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As the 2007-2008 school year begins, the Princeton Township Police Department would like to welcome back students and parents and to take this opportunity to provide you with some information, tips and reminders regarding pedestrian and traffic safety in school zones and surrounding areas throughout the Township.

Thirty years ago, half of all children walked to school. That number has reduced to a mere 15% today. As a result, the areas around our schools are often gridlocked in traffic. In addition, as traffic becomes clogged, drivers forced to wait often end up “in a hurry”, late for their next destination. This now posing an additional speeding issue on other residential streets.

Please note the following guidelines for both parents and children.

1. Take the time now, before school starts, if possible, to familiarize yourself with the various regulations around each school. Identify your driving route and look for alternatives that avoid the most popular or congested streets.
2. Consider a route that allows you to drop your children off one or two blocks away, but along one of the designated safe routes utilizing a crossing guard. This will allow you easier entrance and exit from the area, ease traffic congestion for all, and still allow your children a safe path to school.
3. Please remember that regulated areas for standing, stopping or parking have been marked out specifically to augment pedestrian safety and to address issues regarding the safe movement of traffic through school zones. Even when drivers stopped in these areas for “just a minute”, they are causing potential hazards. Police will issue tickets for these violations.
4. Please respect our crossing guards by watching your speed, following their instructions, and by not stopping in prohibited areas-especially in crossing zones. Children should always wait for the command to cross from the guard.

In addition, as we continually assess safety around the schools, we have made two changes of note for parents and students.

For PHS and some JW students:

At the intersection of Franklin Avenue and Walnut Lane, there is a new crossing pattern to be used by pedestrians. The old, diagonal crossing from PHS across to the Choir College area has been eliminated. Students are now asked to cross the newly marked route, which crosses over Walnut Lane nearer to John Witherspoon School. The crossing guard, signage and barricades, along with police, when available, will be in place to educate students on the new pattern.

For parents accompanying children to Community Park School:

Though a marked crossing has been added at the intersection of Witherspoon St. and Guyot, the “safe routes” crossing remains mid-block, in front of the school where the crossing guard has traditionally been located.

Please remember: All the markings, signs, crossing guards and police in the world cannot undo the damage that one careless moment can cause. Whether driving, walking or riding, we all must be alert to our surroundings to keep safe.

Best wishes for a safe, fun and productive school year.

The Princeton Township Police Department