One of the main reasons that schools have principals is to solve problems. I have learned that problems are best solved if and when all involved work together to see beyond their own interests and find common ground. I do my best to consider all sides of a problem. I seek counsel from others and do the best I can with the understanding that sometimes there is not a perfect solution. Most times, problems are not solved by me making a declaration. And so, I ask you to join me to find a solution to a problem that has plagued us for quite some time.

As a school leader, I know that my primary responsibility is to keep your children safe. And yet, as each day comes and goes, I am increasingly concerned about their safety in the parking lot. We need your help to ensure that the parking lot is as safe as it can be for children during drop-off and pick-up. I have made the annual proclamations, posted directives and emailed them home. When I can, I stand in the parking lot with my stop sign; I admonish parents who park in non-designated spots; I remind parents to use the crosswalk; I plead with parents not to get out of their cars in the drop-off line. I am grateful for the majority of parents who adhere to the policies and procedures that we have put in place. Thank you for your help.

And, I understand that our lives are full of pressure. Sometimes things don’t go as planned in the morning. Traffic is unusually bad or you may have an appointment at work for which you cannot be late, etc. I am asking you to please put that all aside and think of the safety of the children first. We have rules so that we can maintain a safe environment for our students.

We have four main rules in the parking lot:

1. **Park only in designated parking spaces.** When you park along the island with the sign, the hill by the church, the driveway exiting out, or the fence on the side of the lot, cars will be forced to move around you which puts pedestrians (i.e., children) in jeopardy. We will put more cones in places where parking is restricted. I could use a few volunteers in the afternoon for this duty, as I am often tied up at the end of the day.

2. **Please use the drop-off line in the morning.** The teachers are there to assist. Using the line will significantly reduce pedestrian traffic.

3. **If you chose to park and walk to the plaza, please use the crosswalk.** It is nearly impossible for drivers to account for people (i.e., children) when they cross outside of the crosswalk. I will have new lines painted for the crosswalk as soon as I can.

4. **When you use the drop-off line, do not get out of your car.** When you do, the line slows down and it is not fair to the drivers behind you who want to be on their way. Impatient drivers will pull around you and cause traffic congestion. Particularly in the morning, the car line must be allowed to move out as soon as children exit the car. If your child is having a difficult time, please park the car and use the crosswalk.

I will do my best to remind offenders that the rules do, indeed, apply to them. I have entertained a number of actions should the situation not improve. I understand that there are parents who want to form a safety committee, and I am open to it. We could issue
citations and parents have volunteered to patrol the lot to remind violators of the rules. I would hope that this would be a last resort. Of course, the best solution would be for everyone to do what is expected. Please, let’s work together to fix this problem for the safety of the children.

Sincerely,

Dr. William Gartside
Head of School

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