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Press Release: New School Year Safety Information

For Immediate Release: August 26, 2019

As the new school year is about to begin, the Dedham Police would like to take the opportunity to provide some important back to school safety information. Parents of school aged children as well as commuters traversing Dedham roads are asked to familiarize themselves with the traffic patterns around our schools and walking routes used by students.

Child safety should be the first and foremost consideration when determining how a child is dropped off and picked up while traveling to and from school.

Each year across the United States, tragedies are reported of children getting injured or even tragically killed by darting between cars, not using a cross-walk, or motorists simply not being observant.

We can help to ensure the safety of all children by doing the following:

- **Familiarize yourself with the schools drop-off and pick-up practices:** One of the biggest complaints by Police and School Officials is that parents find a reason to be the exception to the rule. If the curb says “**No stopping, standing or parking at any time,**” that means for everyone. Children are required to use designated cross walks, don’t walk your child across the middle of a street just because you’re holding their hand.
- **Resist the urge to speed or make any traffic rule exceptions because you are running late:** Whipping your car around, getting your child to dash out of the car to reach the classroom before the school bell rings, or encouraging a “drop-and-dash” drop-off is a recipe for disaster in terms of child safety. You would rather your child receive a tardy notice than to be in an accident.
- **Refrain from using your cell phone, or being subject to any other distractions while around school zones:** This common-sense advice applies whenever a motorist is behind the wheel, but especially when in a driving situation around young children. Remember, it is illegal to read, compose or send a text while driving. Pedestrians should also refrain from being distracted.

The mission of the Dedham Police Department is to protect and serve the citizens of Dedham through collaboration, preventative programs and the judicious enforcement of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the by-laws of the Town of Dedham.



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- **Know all traffic rules concerning school buses and school zones:**
Speed limits are 20 miles per hour in school zones, unless otherwise posted. Yellow flashing lights indicate that the bus is preparing to stop to load/unload children. Slow down and prepare to stop, regardless of your direction of travel. Red flashing lights and extended stop arms indicate that the bus has stopped and that children are getting on/off. You must stop and wait until the red lights stop flashing and the extended stop sign is withdrawn before you may start driving again.
- **Front Driveways:** Schools with a front driveway are not to be used for drop off and pick up. They are all clearly posted with the proper times of use.
- **NO PARKING, STOPPING OR STANDING:** This means exactly that, the posted signs cover from curb to curb.
- **U-Turns:** Making a U-Turn in a school zone to change direction can cause serious safety hazards. Depending on road markings, such turns may also be illegal.
- **Take your time:** Please leave yourself enough time to follow the proper traffic patterns.
- **Solar Glare:** During the beginning of the school year, the sun can create significant solar glare on certain roads. Please use extra caution when such conditions exist.

Most of the infractions committed during drop off and pick up are a surchargable moving violations to which a parking ticket or civil citation can be issued either in hand or by mail. This of course is the last step in enforcing these safety concerns and hopefully will not be needed.

It is encouraged that you walk with your children to and from school. Our schools were designed during a time when most children walked to and from school. Unfortunately, the schools are not designed to handle the traffic they receive. The fewer vehicles we have around the schools the safer they will be. The safety of all the children is our concern. Please help us to ensure that we have a safe school year.

Neil Cronin
Community and School Resource Officer

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