

Changes to the after school car parking - Monday 12th April to Friday 16th April

As a school we have been searching for a solution to the 3pm pick up from Sunnyview Road for many years. My predecessor, Peter Marshall, and the Boards at that time explored several options, with no solution found, despite the constant efforts with Auckland Transport. This battle is something myself and our current board have also been working on as well. We have worked with Auckland Transport and the police. We have had no success with suggestions from ourselves and neighbours regarding using timed yellow lines or a one-way system. The tragic events in an Auckland school car park last month has again brought this to a head for me. The safety of our children is my number one concern. With this in mind I asked the police again to come out and work with us.

Our local Police School Community Officer, who has worked with us for a while, Constable Louise Nicholas (Louise.Nicholas@police.govt.nz), has been out to view the traffic situation after school on Sunnyview Road. This comes as a result of the concerns voiced by the community, concerned parents and discussions with Auckland Transport.

This from Constable Nicholas:

“Unfortunately, the immense traffic pressure of Greenhithe School pick-up on Sunnyview Road is causing significant frustration to the wider Greenhithe Community. It is also causing significant dangerous driving practices that simply can’t continue.

The following things were noted:

- *Parents and the community legitimately park on both sides of Sunnyview Road, causing the road to only have space for one vehicle to safely pass from about 2.45pm until about 3.15pm*
- *Sunnyview Road was completely blocked from about 2.50pm with parents stationary and waiting to move into the school car park*
- *All traffic heading north down Sunnyview Road had nowhere to go – this resulted in two vehicles reversing back up the street, and another three vehicles doing dangerous U-turn manoeuvres in an effort to get out of the blocked street, the later vehicles became blocked in with no way forward and no way back as there was traffic now in behind them*
- *By a few minutes to 3pm, the stationary line of traffic reached Greenhithe Road, causing disruption to traffic on the main road, and affecting the visibility of the Road Patrollers further up the street*
- *A vehicle was noted wanting to turn right onto a blocked Sunnyview Road from Greenhithe Road, the school traffic now meant we had a blocked Greenhithe Road from the western side too while vehicles waited for the line to move*
- *Frustrated motorists attempted to move past stationary vehicles, mounting the kerb near where children were walking, driving in and out of driveways when children were trying to cross and police understand some verbal altercations have occurred in the past*

The safety of the children and community is paramount, and we can not have a road completely blocked, or Road Patrollers that are struggling to complete Road Patrol correctly due to backed up traffic. We cannot have vehicles reversing up narrow roads when there are children navigating their way home on foot. We cannot have vehicles attempting U-turns, mounting kerbs, or swinging into driveways to avoid a grid-locked street.

In an attempt to mitigate these issues, Police recommend changing the format of the drop-off bay.

In further discussions with Constable Nicholas, she suggested the following trial, which we are enacting:

During the final week of term (Monday 12th April to Friday 16th April) the school car park off Sunnyview Road will be open until 2.45pm, when the gate will then be shut. Any cars in before 2.45pm can legitimately park their car in an available parking space. If the car park is already full – you will have to exit and find another park elsewhere. Children will be able to freely walk down the allotted side footpath to Sunnyview Road, but any children needing to cross the carpark to their parents cars will wait on the netball court until their parent comes to get them. The side gate will be reopened for this trial. All children walking through the carpark will need to have an adult with them for safety around moving cars. All other vehicles past the gate-shut time of 2.45pm will need to find alternative parking spaces, or safe pick-up points for their children.

Please discuss in advance how this will work for your family before Monday afternoon when the change occurs. The morning routine of a supervised drop off zone will continue as usual.

This will mean we do not have a queue of traffic to get into the car park, resulting in a flow through Sunnyview Road. It may mean you need to park a little further away and walk to collect your child or arrange a meeting point. Parents meeting their children can come into the car park as pedestrians and wait as usual.

This is a trial for one week. Constable Nicholas will visit during the week to look at the effects of the trial and whether we extend it. I have also asked Auckland Transport to attend, as this is their suggestion of solving the issue. While this may cause some inconvenience to those collecting children, please know our work with the Police as a school is to safeguard your children around our area. This is our main concern. The constable also noted some dangerous driving around our crossings and is taking action against these drivers.

The Board and myself are appreciative of your support with this trial, as we look to maintain the safety of our tamariki.

Ngā mihi

Stephen Grady
Principal
Greenhithe School

Kathy Frame
Presiding Member (Chair)
Greenhithe School Board