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**School bus safety**

**Kids are almost back in school!**

School buses are the safest mode of motorized transportation for getting children to and from school, but injuries can occur if kids are not careful and aware when getting on and off the bus.

Let’s work together to keep kids safe while riding a school bus.

**For kids:**

- Stand at least three giant steps from curb while waiting for the bus.
- Use handrails while boarding and exiting bus.
- Be careful of straps or drawstrings that could get caught in the door.
- If you drop something, tell the bus driver.
- If you need to cross the street after exiting a bus, take five giant steps in front of the bus and make eye contact with the bus driver before crossing the street.

**For drivers:**

- Follow speed limits and slow down in bus loading/unloading areas.
- Stay alert for kids walking to and from buses.
- Stop when driving near a bus that is flashing yellow or red lights.
Heads up, devices down

Did you know that the pedestrian death and injury rate among older children and teens is now twice that of younger children? This increase is believed to be related to distractions caused by the use of electronics and handheld devices while walking. Distracted pedestrians are less attentive to traffic and have accidents and near-accidents with vehicles.

Avoid these dangerous behaviors while walking:
- Talking on the phone.
- Texting.
- Playing handheld gaming devices.
- Using ear buds or headphones.

Other top tips for pedestrians:
- Always stay alert and be aware of your surroundings.
- Remind children of ALL ages the basics of pedestrian safety
  - Cross at crosswalks, obeying traffic signals.
  - Look both ways and listen, before stepping off the curb.
  - Walk, don’t run while crossing the street.

Backpack safety

Book bags and backpacks are part of a student’s wardrobe. When used incorrectly, backpacks could injure your child’s muscles and joints, which can lead to severe pain and other problems.

When selecting a backpack, look for the following features:
- Two wide, padded shoulder straps. A single strap does not distribute weight evenly.
- Lightweight. Lighter bags decrease the total load weight on the back.
- Rolling backpack. A good choice for students who must tote a heavy load.

Tips to prevent injury:
- Always use both shoulder straps to distribute weight evenly and decrease muscle strain.
- Tighten the straps so that the pack is close to the body and two inches above the waist.
- Pack light. The backpack should never weigh more than 10 to 20 percent of the student’s total body weight.
- Organize the backpack to use all of its compartments. Pack heavier items closest to the center of the back.
- Use school lockers to store books between classes.
- Bend using both knees. Do not bend over at the waist when wearing or lifting a heavy backpack.

For more information, contact Safe Kids at 859-323-1153 or visit www.safekidsfayettecounty.com.

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