



Parents behaving badly at school

The chaos at drop off time has forced schools to install signs and boom gates to protect kids.

A BOOM gate is not usually associated with school carparks but an increasing number of schools are installing the safety feature to keep parents out.

Parents behaving badly in carparks – driving into restricted zones, ignoring signs and refusing to abide by rules – has forced many principals to increase security measures. Without realising it, parents who ignore school regulations and drive their children onto the school grounds and into staff-only carparks are putting young lives at risk.

In fact 'low-speed vehicle runovers' in locations such as schools are responsible for tragic deaths and

injuries that could otherwise be prevented.

Australian data shows 43 child pedestrians aged 0 to 14 years were injured at schools between 2002-03 and 2009-10 – almost the same number as were injured on farms.

From 2001 to 2010, 29 child pedestrians were killed in "non-traffic" locations outside of the home such as schools, universities, hospitals, prisons, factory premises and military camps where vehicles would be expected to be travelling at low speeds and performing low-speed manoeuvres.

The *Child Pedestrian Safety: driveway deaths and low speed vehicle runovers 2001-2010 report* by the department of Infrastructure and Transport highlights the surprising discovery that such accidents occurred in places that

were considered a "safe haven" for children.

While it was difficult to determine how and why these car-versus-pedestrian accidents happened, some factors are believed to include difficulty seeing behind vehicles when reversing and the built environment.

The accidents raised questions about visibility of small and near objects and whether the movements of pedestrians and motor vehicles needed to be more segregated.

"There are fears among many in the medical profession that unless the major factors behind these deaths are understood and preventative measures implemented to mitigate the risks involved, the numbers of children killed or seriously injured could increase over the coming years," the report states.

The duty to protect children from parents behind the wheel has led schools to invest money in signage and boom gates.

Industry take

Larry Wainstein, managing director of Signpac, said one of the biggest issues for schools was parents driving into the staff carpark to drop off children.

"We get a lot of schools where there is carparking for staff only and the parents don't care and drive in and they really shouldn't," says Larry.

"Parents don't realise that what they are doing can lead to drastic consequences."

Signs such as "Staff Carpark Only", "No Student Access" and "No

pedestrians" act as an indicator to mums and dads as to where they can and cannot drive their vehicles.

"The signs are for the parents – not the staff or the teachers – because the parents are the ones not doing the right thing," says Larry.

"The signs are to make parents aware of where they can't go and how they should behave."

Larry urges schools to "embrace the power of signage" to make sure that kids are safe.

Seton Australia director of marketing Adrian Castorina said the positioning of signage on school grounds was paramount to ensuring parental compliance.

"During drop off and pick up times it is common to see traffic congestion as well as unsafe parking and driving practices. "The positioning and design of signage is fundamental for safety in car parks to ensure children are protected inside and outside of school grounds. Clear signage also warns drivers about school zones, parking and crossing areas.

"Not all carparks are the same and some may require specific signage to alert carpark users to special circumstances to ensure everyone understands the rules of the carpark.

"Carpark safety audits and checklists are one way to ensure a school's carpark is well equipped to keep students and the broader community safe."

However in some cases parental behaviour is so bad that even signs are not having the desired effect.

Alan Roberts, whose company Rotech Group specialises in boom

Safety for your school

Seton's mission is to make safety easy, so everyone returns home safely. Founded in Sydney, the company is one of Australia's largest suppliers of safety products and solutions and a provider of choice to schools of every size.

With more than 30,000 products, Seton says it offers the country's most comprehensive selection of high quality and compliant safety solutions.

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manufacturing capabilities and global sourcing expertise, the company ensures safety for school communities is easy and accessible. All school safety products meet local, state and WH&S regulations and, where applicable, comply with Australian Standards.

If you need compliance or product advice or would like help ordering, contact Seton's expert team on 1800 651 173. You can also browse an extensive range and order online at seton.com.au/school-safety. "We look forward to giving you peace of mind and helping you to make your school a safer place for everyone," says Terry O'Neill, Brady managing director. ●

gates for industry, mining and military, says he has been receiving more and more inquiries from schools.

"The real problem is parents driving where they are not meant to," says Alan.

"With boom gates you can keep parents out so they are not driving their children into the staff carpark and creating safety problems."

Rotech recently supplied a boom gate at Mooloolaba State School on the Sunshine Coast because parents were ignoring the designated drop off area and driving through the main gates to the teachers' car park.

"The teachers' car park was a restricted zone and despite being designated 'out of bounds' for students and unauthorised vehicles there was nothing to prevent access to this area," he says.

"What was needed was the ability to strictly control the access into the teacher's car parking area during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-ups."

The school's new boom gate remains closed during the school drop-off period between 08:30 and 09:30 and opens afterward to enable contractors and other visitors through.

Alan says boom gates give control to schools to decide who can enter and leave the property. The boom gates can be opened a number of ways, including through mobile phones, intercoms and coded touch pads.

"I think schools will definitely be installing more boom gates. We have been getting inquiries from all over Australia." ■

By Kat Donaghey, Editor

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When school safety goes 'boom'

BOOM gates can be an effective solution to control who enters a school.

Rotech has been providing fast, safe and secure vehicle and pedestrian access controls to industry since 1999 and is now servicing schools.

They offer a choice of automatic and manual boom gates that enable fast and secure vehicle access.

Solar-powered boom gates are another option for sites that do not have easy access to electricity.

Rotech director Alan Roberts says boom gates are increasingly sought

to prevent parents driving into restricted school areas,

The gates can be opened a number of ways such as a pin code or intercom to ensure only authorised vehicles can enter.

It takes about three seconds for the lightweight aluminium pole to raise, ensuring prompt access.

The gates can also be timed to remain closed during certain hours of the day.

Alan says schools should budget about \$5000 for a solar powered boom gate. ●



Rotech's boom gates, like this one at Mooloolaba State School on the Sunshine Coast, keep parents out of staff carparks.

Sign language of schools



When you walk through a school, signs help navigate the way.

But more than that, Signpac director Larry Wainstein says signs enable schools to promote their brand.

Signpac has been creating signs of all makes, sizes, and purposes for schools across Australia for more than 20 years.

The list of products include signs for antibullying, carparking, directions, scoreboards, welcome and cut-out school crests.

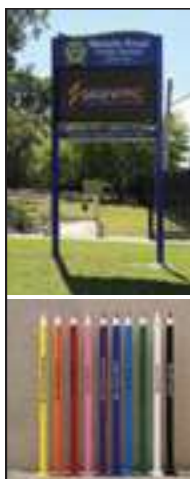
A popular current trend is digital signage using LED technology for up-to-the-minute messages that can be

posted without leaving the office.

The digital signs have full colour and photo image capability and can be controlled with a no cost WiFi system (and come with five years' warranty and ongoing technician back-up and service).

Larry says schools should consider signage to ensure the safety of students and visitors and communication but also for branding purposes.

"We understand what signage schools need and can help them change the face of their school" says Larry. Get more information at signpac.com.au. ●



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