

Driving near schools

Roads around schools get busy at drop off and pick up time and the hazards increase significantly.

Poorly parked cars, school buses, children on cycles, scooters and on foot who can act unpredictably - this guidance note is a reminder that journeys near schools need particular care, especially when children return from their holidays to the classroom.

Stop those distractions

Many accidents involving children occur when drivers are distracted, even momentarily. When passing a school at drop-off, lunch and pick-up times it is especially important to concentrate on the road. Using mobile phones is already illegal and other common distractions include eating, drinking, smoking, reading maps, playing loud music, attempting to tune the radio and involved conversations with passengers.

Safe delivery

When making deliveries near schools remember the following:

- Double parking is dangerous because obstructs clear line of sight of traffic for other drivers and pedestrians. It also obstructs traffic flow.
- Obstructing footpaths creates dangers for pedestrians.
- Always observe the parking signs outside schools. Never park on a school crossings, driveways or 'keep clear' lines - it is not just illegal but creates further dangerous situations.
- Avoid the need to reverse the vehicle.

Drive past safely

Keep your speed down - hitting a child at 40mph kills in most cases. Children are unpredictable,

particularly near a busy school gate. Remember to:

- Drive slowly and keep well within the speed limit
- Avoid driving too close to the pavement so you have more time to react if a child runs out.
- Be aware that children may be out of school outside of the start and finish of school time on activities.

You should also take further precautions:

- Ensure children exiting your vehicle do so by a door facing the pavement, not the road.
- Give school buses space to manoeuvre and be aware that children may run out from behind these vehicles.
- Do not overtake vehicles near a school or make sudden turns or U-turns.
- Signal clearly in plenty of time and cancel them after the manoeuvre
- Always obey a crossing patrol supervisor ('lollipop' person). Never proceed without clear instruction.
- Be especially vigilant approaching an unsupervised crossing - children often see a pedestrian crossing as permission to cross without due care.

General recommendations

If you know your route takes you past a school, try and plan your journey to take a different route or pass the school during a quiet period. Build extra time into your journey if you know you need to pass a school at a busy time. Always assume children will act unpredictably so drive slowly and carefully. Following these recommendations will dramatically reduce the risk of children being injured by your driving activities.