



• Flinders Public School Kindy twins, 5-year-old Kale and Noah Fewings, and sisters, Jessica (Yr 6) and Alyssa (Yr 3) Hartgrove with Sen Const Jason Harrison. These kids are among the 40 per cent of students walking to and from school each day.

Getting kids to walk

FLINDERS Public School might only be two years old, but it already lays claim to two of the worst statistics in the Illawarra.

Its student population produces the lowest statistics for walking to school, while the parents produce the highest statistics for car usage in transporting their kids.

Yet principal, David Lewis, says positive participation in the Walk Safely to School program boosted walking from 30 per cent of the student population to more than 40 per cent.

He attributed this to the catchy slogan: Using Our

Feet To Give The Environment A Hand, a theme the school will promote again this year.

This year's campaign, which starts on Friday, should see this healthier alternative to car transport rise even more, he said.

However, Mr Lewis said local and governments and developers in newer areas, such as Flinders and Shell Cove, needed to pay greater attention to pedestrian infrastructure if more children were to walk safely to school.

"Footpaths have been provided in some areas,

and not in others," Mr Lewis said.

"We have main roads with no pedestrian crossings, and we have pathways that come close to fairly large bodies of water.

"Parents of very young children believe the threats to their kids getting to and from school safely outweigh problems associated in driving them."

Mr Lewis said that after last year's student and parent surveys, the school had been able to get footpaths built and completed in some streets, and for residents close to the

school to move their cars off footpaths and verges.

Sen Const Jason Harrison, of the Lake Illawarra Regional Command, said similar problems were also being experienced in newer areas of Dapto.

"Consistent pedestrian access is something councils and developers have to be aware of when they are layout our residential developments close to schools like Flinders," Mr Lewis said.

"However, we have been pleased with responses from authorities when shortcomings have been pointed out."