

SAFETY REMINDERS

Pupil Transportation is the safest way to get your student to and from school. But getting to school safely and ready to learn, then home again takes the help of everyone on the bus. Here are a few things to share with your students to make the ride the best possible.

- Leave home early enough to arrive at your bus stop on time.
- Wear bright clothing and always walk facing traffic.
- Wait for your bus in a safe place - well off the roadway.
- Never stand, sit or play in or near the street.
- Enter your bus in an orderly manner, and take your seat.
- Follow the instructions of your bus driver.
- **R** Be alert to traffic when leaving the bus. **REMEMBER, UNDER STATE RULES, T**
GETTING STUDENTS SAFELY TO AND FR **OM THE BUS STOP AND FOR THEIR**
CONDUCT AND SAFETY WHILE WAITING AT THE STOP.

So, how do I help my student get to a bus stop safely, or walk/bike to school safely?

The Florida Department of Education has published a brochure to offer some suggestions and ideas. Charlotte County distributes this brochure to the schools at the beginning of each year to be share with students and parents. The brochure is also available here:

ARE WE THERE YET?: Staying Safe Between Home and School

Tips for School Bus Riders:

School officials, bus operators, parents, and students themselves are all responsible for ensuring that school bus riders follow these safety tips:

At the bus stop:

- Students and parents are responsible for safety and proper behavior going to and from the stop and while waiting for the bus.
- Students must stand off the roadway while waiting.
- Students must respect other people's property.
- Students must not push, shove, or engage in horseplay.

- Parents should supervise children at the stop if possible.
- Students must arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes prior to the scheduled pickup time.
- Students must wait for and get off the bus only at approved stop locations.

During loading and unloading:

- Always stay away from the 10 foot “danger zone” around the bus, except when you are directed by the driver to get on or off the bus.
 - NEVER pick up an object that you drop under or near the bus. Ask the driver for help.
 - Always be sure the driver can see you.
 - Make sure clothing and backpacks have no loose drawstrings or long straps that could catch in the handrail or bus door.
 - When you see the bus coming, stand at the stop and wait for the bus to come to a complete stop.
 - Always wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross the road and/or load into the bus.
 - When crossing a traffic lane, always look left, right, then left again; cross only if approaching traffic has stopped. Never walk behind the bus or along the side of the
- Only board your assigned bus, unless other arrangements are approved.

What is bullying?

Unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture by an adult or student that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment, cause discomfort or humiliation, or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation.

Where Does Most Bullying Occur?

As with most harmful behavior among children, in general bullying occurs wherever there is the least structure and adult supervision. Most incidents tend to occur on the playground, in bathrooms, in locker rooms, in cafeterias, in cyberspace, at bus stops, and in the school bus.

What Can Parents and Students Do?

Tips for Parents:

- ✓ Encourage your child to talk to you. Praise your child for positive communication and behavior.
- ✓ Provide/ensure adequate supervision.
- ✓ Teach your child to be assertive rather than aggressive or violent when confronted by a bully.
- ✓ Verify that consistent messages about rules and safety are practiced in your child's school and staff is trained in bullying prevention.
- ✓ Build a relationship with your child's teachers and administrators.

Tips for Students:

- Stay away from bullies.
- Tell an adult.
- Avoid bad situations.
- Make friends.
- If bullied, tell the bully to stop; then walk away.

Did you know that research shows that at least half of all bullying can be prevented?

Did you know that according to the National Mental Health and Education Center, direct, physical bullying increases in elementary school, peaks in middle school, and declines in high school?

Protecting Children from Sexual Offenders and Predators – Tips for Parents and Students:

Florida has the strongest laws in the country to protect its youthful citizens from being abducted. However, parents and children themselves are the first line of defense. Talk to your children about following these rules:

- Stay away from any unfamiliar person who is trying to trick you or force you to go with him or her.
- Let your parents and other trusted adults know about any suspicious persons or situations.
- Learn to describe people and

- Accept a ride only from someone approved by the school.
- Walk or bike only along a route that your parents or the school has determined is safe.
- Lock the door and never tell callers you are home alone.

For More Information:

If you want more information on staying safe between home and school, check out these websites:

Florida Department of Education School Transportation Office <http://www.fldoe.org/transportation>

Safe Schools Office <http://www.fldoe.org/safeschools>

Florida Department of Transportation Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Program
http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety/ped_bike/ped_bike.shtm

Safe Routes to School Florida http://www.dot.state.fl.us/Safety/SRTS_files/SRTS.shtm

Community Traffic Safety Teams (CTSTs) <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety/CTST/ctst.shtm>

Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FDHSMV; licensing and teen drivers)
www.hsmv.state.fl.us