

School Safety Tips

When school is in session, parents drive many of their children to school. Some children walk while some ride bicycles. With all those people, bicycles and cars moving every morning and afternoon, the need for safety is paramount. But every year people of all ages break the rules of the road. All of us could use a refresher course as the new school year draws near to help keep children safe!

Adult crossing guards and school safety patrols work to get children safely across the street. Please be on the lookout for children crossing the street and the crossing guards assisting them. Speed can also be a problem in school zones. Drivers should slow down and be observant in the 15 miles per hour school zones. "15 miles per hour school zones" means drive no faster than 15 miles per hour. Be alert to what is going on around you.

Pick up and drop off at schools can also cause confusion. Parents should never stop in the middle of the street in a traffic lane to let their children get out of the vehicle, or motion for their children to run across the street to get in. For the safety of the children, parents should park only where they can legally do so. Sometimes it is easier to pick a spot a block or two away to park and let the children out to walk the rest of the way.

You may not park in the following areas:

- Within 15 feet of an intersection or crosswalk.
- Within 4 feet of a driveway.
- Within 5 feet of a curbside mailbox.
- Where the curbs are painted yellow.
- Where a sign designates "no parking".
- No parking stopping or standing if a sign is posted, or 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. on school days on the near side of a through street next to an elementary or middle school.
- No parking in school parking lots unless authorized to do so.
- No driving into school parking lots to drop off or pick up children.

Safety for students walking or riding bikes

Parents should walk their children to school the first few days until they are comfortable going by themselves. Use the safe walk route found in each school's handbook. Teach children to cross the street at intersections and crosswalks only. When available, cross at intersections with adult crossing guards and school safety patrols. Never attempt to cross the street from between parked cars. Children should use the same exact route to and from school every day so parents can find them if the need arises.

Some schools have safe house programs to help children who are bullied, attacked, injured or who have other emergencies, including friendly stranger situations. The programs have a number of names, such as McGruff House, Helping Hand or Block House. All use some type of sign displayed in the house windows and are there to help children. For more information about school safety, call the Police Department at (608) 755-3133.