

Report to PARENTS

Boost Bus Safety

Get your child on board with school bus safety! To avoid dangerous situations and accidents, students must follow bus safety rules and procedures. First, review your school's specific bus rules and procedures with your children. Then, make sure they understand these general bus safety principles.

Board the bus safely. Students should walk, not run, to the bus stop. While waiting for the bus, children should stay in a safe spot away from the road. Remind your child never to never speak to strangers at the bus stop. When the bus arrives, students should wait their turn to board and never push or shove on the stairs. Students should ask the driver for help if they drop something while getting on or off the school bus.

Follow the driver's rules. Explain to your child that drivers have to focus on the road to keep students safe. Distracting the driver, even for a second, could put all the riders in danger. Remind students to treat drivers with respect, and always follow printed rules or the driver's procedures—especially in case of an emergency.

Keep the bus calm and quiet. Students should find a seat quickly and stay in it. Many schools have a code of conduct for the bus—go over it with your child to make sure he or she understands the behaviors that are acceptable and unacceptable. Behaviors that might seem "cool" (waving one's arms out the window, for instance) can put your child's, and other children's, safety at risk. Enforce tough punishment if your child exhibits bad bus behavior. Students should never throw things on the bus or out the windows, or play with emergency exits. Make sure students know to use their "inside voices," and never play loud music on the bus.

Watch for bullying behavior. Alert the bus driver if students on the bus are harassing your child. School bus drivers are not counselors, but they are there to transport students safely. You can work with them to find a solution to problems.

Avoid the "danger zone." Children should wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before getting off, and use the handrails. When crossing in front of the bus, children should take five giant steps away from the bus, make eye

contact with the driver, and cross when the driver indicates that it's safe. Teach your child to look both ways before crossing, and to stay away from the wheels of the bus.

Listen and report. Remind your child to tell you if they notice something odd or unsafe on the bus, such as the driver seeming impaired or students bullying one another. If your child tells you about any inappropriate behavior, speak to your principal.



Web Resources

The **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** has a bus safety pledge students can take.
www.nhtsa.gov/parents/parents-bus.html

Visit **SafeKids.org** for factsheets on bus accidents and safety statistics.
www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/school-bus-safety

Your state's **Department of Transportation** website may have state-specific guidelines or activities related to bus safety.