

# NEWS RELEASE



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## **Back to School Safety Series: School Bus Safety**

This is Part Two of the four-part series of articles by the Garden City Police Department addressing Back to School Safety issues. In last week's paper, we addressed Safe Driving Practices. If you missed last week's article, a copy has been placed on the Village website. This week's article will cover School Bus Safety. Parents, Grandparents, Guardians and Teachers are encouraged to use this article to help teach their children about School Bus Safety.

### **Bus Stops:**

- Hold your child's hand and walk together to the bus stop in the morning. Research has shown that until your child is at least 8 years old, you should hold their hand on the sidewalk and in parking lots. Furthermore, until they are 10 years old you should hold their hand while crossing the street.
- Ensure your child follows all COVID-19 protocols by wearing masks and social distancing.
- Stay with your child at the bus stop. If you cannot stay with your child, arrange for another trusted adult to accompany them.
- When waiting for the school bus, have the children wait in an orderly manner and standing well back from the curb.
- Meet your child at the bus stop after school. NEVER wait on the opposite side of the street. Talk to your child about what they should do if you are delayed and cannot meet them as usual.
- Discuss with your children what they should do if they accidentally get on the wrong bus or miss their regular bus stop.
- When children get off the bus they should use the handrail and look out the door to the rear of the bus before stepping off the bottom step. Research by the Pupil Transportation Safety Institute tells us that more and more vehicles are passing stopped school buses on the right shoulder - where the door is.

- Remember clothing can get caught. Jackets and sweatshirt drawstrings, backpack straps, scarves and loose clothing may get caught on bus handrails or doors. This could be dangerous while getting on or off the bus.
- Children should take five giant steps straight out from the school bus door and out of the danger zone.
- Teach your child to make eye contact with the bus driver, and wait for the driver to signal them before they cross in front of the bus.
- Remember to look both ways for traffic before crossing the street. Never assume cars will stop for the bus.
- NEVER go back for anything you left on the bus and NEVER bend down near or under the bus.

### **School Bus Behavior:**

- Enter and exit school buses in an orderly manner, using handrails where provided.
- After getting on the bus, go directly to your seat and remain seated, facing forward.
- It is important to listen to your bus driver in case there are any special instructions for your bus ride.
- Ensure your child follows all COVID-19 protocols by wearing masks, social distancing, and sitting in designated seats.
- Speak quietly to the other children near you.
- Do not jump up and down, fight or tease other passengers or make a lot of noise. These activities can bother the bus driver and he or she will not be able to give proper attention to driving.
- Keep aisles clear.
- Keep heads, hands, arms, feet and other objects inside the bus at all times.
- Never run or throw items inside the bus.
- Help keep the bus clean and in good condition. Report any unsafe or unsanitary conditions to the bus driver.

### **Motorist Reminders:**

Remember, if you are approaching a school bus either from the front or behind and its yellow lights are flashing, the bus is preparing to stop.

It is illegal - and very dangerous - to pass a stopped school bus when the large red lights located on the top of the bus are flashing. These flashing lights mean the bus is either picking up or discharging students.

If the bus's red lights are flashing, **YOU MUST STOP**, and remain stopped until red warning lights are off. This includes school buses that are on the opposite sides of divided highways, on multiple lane roadways, in parking lots and on school grounds.

The first time fine for illegally passing a school bus ranges from \$250 to \$400, 5 points on your license and/or 30 days in jail; subsequent violations carry fines ranging from \$600 to \$1,000, 5 points on your license and/or up to 180 days in jail.

The Garden City Police Department encourages residents to incorporate these safe practices into their lives to make this school year a safe one. Please remember to read Part Three of the Back to School Series, "Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety," next week.