

Safe Routes to School Transportation Safety Guidelines



A parent guide to help create a safe environment
for children traveling to and from school.



Let's be **Safe**, **Respectful**, and **Responsible**!

Pedestrian Safety

Be Safe

- **Look both ways.** Before crossing the street, children should be taught to look to their left, to their right, and to their left again to ensure it is safe to cross.
- **Use the crosswalk.** Children should always cross a street at a crosswalk. Motorists are not expecting pedestrians to cross mid-block or outside of a crosswalk.
- **Stop at the edge.** Teach children to be aware of 'edges', or locations where they may come into contact with cars, such as corners, driveways, and street crossings.
- **Be visible.** Children should make eye contact with drivers before approaching edges such as driveways, crossing the street, or walking in front of cars to ensure motorists see them.

Be Responsible

- **Share out loud.** Read aloud to your child/ren the recommendations in the 'Be Safe' Section above.
- **Model safe behavior.** As a parent/caregiver, being a role model for your child/ren is one of the best ways for them to learn how to be safe as they walk to and from school. Always teach by example!
- **I.D. your route.** Some schools have neighborhood maps with suggested walking routes. These maps highlight the location of crosswalks, stoplights, and stop signs. It is recommended that you review this map to select a walking route to school. If a map is unavailable, walk the route in advance and then practice walking with your child/ren before they walk on their own.
- **Form a 'Walking School Bus'.** Coordinate adult volunteers to pick up students at designated stops and walk to school together. Visit <http://www.walkingschoolbus.org> for more information.
- **See the world like a child.** Children are *not* 'small adults'. It's important to understand children's limitations in understanding traffic. Children:
 - Have a narrower field of vision than adults, about 1/3 less.
 - Cannot easily judge a car's speed and distance.
 - Assume that if they can see a car, its driver must be able to see them. However, children are easily hidden from view by parked cars and other objects.
 - Cannot readily tell the direction a sound is coming from.
 - May be impatient and impulsive.
 - Concentrate on only one thing at a time. This is likely not to be traffic.
 - Have a limited sense of danger.
 - Often mix fantasy with reality.
 - Imitate the (often bad) behavior of others, especially older children and adults.

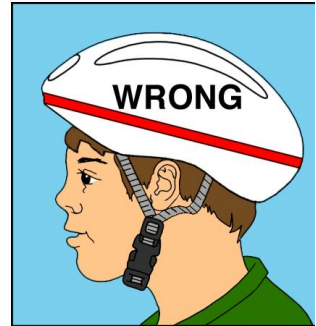
Be Respectful

- **Be courteous of others.** Always obey school rules, traffic signs and signals and be aware of other users of the roadway, including bicyclists and motorists.

Rolling Safety for Bikes, Boards, Scooters and Skates

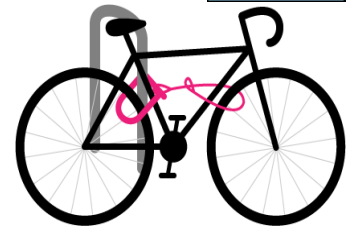
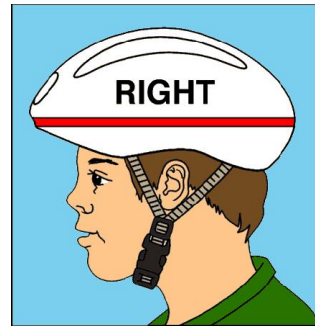
Be Safe

- **Wear a helmet** when you bike, board, or skate. Teach your child/ren to wear and adjust their own helmet and make sure it is the proper size.
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/injviosaf/traffic/Documents/BikeHelmetSPAN01-VOSP.pdf>
Helmets for children under 18 are required by law. If your child needs a helmet please contact Making Headway, or Humboldt County Public Health.
- **Be visible.** Bright clothing, lights, and reflective gear will help motorists see your child rolling to and from school.
- **Keep gear in good repair.** Make sure your child's bike and helmet are the correct size. Be sure the brakes work on their bikes, boards, scooters, and skates.
- **Two shoulder the load.** Teach your child/ren to carry books, lunch, school supplies in a backpack or on their bike rack in order to maintain balance and ride with both hands.



Be Responsible

- **Identify the route.** Use a map to determine a safe route in advance then ride or roll to school with your child to teach them the way you would like them to get to and from school. Practicing together is fun and will help make both of you more comfortable.
- **Follow the law.** Your child/ren **must** wear a helmet, ride in the same direction as traffic and obey all traffic signs and signals.
- **Hop off.** Children should always walk bikes, skateboards, and scooters across crosswalks and at school.
- **Lock up.** Children should lock their bikes in the rack for the entire day.
<http://www.chicagobikes.org/public/theftprevention.php>
- **Form a "bike train."** Work with other parents and adult volunteers to create a schedule for riding to and from school together from your neighborhood.
- **Teach by example.** Children learn by example. Share with them the fun and excitement of getting around under their own power safely.



Be Respectful

- **Roll with respect.** Teach your child/ren to obey the traffic laws and school rules for rolling. Remember, bikes and boards always make way for walkers.

Bus Rider Safety

Be Safe

- **Walk with caution.** Use safe pedestrian skills on your way to and from the bus stop. Refer to your school's suggested walking route map and select the safest route to get to and from your child/ren's stop.
- **Wait at your stop.** Wait at the stop and do not step into the road at any time.
- **Wait until the bus stops.** Do not move towards the bus until the bus has stopped completely. Wait until the door is open and riders have exited to approach the door.
- **Stay seated.** Take the nearest available seat and stay seated. Wear the seatbelt if the bus is equipped with seatbelts.

Be Responsible

- **Be on Time.** Allow yourself enough time to be at your designated school bus stop in advance of when the bus arrives.

Be Respectful

- **Roll with respect.** Keep the bus clean and do not damage the bus in any way. Treat your driver with respect and follow their instructions.
- **Keep your hands and feet to yourself.** Mind your own business and keep hands and head inside at all times.
- **Use a quiet voice.** Do not yell or speak loudly inside the bus.
- **Bus stops are smoke-free zones.** Refrain from smoking at or near bus stops.



Driver Safety

Be Safe

- **Buckle up.** Secure everyone in your vehicle with seatbelts and make sure that children under 8 years old or under 4'9" tall are properly fit to a car seat or booster seat.*
- **Obey speed limits.** Drive slowly and carefully and use extra caution during arrival and dismissal. Obey the 25 mph school zone on Park Street.
- **Talk to your kids, not on the phone.** It is better to enjoy a conversation with child/ren than to talk or text on a cell phone. Using a cell phone while driving is a dangerous distraction and it is against the law to text while driving in California.
- **Use caution when backing up.** You have limited visibility behind you and may not see a child.
- **Look out for school buses.** Children are often exiting and entering buses. Never pass a school bus that has red lights flashing or their stop sign displayed.
- **Place car seats correctly.** To have a certified technician fit your child/ren to a car seat please contact Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services at 707-268-2132.

Be Responsible

- **Know the plan.** Some schools have developed guidelines for dropping off and picking children up from school in private vehicles. Make sure you know and understand the safest and most efficient ways to drop off and pick up their children from school.
- **Form a car pool.** Car pooling is a great way to:
 - Save on gas
 - Help the environment
 - Reduce traffic congestion
 - Give yourself a break!

Be Respectful

- **Use remote drop-offs.** A good way to avoid the traffic at school in the mornings and to get beneficial physical activity is to drop off your children a few blocks away from school and then walk with them the rest of the way or let them walk in with friends.
- **Park in designated spaces.** Please park only where you are supposed to! The red zones exist for the safety of your child. Never double park, do not park in red zones, and do not block the path of other vehicles. *White zones are for loading and unloading only.* Do not leave your vehicle unattended in a white zone.
- **Leave Early.** Plan ahead to reduce stress and the urge to drive too fast.
- **Be courteous of other travelers.** Obey all the rules of the road and look out especially for bicyclists and pedestrians. Let's work together to get everyone to/from school safely.
- **Turn off your engine when you can.** Turn off your car while waiting and take a breath of fresh air! An idling car still emits harmful fumes that pollute the air and are dangerous to breathe in.