

November 1, 2013

Dear Families,

On November 5, Dave Gibson, Regional Traffic Safety Officer with our district, will be training an eager group of grade 6 students to be our valets for our "Kiss and Drop Zones". We are encouraging all parents of grade 1-6 students to use the LOWER "Kiss and Drop Zone", leaving the UPPER zone for kindergarten families, Strong Start, and Preschool drop off. Walking up those "Rocky" steps is a great way to start your mornings! As a friendly reminder, we ask that you respect the guidelines of the "Kiss and Drop Zone". Please do not leave your car unattended in the zone – it is simply meant as a convenience for dropping your child(ren) off near the entrance of the school. Our trained valets will open passenger side doors for your child(ren) to exit in a quick and efficient manner. The GPE Traffic Safety Committee was formed last June with the primary goal of improving the safety of our students as they walk to school or are dropped off on or around school grounds. On Thursday, Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> the committee, including our principal John McMahon, met with Dave Gibson, Regional Traffic Safety Officer for SD23, and Constable Sheri Lund, RCMP liaison for SD23. We would like to share the recommendations from this meeting with all parents, guardians, and staff.

**Problem 1: Congestion in the upper parking lot and drop-off area, resulting in unsafe conditions for students being dropped off or walking through the parking lot.**

**Recommendations: (Letters A-E on attached map)**

- 1) When possible, GPE staff will use the lower parking lot. (A)
- 2) The upper parking lot should primarily be reserved for parents who need to park to stay with Kindergarten, Pre-school/StrongStart, or other young students. (B) The drop-off loop in the upper lot may still be used as a "kiss & drop".
- 3) Parents dropping off intermediate students are encouraged to use the drop-off zone in the lower parking lot. (A)
- 4) Parents should consider alternate areas for parking and/or drop-off of their students, including the Community Garden/Dog Park lot (C), the parking lot behind the sports field (D), or the Save-On Foods parking lot (E). There is also street parking on Elliott Rd in front of Westwood Retirement Center.
- 5) When using either the upper or lower drop-off loops, please be respectful of the NO PARKING signs. When vehicles are parked in the loop, it is impossible to use the loops as they were designed.
- 6) Parents are urged not to park on Ingram Rd on the hill leading up to the upper parking lot. This creates a situation in which only one lane of traffic can pass.
- 7) Consider arriving 10 minutes earlier. The traffic around the school is much lighter, making drop-off much easier!
- 8) Consider carpooling, if possible.

**Problem 2: Students are jaywalking across Elliott Rd to and from the school and the Save-On parking lot.**

**Recommendations:**

- 1) Students should use the crosswalk at Elliott and Ingram Rd, where a crossing guard is located.
- 2) The Traffic Committee is looking into a long-term solution to this problem, but at this time, we need to demonstrate to the District of West Kelowna that we have done our best as a school community to address the problem.

Also, please remember that winter weather is on the way. When the snow hits, the hill leading to the upper parking lot can be very dangerous. This is a city street, and GPE cannot guarantee that it will be plowed or

sanded each day. Accidents have occurred here in the past, and we would like to avoid that this winter! An out of control vehicle can hit another one, or worse, a student who is walking on the hill. We strongly urge drivers to use alternate parking on snowy days (see map).

This is a challenge to all of us, but we are confident that we can improve the safety of our students, parents, and staff! The GPE Traffic Safety Committee will continue to work toward improving the traffic conditions and ultimately the safety of our students, but we need everyone's cooperation! The RCMP and SD23 liaisons will assist us when necessary, and you may be seeing them around the parking lots from time to time. If you have any questions or suggestions or would like to be a part of the committee, please contact us.

Sincerely,

The GPE Traffic Safety Committee:

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