



Mental Health and Recovery Services Board

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PRESS RELEASE
August 20, 2019
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Back to School Safety **Tips for Parents and Students**

This month, thousands of Ohio school children will be heading back to school. There will be more children, teen drivers and buses on the roads. With classes back in session, all drivers and riders should brush up on traffic safety.

School Bus Safety

Drivers

School bus safety involves a commitment from motorists, parents and children. From 2016 to 2018, there were 3,962 traffic crashes involving school buses in Ohio. Compared to the previous three-year average, the number of accidents in Ohio involving school buses declined; however, three fatal school-bus related crashes have already occurred in 2019. None of those killed in the fatal crashes were on a school bus.

Motorists are required to stop at least 10 feet in front or behind a school bus when flashing lights and an extended arm are displayed. Drivers are not allowed to resume driving until the school bus begins moving again.

If on a two-lane road, all lanes of traffic must come to a stop when a school bus is either picking up or dropping off students. If on a four-lane road, Ohio motorists are not required to stop when approaching a stopped school bus from the opposite direction.

Students

Children should arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.

Teach them to play it SAFE:

- Stay five steps away from the curb.
- Always wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the bus driver tells you to board.
- Face forward after finding a seat on the bus.
- Exit the bus when it stops and look left-right-left for cars before crossing the street. Your child should never walk behind a school bus; cross in front.

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Pedestrian Safety

Drivers

Drivers must be alert of their surroundings, looking for pedestrians everywhere. Often, young pedestrians are not where they should be or where you would expect them to be. If you're driving:

- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and stop well back from the crosswalk to allow other vehicles to see the crossing pedestrians so they can stop, too.
- Never pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk. There may be people crossing that you can't see.
- Follow slower speed limits in school zones and in neighborhoods where children are present.

Students

Walking to school is great exercise, but children under 10 years old should be accompanied by an adult or with someone who will make sure they walk safely. If you're walking:

- Use the sidewalk whenever possible, and if there isn't a sidewalk, walk on the edge of the street facing traffic.
- Use marked crosswalks to cross the street and look left-right-left for vehicles before crossing.
- Watch the road, not your phone.

Teen Driver Safety

For some teens, back to school also means the new-found freedom of driving. You should keep these tips in mind when driving to school:

- The car shouldn't move until everyone is buckled up.
- Follow the speed limit.
- Stay focused; remember that the phone stays down when you're driving and limit the number of additional passengers.

Safety on the roadway is a shared responsibility by drivers and students. Remember always to exercise caution while traveling to and from school. Together, we can make this school year safe.

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