

As kids all across the DFW metroplex kick off the start of the new year, MedStar highlights the following tips from the National Safety Council for kids and parents to help avoid preventable injuries and prepare for any medical emergencies that may arise at school.



MedStar experienced a significant jump in pediatric auto-pedestrian crashes last year as school started, responding to 13 pediatric auto-peds between August 20th and September 19th compared to just 5 in July!

Emily Hill, a MedStar Paramedic Supervisor states “A *pediatric auto-pedestrian crash is one of our most heart-breaking calls. Kids are very fragile and these crashes too often have devastating outcomes*”. “*Drivers, please stay alert, and parents, teach your kids how to be careful while going to or from school*”, explains Hill.

We encourage our community to heed these tips to help prevent a repeat of last year.

Preparation:

Parents, do a ‘dry run’ with your kids – walking to school or to the bus stop, walking home, etc. Review the safety tips with them. If your child has medical issues, be sure the school is briefed on your child’s medical condition, emergency contacts and to which hospital you would like your child transported to in the event we are unable to reach you in an emergency.

Waiting for the Bus:

- Do not stray onto the street, alleys or private property
- Line up away from the street or road as the bus approaches
- Wait until the bus has stopped and the door opens before approaching the bus
- Use the handrail when boarding

Walking to the Bus Stop or to the School:

More school-age pedestrians have been killed during the hour before and after school than any other time of day, according to NHTSA. And, although drivers are required by law to stop for a school bus when it's loading or unloading passengers, they often don't. Children should not rely on them to do so.

- Always walk on the sidewalk if one is available; if a child must walk on the street, he or she should face oncoming traffic
- Look left, right, then left again before crossing the street
- Never walk while texting or talking on the phone

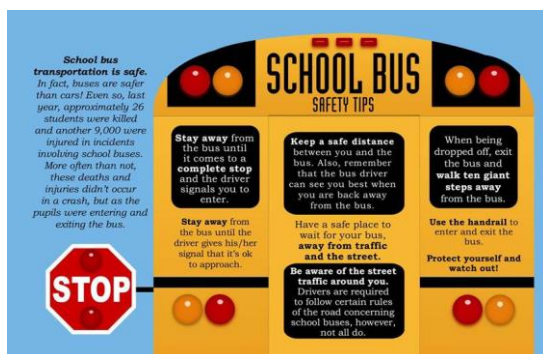
- If texting, move out of the way of others and stop on the sidewalk
- Do not walk with headphones on
- Be aware of the surroundings
- Cross only at crosswalks
- Never cross the street while using an electronic device

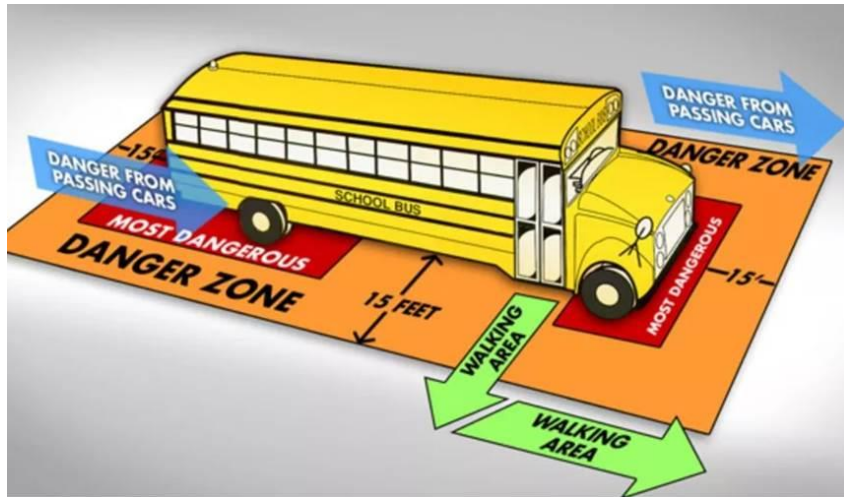
Tips for a Safe Bus Ride:

- If seat belts are available on the bus, buckle up
- Don't speak loudly or make loud noises that could distract the driver
- Stay in your seat
- Don't put your head, arms or hands out the window
- Keep aisles clear of books and bags
- Get your belongings together before reaching your stop
- Wait for the bus to stop completely before getting up from your seat

Getting Off the Bus:

- Use the handrail when exiting
- If you have to cross in front of the bus, first walk at least 10 feet ahead until you can see the driver
- Make sure the driver can see you
- Wait for a signal from the driver before crossing
- When the driver signals, look left, right, then left again. Walk across the road and keep an eye out for sudden traffic changes
- If your vision is blocked, move to an area where you can see other drivers and they can see you
- Do not cross the center line of the road until the driver signals it is safe
- Stay away from the rear wheels of the bus at all times





Map it out. Plan out your child's walking route with them ahead of time. Review street names and landmarks to help orient them.



Road rules. Make a fun and interactive game out of guessing the correct traffic signs and meanings with your child.



Set a good example. Never jaywalk or run to cross the street. Where possible, cross at intersections with a pedestrian crossing light or marked crosswalk.



Look. Teach your child to make sure all vehicles have stopped before entering the road. Show them how to make eye contact with drivers before crossing, even when the walk signal is on.



Listen. Make a habit of putting away all electronic gadgets/ear buds etc. while you're walking, so you can hear approaching traffic that may be hard to see.



Be seen. Make sure your child is wearing bright clothes and/or reflective gear especially at night and in poor weather.



Railway crossings. Only cross railway tracks at designated signals or signs and watch your step. Discourage play around or on railways.



Parked vehicles. Avoid shortcuts through parking lots or around parked cars where it's harder for drivers to see small children.

