

October 3, 2017

Dear Parents,

We would like to bring you up to date on what we have been doing to address some of the safety concerns regarding the construction in our neighbourhood.

We have been in contact with representatives from Activa and Mattamy Homes to share our concerns as well as looking at ways to address these concerns in a proactive manner. In my conversations with them, I want to assure you that they take the matter of safety seriously. They also wish to be a good neighbor to Groh Public School and families it serves. They recognized that safety of children would be a concern for everyone.

Activa initiated discussions with the Transportation Department of the WRDSB this past June, which led to Board-endorsed recommendations that they followed through on in preparation of the new school year.

Specifically, they

- Agreed upon a preferred travel route from the north that would lead people safely to and from the school;
- Constructed sidewalks to accommodate the preferred travel route

In addition, Activa constructed sidewalks to aid travel from the west beginning at Tall Grass Crescent. More recently, they have installed caution signage along high traffic routes, particularly on Blair Creek Drive, and are preparing additional signage to highlight and encourage the use of the recommended route. They are also communicating with the other builders to see if asphalt sidewalks could be laid on the four empty corner lots on Thomas Slee Drive to ensure students walk safely to and from school without going onto the road or through mud.

As well, Activa and Mattamy Homes have communicated with their construction team and trade partners to remind them of the importance of safety, "looking out" for pedestrians and being mindful of their actions, particularly during those peak school hours. They have assured us that this will be an ongoing initiative.

From the school's initiative, we have contacted our school board trustee Natalie Waddell, our city counsellor Yvonne Fernandes and constable Amar Rajansani who is the community liaison officer with the Waterloo Regional Police. Each of one of them is aware of our concerns and they are leveraging their influence with their respective agencies to ensure that our community needs are being heard and addressed.

In addition, as a school, we have trained some of our grade 6 and 7 students as trailblazers which we will be starting next week. These students will be wearing vests that indicate that they are from Groh Public School and will be walking the safe path to and from school. All of our Groh P.S. students who see our trailblazers are encouraged to walk with them. It is important to note that the trailblazers are not responsible for the children's safety, but they are there to provide assurance that there is someone who knows the safe path to and from school as well as feeling safe in a large group.

Finally, we are also asking parents to refrain from driving their children to and from school. The volume of vehicles that have been arriving at our school also contributes to the safety concerns. We are fortunate that we are living in a community where everyone has the ability to walk/bike their children to and from school – rain or shine. Walking/biking to school not only helps reduce the vehicular traffic but more importantly, it provides a healthy alternative to driving and you get to spend quality time with your children.

As you have read, as a community, we all bear responsibility to ensure the safety of our children. It is our hope that by all of us working together our students will be safe. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact me at the school.

Helmut Tinnes
Principal