

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Davidstown Primary School is located on the edge of the village, 250 meters from Cloney Park which is at the centre of the village. Children who live within 1km of the school are dropped by car as there is no safe route for our pupils to access the school by bike or by foot.

As a part of the An Taisce Green Schools programme we have actively encouraged our families to walk and cycle to school. There has been much investment, time and effort by the entire school community to walk and cycle, however, it is simply not safe.

We have asked our parents, as directed by the Department of Education, to walk and cycle to school as a safer and healthier alternative in times of Covid. This prevents gathering at the school gates and has proven quite successful. Unfortunately, the lack of a safe walkway on the approach from the village to the school is dangerous.

On any given morning, congestion outside the school, combined with limited parking means that staff are parked in the designated spaces, parents park parallel behind our cars. This blocks one full lane of the road, leaving one lane for passing traffic and no room for pedestrians. Our children are then walking between, and behind, moving cars. There have been a number of minor dents and near misses over the past four years, including this morning. We have serious concerns that a critical incident is imminent.



78% of our pupils live within a 5km radius of the school.

45% of our pupils live within a 2km radius of our school

6% of them walk

42% would like to walk if it were safe

100% of our families would park and stride if a safe pathway was available

3% cycle

20% would like to cycle

It was interesting to note that all of the senior and junior infant class are driven to the school gate, regardless of the distance from home. This highlights how unsafe the route is currently.



Strategies used by the school community to aid safe approach to the school include:

- Staff park, filling spaces in order starting from the gate leaving spaces for families
- Staff reverse in to spaces
- Ditch at end of pitch is cleared to increase parking spaces for parents
- Designated bus bay with separate entrance to school premises
- Secure bike rack
- Cycle safe lessons for 3rd to 6th class with on-road practice
- Promotion of Walk on Wednesday, safe cycling
- Park and Stride has been highlighted to parents as an option to reduce congestion outside the school. There is ample community parking available outside the church. Parents have tried this, however, the road is simply too dangerous to walk.
- Parents do not park in front of the school gates
- Installation of solar power road speed sensor detector by Wexford Co. Co.
- Completion of the Expression of Interest form for Safe Routes to School Programme

Each of these strategies has worked as much as can be expected, however, as the school population continues to grow the issue will continue to worsen.

Davidstown PS has developing school status with 72 projected enrolment for September 2021, an increase of almost 40% in school population in 4years. Current projection supports the appointment of an additional class teacher in 2022/2023.

The school community would be very willing to partner with the council to alleviate the issue. A safe walkway from the village to the school would be an ideal solution. The school would be willing to do works to enable access to the school property. There is a gateway at the village side of the school that could be adapted for safe pedestrian access, significantly reducing the length of a path needed from the village. It is a simple solution that would be of enormous benefit. Please see pictures below.



Distances:

- 250m from the footpath in the village to the front gates of the school.
- 200m from the pedestrian entrance of the church car park to the front gates of the school (park and stride)
- 180m from the footpath in the village to the lower gate

The lower gate is an existing gate that is not currently suitable for access by pedestrians. The school would be willing to make it accessible should a safe walkway from the village be developed.



The school has worked hard to ensure that we serve the needs of our community. We have made a number of improvements to the school over the past few years and have made the school available to the community for use outside of school hours. Classes have included exercise, computers and mindfulness. It would be of enormous benefit to the entire community, not just our pupils, that the school would be safely accessible from the village. This development would be supported by our Parents' Association and the Cloney Park Residents Association.

We hope that you would consider our proposal and we would appreciate feedback at your earliest convenience.

Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Le gach dea ghúí,
Ita