

# Fall on school walkway prompts local woman to give warning

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A slip and fall at a local public school has a Georgetown resident warning others to watch their step.

While walking her dog on the morning of Jan. 17, Sandra Scherbinsky came across Gardiner Public School and decided to walk through the back of the schoolyard. When she came to the fence, a patch of ice caught her by surprise, causing her to fall.

"I knew right away it was going to be bad because it's on a bit of a slope, and I knew even walking slow wasn't going to help, so I held on to the fence to try and make my way," Scherbinsky explained. "I got one step in and my foot slipped right out from underneath me."

While trying to get up, and obtaining injuries to her head and back, she noticed a sign posted on the fence stating the walkway is not maintained during the winter. Now, she's worried about the well being of others who frequent the route.

"There's two catwalks to two dif-

ferent streets leading up to that, so there must be a lot of students that go through that area to get to school every morning," she said. "That was not a pleasant fall. I just don't want anyone else to get hurt."

Dick Spear, Superintendent of Public Works, explained because the walkway is not paved, therefore it is up to the Halton District School Board (HDSB) to keep clear.

"This entrance to the school was brought to the school board ('s attention) last year or the year before about this walkway, in particular, because there's nothing there that goes into the school from there, it's just the yard," he explained. "We talked about the particular problems we would have when trying to maintain it. There's no concrete, there's no asphalt, there's nothing there, and there's nothing beyond that end of their schoolyard."

Spear suggested the school board pave a walkway so Public Works could take it over or to fence off the walkway completely during the winter months, but the school board insisted the signs would be enough.

"We pave all the routes to get to the school," he said. "We don't want to lead people to an unsafe location."

The issue first came up to the school board a couple years ago when people started to complain about the state of the walkway leading into the school.

"In the spring or summer of 2014, a parent group representing the school and community lobbied for a pathway there because the area was wet and muddy," Marnie Denton, HDSB Manager of Communication Services said.

"As a result of the discussions, some of the area was paved but the ground leading into the property was left out. "After that work was done, the sign was posted immediately to make people aware that are would not be maintained during the winter," she said.

Denton said the signs are there to warn residents walking to the schoolyard and to be careful when navigating the area.

"It's not a paved area at all," she explained. "There's a sign posted that clearly says that the area is not maintained during the winter."



A sign is posted warning residents that a school walkway leading to Gardiner Public School is not maintained in the winter, but a Georgetown woman believes that's not enough.

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