



## AMHERST POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Schools in Amherst have started up and the Amherst Police Department will be diverting its attention towards school zones throughout the month of September as part of their monthly focus enforcement initiative. Officers will be watching again for motorists who are speeding through school zones in the Amherst area. The speed in school zones in town is reduced to 30 km/h when children are present. Often motorists are confused by what it means when “children are present”. This means children on the roadway or outdoors within 30 metres of highway. The school zone is in effect 365 days of the year and covers all hours of the day. Fines for speeding in a school zone 1-15 km/h over the speed limit will cost a driver a fine of \$340.21 and two points off their license. Motorists going 16-30 km/h over the limit will be fined \$455.21 and lose three points off their license. Over 31 km/h in a school zone will cost motorists a fine of \$685.21 and four points.

Traffic congestion issues have also been an issue of concern for the department. Police would like to remind motorists to pay attention to the parking signs that are in effect around each of the schools. The main issues that we have seen seem to be at Spring Street Academy Elementary School. Drop off zones are just that, to drop off the child and move on. Motorists who park their vehicles in these zones will be ticketed. We have had several issues with motorists parked on both sides of the roads on Charles Street and Academy Street which have caused vehicular traffic to be reduced to one lane only. There are many side streets where parents of children can park safely and then walk their kids to the school. Police officers will be present throughout the school year to make sure that the parking laws are adhered to. Parents are also reminded that no vehicles should be dropping off students in the parking lots of either elementary schools. These parking lots are for staff use only. The rule is intended to provide a safe area for students who walk through the parking lots.

Our Department will also be looking at school bus safety during this month. Throughout the school year, our department receives a variety of complaints of motorists failing to yield to school buses with their lights flashing. Whether driving towards a school bus or following behind it, a red flashing light on a school bus means STOP. Violators who fail to stop for a school bus displaying its flashing red lights will face a hefty fine of \$406.45 and lose six points off their license. Nova Scotia is kicking off a school bus safety campaign this year and the motto is “no one plans to run over a child when they pass a school bus”. School buses remain one of the safest modes of transportation for our children, however it only takes one incident which can change lives and communities forever. The school resource officer, Cst. Michelle Harrison and I will be passing out

pamphlets on this issue throughout the month and we do urge all motorists to keep an eye out for school buses whether they are in town limits or not.

While there are a lot of children who ride school buses on a daily basis, the majority of children in Amherst walk to their respective schools. Motorists must keep a watch out for this increased pedestrian traffic and be mindful for children darting in and out of roadways. Our department will be watching the crosswalks in the school zones and making sure that vehicles are yielding to the kids. Officers have also been urged to counsel any kids seen running in front of vehicles. It takes everyone in our community to make sure that we have a pedestrian/vehicle collision free school year. Motorists in school zones must be prepared to stop frequently in these zones especially during the times when the children are coming or departing from the schools.

Our department urges Amherst residents to call our office at 902-667-8600 if they see someone violating any of the above school zone issues. We hope that all Amherst students have a safe and happy school year!