



Bedford South School

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Helen Healy – Principal Ms. Cindy Crewe – Vice-Principal

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Due to ongoing safety concerns for our Bedford South School (“BSS”) students and staff, the front drop off loop at BSS will be closed to vehicle traffic during drop off and pick up times.

Why is the loop is being closed:

- BSS was designed with the expectation that 80% of the students would be walking to school. Since opening, traffic volume has increased such that 47% of students are now driven. The loop was not designed for this volume of traffic.
- Fire and emergency vehicles do not have adequate access to the school when responding during periods of traffic congestion and have requested changes to front loop vehicle access.
- Drop off habits have changed. Cars dropping off kids are not abiding by the no parking signs and many are no longer just stopping in the “kiss and go” loops, but parking and escorting students to the school.
- The demographics of the school have changed with a larger number of total students and a greater proportion of younger students.
- Students safety is also a concern due to the proximity of the Primary to Grade 1 playground to the front loop.
- This has led to significant safety concerns for our students at BSS.
- After extensive consultation this past year on this high risk situation with our many partners: Scotia Learning (property owner), the Regional Centre for Education, School Staff, School Advisory Council, Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Regional Police, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency and the Ecology Action Centre, we all agree the closure of the front loop to traffic during drop off and pick up times is the best solution.

When is the loop being closed:

- The front loop will be closed starting **Monday June 3rd** during drop off and pick up times. The gate will be closed from 8:15-9:00am and 2:15pm-3:15pm. Vehicles will not be permitted to drive within the loop during these times. Buses and staff will still be able to enter and exit the premises during this period.
- We recognize that this change may be challenging for some families which is why we wanted to give you as much notice as possible. We feel that the safety of our students and staff is of utmost importance to us all and makes these changes necessary.

How will the school be supporting families in making this change:

- We are currently working with the Halifax Regional Police and HRM Transportation & Traffic to address infrastructure and traffic enforcement to support the safety of our students travelling to school (e.g. additional crosswalks and guards), and a traffic safety document for the school with a map showing legal alternative drop-off/pick up locations.
- Our school will also be piloting a *Walking School Bus (WSB) Program* to encourage more families to safely and actively get to school in the morning, a program whereby a group of parents take turns during the week to lead a group of children walking to school. The WSB pilot program will be launched on Wednesday, May 1st.
- In addition, to help prepare them for safe walking travel to school all students will be receiving *Walking Safety Lessons* in May during school hours.

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How can you and your family support the school in making this change?

- Please review your present method of getting your children to school. The closer you get to the school, the more dangerous it gets for all children, including those who are driven to school.
- If driving remains necessary to you, please reassess your current travel arrangements and consider finding a spot 2-3 blocks away from the school to park or drop-off/pick up your children, and walk with them to school.
- Please plan accordingly, adjust your time for walking to and from school with your children.
- Also, please note and obey all traffic and parking regulations. Parking is currently allowed on most streets around the school, but not allowed on the back loop.

The closure will be monitored and information gathered to help inform potential changes in the process for the 2019-2020 school year.

Your cooperation and patience is appreciated while we refine the school travel process. If you have any questions, or you wish to participate in the *Walking School Bus Program* contact the school to speak with one of the administrators.

Regards,

Helen Healy
Principal