



City of Phoenix
Street Transportation Department

STUDENT PICK-UP/DROP OFF PLAN GUIDELINES

While the City of Phoenix has no jurisdiction in school parking lots, what happens in a school parking lot often affects what happens on the streets near that school. By organizing a safe and efficient student pick-up/drop-off plan, conditions can be made safer for students while improving overall traffic conditions around the school. However, many schools do not have the experience or knowledge readily available to make these changes on their own. The City of Phoenix Street Transportation Department has a team that works exclusively with schools and can provide the advice and assistance to help schools develop their own pick-up/drop-off plans.

These guidelines are based on successful examples of pick-up/drop-off plans developed for schools such as Orangewood Elementary School at 19th Ave and Orangewood and Liberty Elementary School at 52nd St and Acoma.

The process to develop a successful student pick-up/drop off plan is a cooperative effort involving parents, school officials, and City staff. To get a plan started, the school officials and parents must:

- Be open to changes
- Assemble a group of willing parent/school volunteers
- Contact a Phoenix School Safety Specialist to schedule an observation

Procedure

1. City staff meets with parents and school officials during an arrival or dismissal time to observe traffic conditions. It is recommended that the observation take place during a time that school-related traffic is heaviest. The presence of a police officer is optional during this first observation. Parent volunteers or school officials may wish to video tape traffic conditions to help illustrate the concern to other parents and to preserve a “before” condition for comparison purposes.
2. Parents, school officials, and City staff should discuss options immediately after this observation. The plan should try to follow the following criteria as closely as possible:
 - a. There should be one pick-up/drop-off zone for all students.
 - b. The student pick-up area should be inside the parking lot and not along the street.
 - c. There should be only one lane of traffic for loading students. Loading students in two lanes of traffic simultaneously is not recommended.
 - d. There should be one moving lane adjacent to the loading lane to allow vehicles free passage through the parking lot, even at busy times such as dismissal.

- e. Vehicles waiting to load students in the loading lane must never be left unattended. The loading lane can never be used as parent parking, even for short-term stops. Anyone who must leave their vehicle for any reason must use a designated parking space in the lot. Because of this restriction, it is possible to utilize a fire lane for loading, as parking remains strictly prohibited.
 - f. The waiting area for all the students should be as close to the parking lot driveway exit as possible. Staff or volunteers should assist in loading students. They should also work to get individual students ready to be loaded before their vehicle has pulled up to the loading area.
 - g. Up to three vehicles along the curb should load simultaneously. Once all these vehicles have pulled away, the next group of vehicles pulls all the way forward to the end of the loading area.
 - h. It is not recommended to load more than three vehicles at a time. Loading too many vehicles slows the traffic flow because it requires some students to walk longer distances to get to their vehicles. Meanwhile, vehicles closer to the group of students will leave the parking lot, leaving a space in the loading area not being used.
 - i. "Stand-back" lines along the curb are helpful so students do not get too close to moving traffic.
 - j. The student loading zone must be separated from the school bus loading, as well as from walkers and bicycle riders.
 - k. Adult driveway monitors are needed where students are required to cross a busy driveway. Bicyclists should walk their bikes while on campus or when on the sidewalk adjacent to the campus. Scooters, rollerblades, and skateboards should not be allowed on campus.
3. The parking lot team should then decide how the plan will function based on their school's design. Before the new plan is implemented, the following preparations must be made:
- a. The school must allocate staff or volunteers to assist in the smooth operation of the loading plan. Their function is to assist the students during loading/unloading and to make sure that parents are not parking in the loading lane or loading students outside the designated area.
 - b. Traffic signs and pavement markings must be changed to reflect the new plan. The City of Phoenix will complete any work in the right-of-way. The school or district is responsible for work on the school property. The school must also purchase cones or vests for volunteers used in the plan.
 - c. The school must notify parents of the new loading procedures well in advance. This can be done through newsletters, flyer sent home with the students, announcements to students, announcements during PTO meetings, and information given out at school registration.

Other points to note:

- It is advisable to use a police officer to assist with the implementation of the new procedure during the first few days. Parents will need to be educated about the procedure and the presence of an officer should help keep traffic under control.
- Volunteers should wear bright safety vests when working so they are visible to drivers and look more official to the drivers and students. This should help increase compliance to their directions.

- Experience has also shown that parents are more willing to accept changes after a long break, such as at the beginning of a new school year or after winter or spring break.
- It is easier to train the students than to train their parents. It may help to provide incentives to the students of parents who follow the rules and help make the plan work. The children may have a positive influence on their parents.
- School officials and parent volunteers involved in the pick-up/drop off plan must always maintain a pleasant demeanor regardless of the negative attitude that may be shown by a parent.
- It is important that the procedure developed is implemented unchanged. Experience has shown that frequent changes to a plan can lead to parent frustration, possibly resulting in less desirable ways to pick-up/drop-off their students. This is not to state that once a plan is implemented that it cannot be changed. If a plan is not working efficiently, or if conditions at the school change, a City of Phoenix School Safety Specialist should be contacted.
- **Do not direct traffic in the street. Only a police officer has the authority and training to direct traffic in the right-of-way.**

For further information contact:

Donald Cross, Chief Engineering Technician – 602-534-2020

For Police enforcement contact:

Traffic Complaints Hotline – 602-534-SPEE(D)

This publication can be made available in Braille, large print, audio tape, or cassette tape upon request. Contact the Street Transportation Department at 602-262-6284 if you would like any of these services. Our TTY phone number is 602-256-4286.