

School Car Parks – Dangerous Places

School car parks are a major risk for children

- Everyone is in a hurry and many, especially children are tired in the afternoon especially.
- They are very busy places, with many distractions and everybody seems in a hurry.
- Pedestrian injuries can be severe and are a significant cause of child disability.

Why children are at risk.

Children are not “little adults”. For example, children:

- are small and can't see over bushes or parked cars. Drivers cannot see them easily either, especially in busy and active car parks.
- are constantly on the move and can dart out into traffic.
- may believe that if they can see a driver, the driver can see them and can stop instantly
- have difficulty telling where sounds are coming from and may expect traffic from the wrong direction.
- have trouble judging the speed of cars reliably.
- tend to concentrate for only a short time, and may only notice one thing at a time.
- tend to focus on what is in front of them. Unless they turn their head, they may not notice cars to the side of them
- may behave differently when they are with other children, and forget about traffic.
- may “freeze” if they find themselves in the path of a car, rather than jump out of the way.

Because of differences like these, while we can teach children about road safety, care needs to be taken about expecting them to use safe behaviour consistently.

How should adults behave around car parks and schools?

1. **Slow down!!**

Speed kills! Even in car parks. And the child could be yours or a close friend's!

2. **Watch out!!**

Children can move very quickly. And your reaction time is unlikely to be fast enough.

3. **Set a good example!!**

Reinforce the school's safety messages – the life you save might be your own child's.

4. **Take time!!**

Do not rush in and around schools. Time gives you flexibility to act properly.

5. **Stay with your children**

Stay with your children at all times. Do not leave them to walk across the car park on their own.