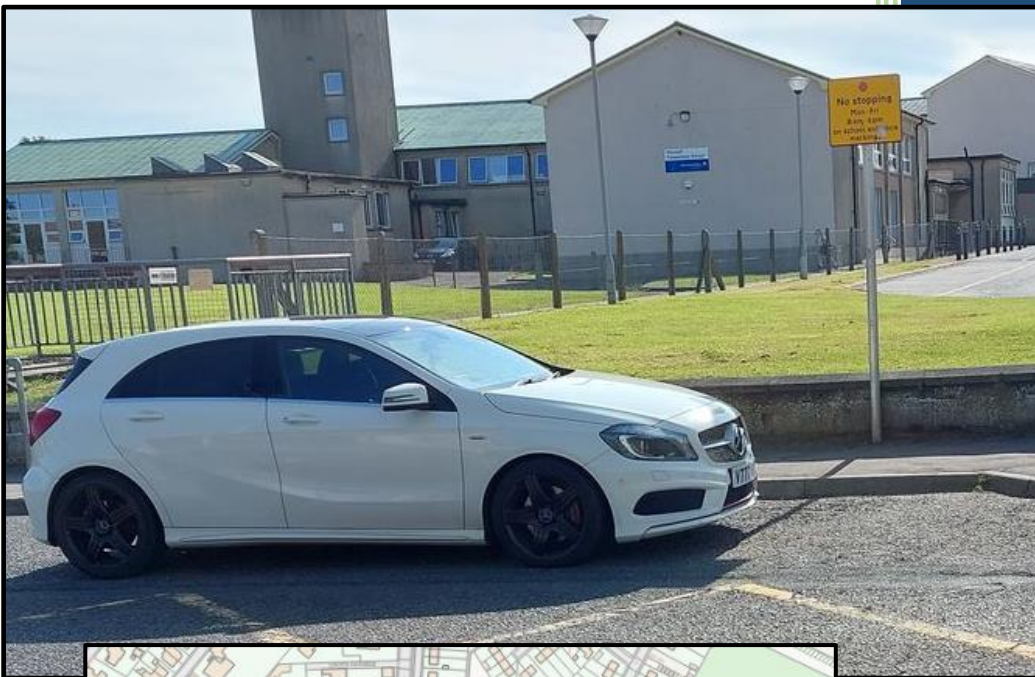


Scheme: Macduff
Primary School,
Macduff

MACDUFF PRIMARY SCHOOL Operational Safety Review



Aberdeenshire Council

04/10/2023

Operational Safety Review - Macduff Primary School

Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	The Review Team members were:	2
2.0	Collision History	3
3.0	Methodology.....	3
4.0	Observations	4
5.0	Recommendations	8

1.0 Introduction

A request to carry out a safety review at the drop-off and collection times outside Macduff Primary School and surrounding area, was received by the Road Safety Unit (RSU). The request was made by Macduff parent council following concerns for road safety that had been expressed by parents.

Macduff is a small coastal town in Aberdeenshire. The school frontages onto the B9026 which links the A947, through Macduff to Macduff harbour.

The purpose of this review is to assess the risk to road users in using the infrastructure at Macduff Primary School during start and end of the school day.

Assessments do not determine whether a route is “safe” or “dangerous”. All roads may be thought of as presenting some element of road safety risk, the assessment determines whether the route presents exceptional road safety hazards, or if the risk can be mitigated through practicable improvements that can be made to achieve a safer walk route and improvements to the school frontage.

Aberdeenshire Council considers that the most appropriate means of ensuring children can safely travel to school is through road safety education, and parents/guardians and schools are expected to educate children in such road safety matters from an early age.

The assessments are carried out as the child being accompanied by a responsible adult on their journey to and from school. If the child is walking unaccompanied then it is for the carer or parent to determine that their child has the skills to walk and cross our roads without supervision. The Council expects parents or carers to make suitable alternative arrangements if they are unable to personally accompany the child. Parents and carers are also responsible for ensuring that their children have suitable clothing and footwear for the conditions. Their clothing should be reflective or use other high visibility aids including torches etc. where applicable.

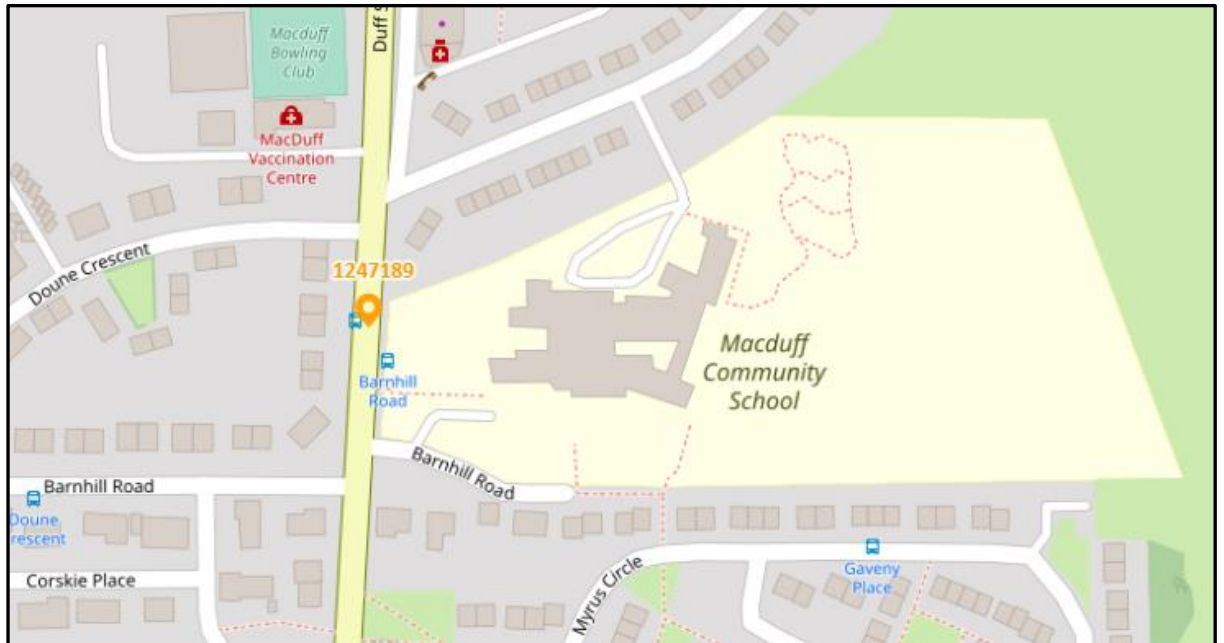
1.1 The Review Team members were:

Andrew Wilkinson *IEng MCIHT, HA RSA Cert Comp*
Principal Road Safety Engineer
and Auditor
Road Safety Unit
Infrastructure Services
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB

Richard Bailie *I. Eng MCIHT*
Road Safety Engineer and
Auditor
Road Safety Unit
Infrastructure Services
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB

2.0 Collision History

In the previous five years there has been one reported injury collision within the review area. This was a serious injury collision and occurred at 10:30 am on a Sunday and involved a five-year-old child running across the road without checking for oncoming traffic, and was then struck by an oncoming vehicle.



3.0 Methodology

A detailed road safety review took place on 20 June between 08:15 - 09:15 A.M period. The weather was warm, sunny and dry.

The scope of the review, carried out by members of the RSU, included the following:

- The school frontage activity
- Existing infrastructure
- Barnhill Road
- Engagement with community members

The issues noted in the following section are indicative and may be exacerbated during inclement weather where more people may choose to use their vehicles to take children to school.

4.0 Observations

The photographs and descriptions in the following sections will help to highlight particular areas of concern.

4.1 Existing infrastructure

B9026 Duff Street

- Duff Street, from the A947 to Barnhill Road is approximately 600m long, straight and wide.
- There are part time 20 mph signs at the south and north side of the school. They are in good condition and working.
- There are zig zag road markings on both sides of the road, they are slightly worn.
- There is a layby bus stop on the east side of the road, the layby extends behind the zig zag road markings.

Barnhill Road

- Barnhill Road is a residential street approximately 84m in length.
- Barnhill Road has a small turning head at the east end.
- At the east end of Barnhill Road is the access to the rear of the school where the playground is.

4.2 B9026 Duff Street - Observations

It was observed that on various occasions vehicles were stopping at zig zag markings, indicating a no parking area during specific hours. Where there are yellow zig-zag 'keep clear' markings on the road and a parking panel is present, it is illegal to stop during the days and times shown. The risk of vehicles parking in these locations is that it:

- creates traffic congestion at the school frontage during busy peak traffic times creating hazardous conditions for all road users increasing the risk of collisions.
- Parking on or around the zig zag markings may obscure forward visibility to the school crossing patroller or any pedestrians that cross out with the crossing patrollers assistance.
- Parking at the frontage may impede emergency vehicles accessing the school premises quickly during critical situations, which will delay response times and may further block the road for all vehicles.

The layout of the zig zags markings with the layby to the rear, creates an unusual situation that is not expressly covered in the traffic signs manual. However, the zig zag markings' purpose is to keep school frontages clear for the reasons stated above.

Operational Safety Review - Macduff Primary School



Picture 1



Picture 2

As can be seen in picture 3 below, it was also observed that during school drop off time a vehicle stopped in the vicinity of a bus stop. It is noted that a bus stop clear way road marking has not been installed. If there was one it would be an offence to park here. However, rule 243 of the Highway Code addresses this, among other relevant issues for the area, stating that:

- vehicles are not to stop or park:
 - near a school entrance
 - anywhere you would prevent access for Emergency Services
 - at or near a bus or tram stop or taxi rank
 - opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space.



Picture 3

The only pedestrian access to the school from Duff Street are steps with a baffle barrier at the top. This forces users with prams, wheelchairs or other accessibility restrictions to go to Barnhill Road, which has other issues with safe pedestrian access which will be addressed in the Barnhill Road section of this report.

Operational Safety Review - Macduff Primary School



Picture 4



Picture 5

There is a crossing patroller which helps with safe passage on Duff Street, although the crossing patroller expressed concerns with vehicle speeds and occasional times when drivers are not stopping or stopping very late. There is a slight crest in the road to the south of the crossing patroller position, however there is suitable advanced warning signage and good visibility from both directions.



Picture 6

4.2 Barnhill Road - Observations

There are some infrastructure issues in this area for people accessing/egressing the school or nursery on this road with pram, wheelchairs or other accessible reasons. The footway into the nursery car park stops at a blocked wall. There are also no dropped kerbs to assist with prams/wheelchair and mobility issues to cross the road safely. Additionally, the dropped kerbs would have tactile paving installed adjacent to them which assist visibly impaired pedestrians to cross the road at a safe location. It was also noted that the narrow access to nursery car park resulted in an informal give way system between vehicle drivers, whilst also there were vulnerable pedestrians in the area.



Picture 7



Picture 8

This lane was used by vehicle drivers to drop off children to then walk to the rear of the school for access. This access is as advised by the school. There is limited room for turning. During the site visit it was observed that one vehicle stopped in the turning area for approximately 15 minutes, making it even more difficult for other vehicles to manoeuvre, all while children were walking around the manoeuvring vehicles. This creates a serious road safety risk with small children walking around a tight road area with vehicles reversing. It was also witnessed at one point a vehicle over-riding the footway to get past another vehicle, due to the narrow road and the number of vehicles coming and going. It is essential for parents and guardians to follow traffic rules and be mindful of the impact their parking choices have on the overall flow of traffic and safety around the school area.



Picture 9



Picture 10

5.0 Recommendations

This school safety review is limited to the immediate area around the school and it is noted that speed limit reviews are not included in this review as this will form part of the wider speed limit strategy being undertaken by the Roads and Roads policy teams.

5.1 Initiatives

There are various initiatives available to assist in encouraging safe and sustainable travel to and from school which Aberdeenshire Councils Strategy Unit and Road Safety Unit will be able to assist with, such as:

- WOW (our walk once a week project)
- Park Smart
- Travel plans. Parents open night to present working together to solve the parking concerns
- Park and Stride initiative utilising nearby parking areas away from the school.
- Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO)

Having reviewed the previous three years Hands Up Surveys, conducted by Aberdeenshire Councils Strategy Unit, it appears that these initiatives are not currently being promoted through the school. From the table below it can be seen that the majority of pupils walk to school regularly. However, it should be noted that this number is decreasing every year with pupils being driven increasing. The nature of the wider area road network should have an impact on this figure with high density residential areas within the immediate catchment area allowing safe and accessible walking/cycling routes.

Initiatives				Survey Year	school roll	Mode of Transport (percentage)					
WOW	I-Bike	Park Smart	Travel Plan Launch			Walk	Cycle/ scooter	Park and Stride	Driven	Bus/ taxi	Other
				2020	304	61.1	0	9.1	24.2	5.7	0.0
				2021	304	54	0	19.0	23.0	4.0	0.0
				2022	295	46.2	1	18.3	29.0	5.5	0.0

5.2 Educational Options

Aberdeenshire Councils Transport Safety Education Officer can attend Macduff school to carry out a road safety presentation at assembly, covering the Green Cross Code. Further inputs by our Transport Safety Education Officer could be arranged, such as:

- Support in staff in delivering Bikeability
- JRSO scheme – getting message to parents through children.

5.3 Enforcement Options

Parking restrictions could be installed on Barnhill Road, particularly around the turning area to discourage the continual use of the narrow road, which is also one of the main pedestrian accesses, as a drop off area. As Aberdeenshire does not presently have decriminalised parking, all enforcement options would be reliant on Police Scotland's limited resources to enforce. However, if this issue is a habitual occurrence, we could recommend to Police Scotland that they visit the site to enforce the restrictions and encourage vehicle drivers to be more considerate to other road users. School engagement with parents/guardians who regularly park in these areas may be required to ensure they are aware of the potential risks parking in this area can cause.

5.4 Engineering Options

There are several recommendations we are making to improve local infrastructure that relates to safe road use in the vicinity of Macduff School, these include:

- Refreshing zig zag markings
- Install bus stop markings on bus stop on west side of road
- Install school zig zag markings on Barnhill Road
- Potential double yellow line parking restrictions on Barnhill Road
- Fill in gap with standard height footway in east side layby to ensure vehicles do not park behind zig zag road markings, but still giving sufficient space for bus to manoeuvre
- Create safer access to school by either installing dropped kerbs directing footway users diagonally from the footway at the car park access on Barnhill Road to the footway on the south side of Barnhill Road and/or-
- Continue footway into school grounds and taking it around the back of the car parking spaces.