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News Geelong

Safety concerns for young students walking on dirt road with no footpath to get to school

Parents are calling for council to fix a road near a Mount Duneed primary school, with students being forced to walk on a dirt strip with no footpath to get to their campus.

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Lauren McClure with daughters Emily, 7, and Ava, 11, with school friend Bodhi Perera, 11, in front of the muddy carparking areas that has no footpath. Picture: Brad Fleet

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Young students and their parents in Mount Duneed are being forced to walk on a dirt road with no footpath and “jump over” open drains to get to school.

Parents have raised safety concerns with Geelong council over the state of Williams Rd, where Mount Duneed Regional Primary School is located.

A footpath and 38 carparks run along the front of the school but turn into a narrow dirt strip.

Local mum Lauren McClure, who has two children at the school, said pick-up and drop-off were “utter chaos” and parents parked “wherever they possibly can” on both sides the dirt road.

She said parents who park there have to “straddle jump an open drain”.

“(There are) tree roots, there is no footpath and we’ve had numerous incidents of parents and kids falling over,” Ms McClure said.

“Last week a parent fell and injured her shoulder and wrist ... it’s slippery, it’s muddy.

“Mothers have fallen while carrying their young kids.”

South Barwon MP Darren Cheeseman has thrown his support behind the push for upgrades, but council said it did not have state government funding to for a new carpark.



(Left to right) Bodhi, 11, Emily, 7, and Ava, 11, are among students who have to walk on a muddy strip because there is no footpath to get to their school. Picture: Brad Fleet

Ms McClure said the situation was “just getting worse” over her six years as a parent at the school.

“(Council) needs to take some responsibility for this,” she said.

"I'm terrified to think what could happen ... there have been so many near misses.

"The school is doing the best it can, the principal is out there with his lollipop sign trying to make it as safe as possible for the kids."

Ms McClure said many students lived close enough to walk or ride their bike to school but there was "no safe way" for them to do so.

Mr Cheeseman supported a new petition for Williams Rd to be upgraded, which has received almost 600 signatures.

"The inaction of the City of Greater Geelong is insulting to students and their families who have had near misses with motor vehicles and are subject to dangerous road conditions daily," Mr Cheeseman said.



Parents have to park on the side of a dirt road to pick up and drop off their kids to school in Mount Duneed. Picture: Brad Fleet

City of Greater Geelong acting director of city infrastructure David Greaves said council has prepared concept plans and estimates for council-managed land at the rear of the school to be turned into a carpark.

"Unfortunately, no state funding to deliver this has been provided to date," Mr Greaves said.

"Roads servicing the school are scheduled for redevelopment as part of the ongoing construction of the Armstrong Creek Growth Area."

Mr Greaves said council added more parking and footpaths on Williams Rd in 2017.

To sign the petition to make the road safer for students, visit darrencheeseman.com.au/campaigns/safe-passage-for-the-families-at-mound-duneed-regional-primary-school.

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