



Houlton School
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Michael McCulley
Principal

Registered in England
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Dear Parents/Carers

Children's safety on their journeys to and from school

I am writing to you as our Houlton family with some important safety reminders – and with an *earnest* plea for your support with keeping children safe on their journeys to and from school. We continue to work with partners at the master developers, *Urban&Civic* and the Local Authority, but you are the most influential, key partners we have as the immediate community who are driving the vehicles outside our school gates.

Unfortunately, our friends at St Gabriel's C of E Primary School are experiencing similar issues with parent/carer parking and congestion outside their school, which last week [resulted in a young person being knocked over by a car outside school](#). Thankfully, the child in question was not seriously hurt on this occasion; however, Mr Taylor, the Head at St Gabriel's and I would like to appeal to all of our families to read and act on the advice that follows. Working together, we can avoid a similar accident occurring outside either of our two schools in the future.

You may be aware from our weekly bulletins that I regularly post requests for your support with safe driving near our school site on Signal Drive and Houlton Way. Despite these reminders, **there continues to be unsafe and dangerous speeds, manoeuvres and behaviours outside school**. Our staff do their best to support outside of school, though we have no jurisdiction beyond the school gates. Staff have been shouted at from car windows, verbally abused whilst trying to supervise children and even physically assaulted by parents and carers since we opened. We must change this mindset and work together to keep everyone safe.

I live on the Houlton Development – what can I do to support children's safety?

The Houlton development has been designed so that no home is, nor will be, more than the three miles away on foot. The local authority deems three miles to be the appropriate distance for secondary-aged children to walk or cycle to school without the support of motorised transport. Walking or cycling promotes a healthy lifestyle and, of course, means fewer cars on the roads. The Houlton development anticipates there being around 180 primary pupil places on the wider Houlton development when it is completed in full, which is the number of places we have available at Houlton School in each cohort; therefore, ultimately, all pupils should be able to walk to school safely, unless they have a specific special educational need and/or disability that would mean this is not possible. Therefore, please consider leaving your car at home and encouraging your child to walk to and from school avoiding driving your child to school to reduce congestion if you live within our community.



If you do need to drive your child to school due to an individual need, please:

- **Observe the yellow 'keep clear' zig-zag lines.** These do not indicate no parking as some parents/carers have wrongly assumed – **these lines indicate no stopping or waiting** so that children can exit on foot and to local bus stops without weaving between motor vehicles.
- **Do not use our school's entrance-way in front of the gates as a turning point** or to wait. This is where a lot of children are crossing, so makes it dangerous for children.
- **Be polite and respectful to school staff** if they need to ask you to observe these rules – our staff have been verbally abused, sworn at and even physically assaulted by parents/carers since opening when their only goal is to keep children safe and avoid a tragic accident.
- **Avoid waiting outside school** – some parents/carers begin parking and clogging up Signal Drive as early as 2.15pm when school does not end until 3.10pm. This creates hazards for children and public transport. Please consider observing [Warwickshire County Council's 'Park and Stride' strategy](#), where you drop and/or collect your child further away from school to avoid driving right up to the campus and causing congestion.
- Observe the **maximum 20 mph speed limits** outside school.
- **Avoid blocking buses** and other public transport.

My family travels to school from outside of the immediate Houlton Development – what can I do to support children's safety?

- **Use Public Transport, Car-sharing and Warwickshire County Council's 'Park and Stride' strategy** wherever possible to minimise the number of cars and traffic outside school.
- **Observe the yellow 'keep clear' zig-zag lines.** These do not indicate no parking as some parents/carers have wrongly assumed – **these lines indicate no stopping or waiting** so that children can exit on foot and to local bus stops without weaving between motor vehicles.
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There is some advice on the following page that we will be sharing with our children about safe conduct for vehicles outside of schools – you may, therefore, wish to discuss this child-friendly poster with your child too. I hope we can work together to keep our children and young people safe.

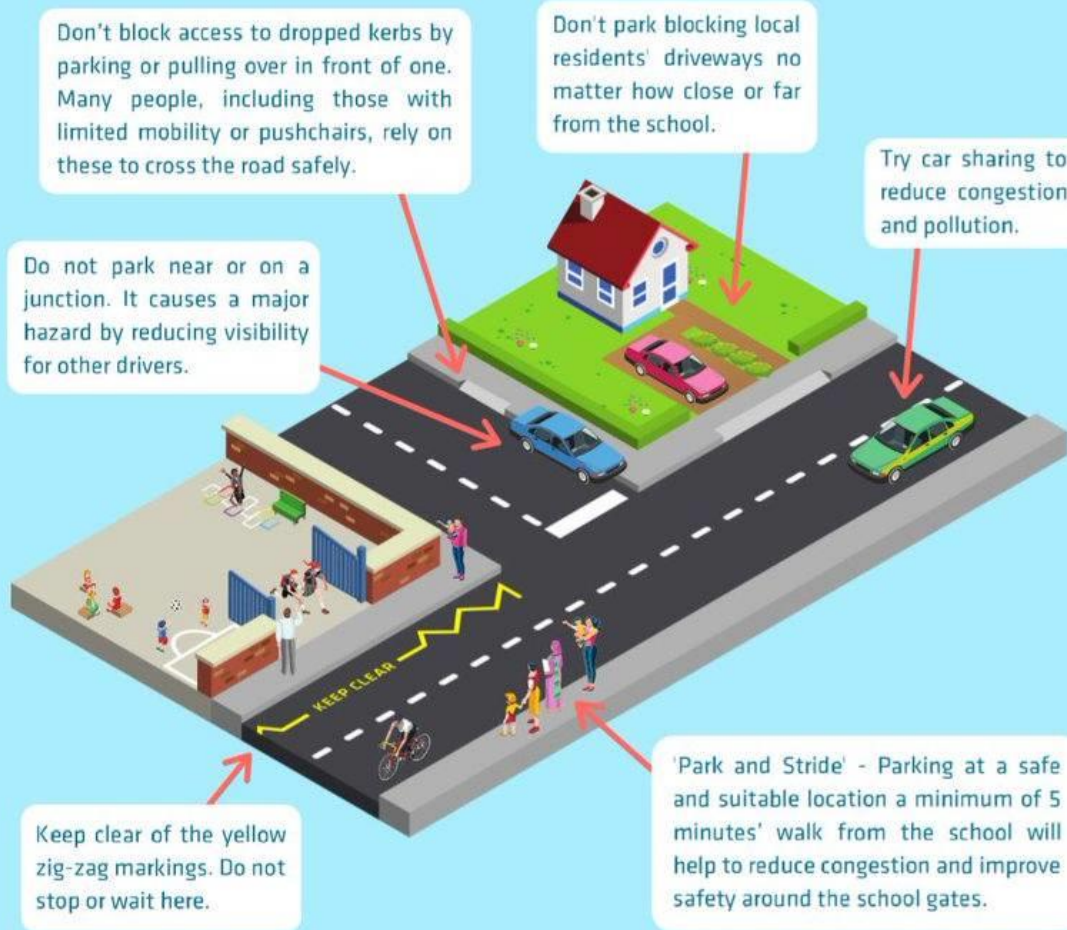
Yours faithfully



Michael McCulley
Principal



PARKING NEAR SCHOOL



You can also keep the areas around school safe by:

- Being careful when driving past the gates especially at the start and end of the school day.
- Reducing your speed when driving near schools. Children can be difficult to see when driving and can move quickly and unpredictably so anticipate this and drive cautiously.
- Following the instructions of School Crossing Patrols and being patient while waiting.