Although frustrated and 'mildly irritated' by the parking issues, they are more concerned, as we are, that there will be a life altering accident or fatality if things continue as they are.

These issues are not new. I wrote to you last month extending a plea to the small number of parents who continue to drive their children to school and park in an inconsiderate and, at times, dangerous manner.

This year alone we have had parking on pavements, causing obstructions, parking around junctions, mounting kerbs, blocking driveways, and allowing children to exit vehicles whilst stopped on school 'Keep Clear' zigzags. There have even been instances of abusive and threatening behaviour by parents and carers. This behaviour and standard of driving and parking are wholly unacceptable and put your children's safety at risk. More importantly, inconsiderate, and dangerous parking outside schools puts lives at risk. ***Do you want to be responsible for the death or serious injury of a child?*** Derbyshire Constabulary and Council are committed to improving driving and parking standards around our schools, ensuring safety for all. Despite the number of complaints, we know that most people do want to do the right thing and drive safely and responsibly.

I therefore request that everyone adheres to the following when parking, dropping off or collecting children from school:

- Ensure pavements, driveways and pedestrian access points are kept clear;
- Keep the school 'Keep Clear' marking (zig zags) clear;
- Avoid driving down/up Vicarage Lane past the infant gate;
- Ensure emergency vehicles would be able to get past if needed;
- Adhere to local parking restrictions;
- Turn off your engine when parked – engines left idling contribute to air pollution;
- Behave in a manner than is respectful towards others – including pedestrians and residents;
- Could you leave the car at home and walk, cycle or scoot with your children to school?
- If you must drive to school – ***park away from Vicarage Lane and St Alkmund's Close***. Make use of the kind offer from the Methodist Church at the bottom of King Street to park in and walk the remainder of the journey. Park a little further away – Avenue Rd or further up Hazelwood Rd - 5 minute walk to school!

The school leaders and governors will be taking the following actions:

- Patrolling and monitoring Vicarage Lane and St Alkmunds Close;
- Continuing to work with the local council to create a 'School Street' which is a road outside a school with a temporary restriction on motorised traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times. The restriction applies to school traffic and through traffic. The result is a safer, healthier and pleasant environment for everyone;
- Request visits from local PCSO (police community police officer) at school drop-off and pick-up to monitor the issues;
- Report incidents that contravene the Highway Code (sections 239 to 247) and are considered dangerous to the police;

- Request that parents and residents *photograph and report* dangerous parking to the police or the school email address enquiries@williamgilbertend.derbyshire.sch.uk;
- Submit bids to the Parish council for a grant to provide scooter pods and bike racks to support families make safer and healthier journeys to school.

The behaviour of a few are contributing to a poor situation for the majority. We have tried to deal with this by appealing to common sense and common courtesy, but clearly this is not working and so will now start to report unacceptable behaviour to the police. Drivers committing offences place themselves at risk of being prosecuted/ issued with tickets by the police.

Finally, we all need to start thinking differently about how we travel and how often we use the car. Emissions from vehicles cause air pollution. Air pollution not only contributes to climate change but is also linked to a range of health conditions and is one of the biggest risks to public health in the UK today. Children, with their developing lungs, are especially at risk. Small changes such as walking, scooting, or cycling to school, can make a big difference so even doing this just once a week can help. Travelling more actively, even just for short journeys, can also have a positive impact on both physical and mental wellbeing.

In anticipation of your full support with the issues raised.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E H Britten
Headteacher