



Back to School Safety Checklist



Summer has come to an end and families are familiarizing themselves with the back to school routine as the start of another school year begins. Whether getting your child(ren) back into the school routine has become a familiar annual activity or this is a new experience for your family, the following checklist can help children have a safe school year.

Rules of the Road

- Review road safety rules with children. If a child walks to school, walk the route with him/her to identify landmarks and safe places to go if he/she is being followed or needs help.
- Teach children the importance of not accepting rides or any invitations from strangers, and to avoid shortcuts and isolated areas. Coordinate a buddy system with other children in the area who may also walk to school.
- Ensure children are aware of their surroundings: Do not walk and text. Do not cross or walk in the street while using an electronic device. Do not walk with headphones in their ears.
- If taking the bus to school, children should arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes before the scheduled pick up time. Children should never run after the school bus to try to catch it. If they miss the bus, suggest they go back home or report to a teacher.
- If riding a bike to school, helmets are the law. Ensure children have properly fitted cycling helmets. Hockey or other types of sports helmets are not legal for cycling. Helmet use is also recommended for children riding skateboards and other non-motorized modes of transportation.
- Motorists: SLOW DOWN - be aware of children walking on sidewalks and streets. When approaching a stopped school bus, with alternating red-lights flashing at the top, drivers must stop before reaching the bus, whether you are approaching from the front or rear. Vehicles must not proceed until the bus moves or the overhead red signal-lights have stopped flashing.

Staying Safe at School

- Check with the school to see what policy it has regarding posting names and photos online. Identifying/personal information should not be posted in a public forum. If photos are posted, they should be group photos that do not identify individual children in any way. Caution children about carrying or wearing items that visibly display their name.
- Check with the school what their emergency policy is. In an emergency, where will children be located, how parents will be notified, when and where will children and parents be reunited, etc.
- Ensure the child's school has up-to-date contact numbers for a parent/guardian, family member or trusted adult who they can contact in the event of an emergency. Ensure the child's school is updated on who the child can be released to. Teach children a pre-selected code word to be used by those who may be asked to give the child a ride.
- Discuss with children what to do if anyone follows, approaches or in any way bothers him/her. Include instructions to get away quickly and to tell a trusted adult. Teach children if anyone tries to take them away, they should yell loudly and make every effort to get away by kicking, screaming and resisting. Take time to update a child's identification, including having a recent photograph of the child, which can assist the police if a child goes missing.

Home Alone

- If a child goes home alone, make sure the rules for safety at home are clearly understood. Establish a policy where the child checks-in with a designated adult upon arrival at home. Ensure the child understands to have doors locked when home alone and not to open the door for strangers; whether they can use kitchen appliances such as the stove or microwave; whether they can have friends over.
- Teach the child what to do and who to contact in an emergency. Have emergency phone numbers posted close to the telephone. Include phone numbers for both parents, police/fire/ambulance, poison control and trusted adults the child can call for assistance.
- Establish a routine. Create a list of activities for the child to complete such as homework, chores, what snacks they can have, whether they can spend time online.

Teachable Moments

- Make time to connect with children at every opportunity. Be available to answer questions and offer assistance. Teach children it is okay to ask for help - use everyday scenarios to teach your child when and how to ask trusted adults for help.
- Be a role model for respect and inclusion, and physical and mental well-being. Use mistakes as learning opportunities. Mistakes offer opportunities to challenge oneself to learn or do something differently the next time in similar circumstances.