



OAK HILL FIRST SCHOOL

Wirehill Drive Lodge Park Redditch
Worcestershire B98 7JU

Telephone: (01527) 528523

Fax: (01527) 510153

e-mail: office@oakhill.worcs.sch.uk

website: www.oakhillfirst.com

Headteacher: Miss L Kelly - BEd (Hons)

9th September 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

I am greatly disappointed and concerned about the ongoing traffic/parking issues on Wirehill Drive, so I am writing again to all parents and carers to encourage drivers to be mindful and more considerate of our community. I apologise for the length of the letter but it is important that I share with you important facts, key information and future actions.

It is unfortunate that we are one of the largest first schools in Worcestershire with the smallest “footprint” in a relatively congested residential area. The school was originally built to accommodate approximately 150 children but the needs of the local area have seen this increase to just under 500 children in the last year. Unfortunately the infrastructure around the school is not conducive in being able to cope with the level of traffic that these additional numbers bring.

Whilst I’m reliably informed that this is a long term issue that has been going on at least for the last 15 years, it seems that the last couple of years have been more challenging than ever with an increase in the number of vehicles who attempt to drive through Wirehill Drive at drop off and collection times. In response to this we have taken a number of steps to encourage parents to be mindful of their parking and driving on drop off and collection. Actions we have undertaken are as follows.

- Newsletter requests
- Specific letters to parents on traffic issues.
- Liaison with the council in bringing the issues to their attention.
- Regular liaison with Redditch Borough Council re: school patrol vacancy update, unfortunately I have been informed that this post is still vacant.
- Introduced pedestrian training for pupils
- Reviewed the potential for a walking bus
- Walk to school initiative – limited whole school response
- Asked all parents to contact PCSO/Police regarding incidents that need to be logged, in addition to the school relaying these reported incidents to the police.
- Publicised, held and encouraged parents to attend PACT meetings here at school – the last one in July there were no parents in attendance.
- Regular (at least monthly) meetings with PCSO to discuss traffic issues.
- Discussions with residents
- Pupil voice – action group of pupils whose actions included meeting the mayor to share pupil views, presentation of an assembly about their concerns and to encourage pupils to educate parents, the presence of the pupils at the front of the school to try and deter drivers from parking on double yellow lines. This worked on the days they were present but just like the PCSO presence, however when they aren’t there drivers are reverting back to previous habits.

- Attendance of the Mayor on site to discuss issues finally resulting in the double yellow lines being repainted and extended.

All strategies employed so far seem to have been limited in their success and we are always happy to hear of reasonable suggestions as to how our school could support the reduction in parking/traffic incidents. One recent suggestion is that we could consider encouraging our older children to walk into school from the school gate, unaccompanied. Although I recognised that it won't reduce the number of vehicles, which would be the ideal, it might help with the movement of traffic and therefore I am asking parents of Year 4 pupils to support this trial next week. School council will again be putting on their high viz jackets, making their presence known outside the school next week, in order to remind drivers of who is at the centre of all of this chaos – children.

I am sincerely grateful to the social club for providing a parking facility on their grounds whenever they are able to do so. It is understandable that there are occasions such as yesterday when they required the use of their own facilities for a funeral. Whilst I am aware that the vast majority of vehicles which are causing issues are cars, we are also contacting as many delivery/collection companies to re-iterate our request not to deliver or collect during drop off and collection times.

A number of taxis have been identified as causing congestion by parking in front of the school. If you use a taxi, could I please ask you to inform the driver that you are not to be dropped off in a place that then cause Wirehill Drive to be “turned into a car park”.

I would caution parents who may be taking photographs or video footage that contain adults and children as you may be placing yourself in a “vulnerable” position.

I had a meeting yesterday with two of our PCSO's and they have confirmed that they are aware of the situation and have spoken to several concerned parents over this issue in the last couple of days. They have informed me that neither they nor the police have the legal powers to manage the traffic issues or to issue tickets. This has come as a complete surprise to me as I was under the impression that as a serious public issue, it would have been part of their remit. I stand corrected.

Despite finding out about their lack of legal powers, I have still requested their regular presence in order to deal with the verbal abuse and unrest that some parents and neighbours are being subjected to. They have informed me that they will be monitoring the situation.

The police officers have informed me of the social media coverage on the matter and they are concerned that **some content** may cause offence and they will be investigating this further.

They have asked me to inform you that should you have any concerns regarding the parking/traffic issues parents and residents should not contact them but need to contact:

<p style="text-align: center;">Traffic Management Team ,Redditch Borough Council 01527 64252</p>
--

Traffic Enforcement officers have been requested to attend as soon as possible.

It is unfortunately a small minority of drivers who are causing the high level of distress and concern to all parties and are as a result, tarnishing the good reputation of our school and community. I feel strongly that whilst we have individuals placing their own needs above the safety of our wider community, direct legal action is the only effective course of action left.

As law abiding, concerned parents you have the potential to be highly effective in putting pressure on those who can actually enforce and bring about change. I would urge residents and parents to take the opportunity to share your opinions with Councillors at the next PACT meeting which is on **3rd October, Scout Hut, Studley Road at 7pm.** Unfortunately only 1 resident attended the last meeting so the level of importance this issue should command wasn't evident.

I do hope for our children's sakes that this matter will improve in the coming weeks provided that enough pressure can result in the council regularly deploying traffic enforcement officers.

Yours sincerely

Miss L Kelly
Headteacher