

Caldwell Police Department

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James H. Bongiorno

Chief

WHY NO PARKING?

The answer: Safety, Safety, Safety, and Love. We as parents, teachers, guardians, Holders of Public Office and Police officers realize that children are our most precious gifts. We want the very best for our children from the food they eat to the safety of the toys they play with. We bare no expense in getting them the best medical care when they are feeling ill. Sometimes we are so caught up in making things easier and better for our children we overlook some important safety issues. That appears to be the case at our schools.

Parking in front of the schools when the vehicle is within six inches of the curb, for the brief minute or less, the time it takes a child to exit the vehicle on the passenger side is acceptable, nothing else is. WHY? Besides the inconvenience to a host of other people wishing to do the same thing in a limited amount of space and time, we risk the safety of our children.

The roads in front of our schools become narrower as vehicles park in front of the school. Drivers are anxious to get to their destinations. Children going to school, their younger siblings and guardians are present, all are distractions. A child anxiously jumps out of the vehicle on the driver's side or a sibling momentarily breaks free from a mother's grip and runs out between parked vehicles into traffic. A vehicle traveling the speed limit of 25 miles per hour travels 36.65 feet per second (two car lengths). The driver is distracted by a child in the vehicle (this happens a lot) the driver is slow to react to the situation. There is a lot of suffering and grief when a child is struck! **Think Safety!**

The congestion around our schools not only hinders the safety of those on the outside but those on the inside also. A small fire starts in a closet, heavy smoke and panic exist. Police, Fire, and Rescue personnel along with their vehicles respond. The parties waiting to pick-up or drop off children either panic by running into the school to see if their child is alright, freeze blocking rescue routes, or just stand and gawk and some move out of the way. It only takes one tire to run over a fire hose to stop the flow of water that may be protecting a child or firemen. When someone cannot breathe, every second seems like a lifetime. An adult person can bleed to death in a couple of minutes. **Think Safety!**

The congestion around our schools and the over abundance of people walking about outside of the school can present another safety risk. The police know most of the school employees however we cannot know every parent or guardian sent to pick-up a child. With a large gathering about the school, it would hinder any kind of law enforcement activities aimed at keeping unwanted persons off the property. We hear too often the sad results on the News about Domestic Violence, Juvenile Violence and other related crimes that happen near or on school properties throughout the country. **Think Safety!**

The next time you think that you need to park illegally near a school, we ask you to **Think Safety and How much you Love Children**. In the past years we have given out warnings and summons for traffic violations near the schools. This year there will be very few warnings after the first day of school. When violations risk the safety of the children we are moving towards a level of zero tolerance. When an officer was stationed in front of the school, it is for the purpose to get vehicles moving. When this officer was not present, the people went back to exiting their vehicles, others let their children off in the traffic lanes and the situation became worse. When an officer is pulled, to work a school zone he can no longer patrol the streets around the school and the patrol force is reduced. We want your willing assistance all the time in this matter rather than having to issue you a summons. The following violations and those more severe will be strictly addressed:

Parking in No Parking Zones.....39:4-138.....\$50.00

Failure to discharge passenger at curb....39:4-65.....\$50.00...2 points

Failure to promptly give place to
a vehicle about to take on or
drop off passengers.....39:4-62.....\$50.00

Standing longer than needed to
drop off or take on passengers.....39:4-139.....\$50.00

Thank you, for your anticipated assistance.

Ann Dassing
Mayor of Caldwell

James Bongiorno
Chief

Sgt. Michael Pellegrino
Traffic Safety, O.I.C.