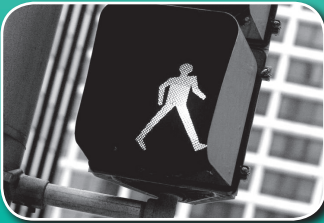


CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SAFE PASSAGE



Building Safe Schools
and Communities

School Number _____

School Bus Company _____

School Bus Number _____

Site Pick Up Number _____

SAFE PASSAGE

Building Safe Schools and Communities

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Walking to School.....	4
Riding the Bus	7
Driving Children to School	10
Bicycle Safety	11
Special Situations.....	12
Tips for Improving Home and Neighborhood Safety.....	13
Tips for Building Safe Communities	15
Tips for Principals.....	17
Important Telephone Numbers	19

SAFE PASSAGE

Building Safe Schools and Communities

Introduction

Keeping children safe once meant teaching them not to talk to strangers and to look both ways before crossing the street. Recent events of violence in schools challenge us to form a parent-student-school partnership which ensures not only that the passage to school is safe, but also that schools remain safe havens for all children.

The Chicago Public Schools has launched the Safe Passage program to increase children's safety as they come and go each day. This booklet offers helpful tips to parents, children, and principals to keep children safe on their way to and from school, in their homes, in their neighborhoods before and after school, and throughout the school day.

Of the nearly 410,000 public school children in Chicago, a significant percentage walk to school. A large city like Chicago can present many dangers to children, especially elementary school children. There are major streets with heavy traffic and many lanes to cross. There are viaducts to pass under, railroad tracks to cross, commercial and industrial areas with truck traffic. Some intersections have lights; some have stop signs; many have neither. The Chicago Police Department provides crossing guards at major intersections, but children have to cross other streets that lack crossing guards. Getting to school in the morning, then, can often be hazardous.

Currently, approximately 22,000 students receive student bus transportation to Chicago public schools. Riding the bus has its own hazards, which students and parents can take steps to avoid.

We hope this booklet will help make every child's trip to and from school safe and pleasant, and create schools that are truly safe havens where our children can grow as individuals and acquire the skills necessary for further academic study or employment.

Walking to School

There are some important lessons to teach your child about walking to school. Before the start of the school year, you should work out the safest route and walk this route with your child both to and from school, pointing out things to watch out for and showing him/her the correct way to cross each street. If your child is going anywhere after school other than home, make sure he/she informs a family member. Get the name of the friend being visited and a phone number where he/she may be reached. If your school has a Parent Patrol, introduce your child to the Parent Patrol members.

If many children in your neighborhood take the same route to school, you can organize a Walking School Bus program among the parents. The children will walk to school in a group, with one or more parents accompanying them. Starting with the child living farthest from the school, the group will pick up children along the route as it moves. After school, one or more parents will be at the school to lead the group home.

You may also join a Parent Patrol. The presence of a Parent Patrol around a school can deter criminal activity and reduce dangers from traffic. The program also gives parents a role in the school and community. It is also helpful for children to see adults as good role models. If your school does not have a Parent Patrol, contact the principal and express your support for starting the program.

General Safety Tips

You should share the following general information or warnings with your child, along with any specific facts about the route:

- Never talk to strangers. Never accept rides from strangers. If someone you don't know offers you a ride, run away from him/her. Run to where there are other people. When you get to school, tell your teacher or principal. When you get home, tell your parents about what happened.
- If a stranger tries to grab you, fight against him/her and yell, "Help! This is not my mommy (daddy)!"
- Look for and obey the traffic lights. Cross the street only when the sign says WALK. If there is not a WALK/DON'T WALK sign, then cross only on the green light.
- Watch out for cars making right turns on a red light.

- Always look both ways before crossing the street—look left, look right, look left again—then proceed carefully.
- Walk, don't run across the street. If you fall, you might not be able to get up in time.
- Always cross at the corner. Don't cross in the middle of the block or walk in between parked cars.
- Wear bright, reflective clothing, especially during the darker winter months.
- Pay attention to traffic sights and sounds. Don't wear headphones or talk on a cell phone on the way to school.
- Stay alert at all times while walking. Accidents happen most often when we are not paying attention.
- Always follow the designated route to school. Stay out of alleys and stay away from any abandoned buildings.

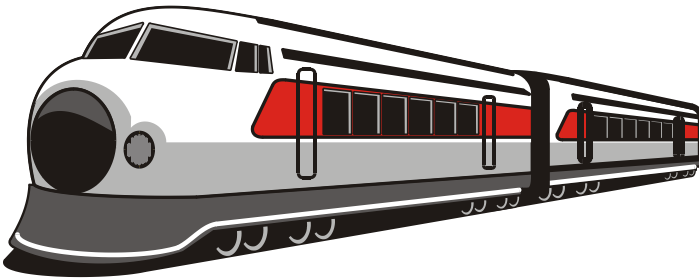
Railroad Grade Crossing Tips

When children are crossing railroad tracks, it is very important that the following safety guidelines be followed:

- Cross tracks **ONLY** at designated pedestrian or railroad crossings. Observe all warning signs and signals at railroad grade crossings or near railroad tracks.
- Never walk around lowered gates or past flashing lights. It's illegal and dangerous. If you suspect a signal is malfunctioning, and it is a non-emergency, dial 311; they will connect you to the railroad. If there is danger to life or limb or if police are needed, dial 911.
- Do not wear headphones when near railroad tracks and/or crossings.
- Never try to race a train to the crossing.
- Expect a train on the track at any time.
- Always watch out for a second train when crossing multiple tracks.
- Trains cannot stop quickly. It can take a mile or more to stop a train once the emergency brakes are applied. When the engineer can see you, it is already too late to be able to avoid a collision.
- **DO NOT** walk on or play near railroad trestles or rails. There

is only enough clearance on the tracks for a train to pass.
Trestles are not meant to be sidewalks or pedestrian bridges.

- DO NOT attempt to hop aboard railroad cars or equipment at any time.
- Be extra alert at night or in bad weather.
- Railroad tracks, trestles, train yards, and equipment are private property and trespassers are subject to arrest and fines.

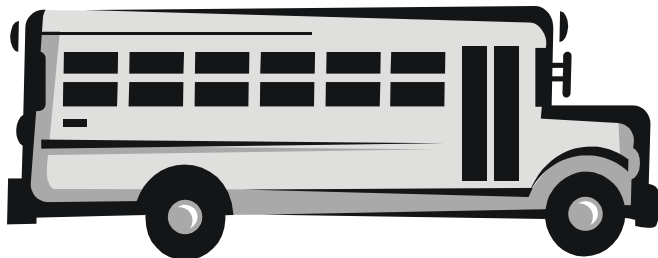


Riding the Bus

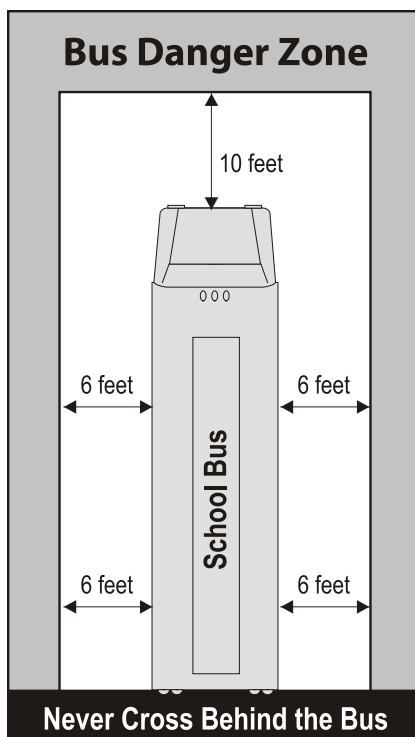
If your child rides a school bus each day, there are several things that you can do to help him/her avoid dangers. If he/she walks to the bus stop, your child should follow the guidelines identified in the “Walking to School” section on page 4). The following provides recommendations for both parents and students to ensure safe bus passage.

Responsibilities for Parents:

- Find out where your child’s pickup and drop-off site is and have him/her there about five minutes before the pickup time.
- Keep the school informed when your child will not be on the bus.
- Make sure your child has his/her schoolwork, backpack, etc., ready before the bus arrives.
- If there are several children at the bus stop, you might be able to take turns with other parents waiting with the children in the morning.
- Bus drivers are to drop children off only at their pickup spot. Do not ask the bus driver to drop your child somewhere else.
- While waiting at the bus stop, your child should stay at least six feet from the street curb.
- Teach your child to not run alongside the bus while it is moving, and to never run after the bus if it leaves the stop without him/her.
- Instruct your child to be very careful when getting on and off the school bus; to cross only in front of the bus; and to look left, right, and then left again for traffic when crossing the street.



- Most accidents occur when the bus driver cannot see a child. Your child must stay out of the bus Danger Zone [Illustration]: six feet on both sides of the bus and ten feet in front of the bus. Instruct your child to NEVER walk behind a school bus and to never stop to pick up anything in the bus Danger Zone. He or she must wait until the bus has left before the item is picked up.



- Children can be injured if their clothing gets caught on the bus handrail or in the door. Jacket or sweatshirt drawstrings, backpack straps, scarves, or other loose clothing can be especially dangerous. Make sure your child understands the importance of dressing safely.
- Instruct your child to tell the bus driver, an administrator, counselor, or teacher if any student has a weapon or has been speaking or behaving erratically.

Responsibilities for Students:

Children should behave properly while riding the bus, and in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct of the Chicago Public Schools. For everyone's safety, children are expected to obey the following rules:

- Respect property at the bus stop.
- Sit in the seat assigned by the driver or school staff.
- Always wear your seat belt.
- Stay in your seat at all times and, to avoid falling, get up **only** after the bus has come to a complete stop.

- Do not open windows without the driver’s permission. **Windows must never be opened more than three inches.**
- Always listen to the directions of the driver, especially in emergency situations.
- Do not talk to the driver unless absolutely necessary.
- Always be quiet on the bus when it stops at railroad crossings.
- Do not ask to be dropped off anywhere other than the regular bus stop.
- Keep the aisles clear at all times and help keep the bus clean.
- Never throw anything out of the bus window.
- Always keep your head, hands, and arms inside the bus.
- Do not touch the emergency doors or the fire extinguishers.

Guidelines for Emergencies

In case of an emergency on the bus, your child should know what to do. The following are the most important general rules:

- Stay calm.
- Listen to the directions of the bus driver.
- If told to get off the bus, leave quickly and safely.
- Whenever possible, leave the bus from the front door.
- Use the rear emergency door only when it is safer to do so.
- Move at least 100 feet away from the bus to a safe location.
- Stay with your group and do not cross the street unless directed to do so.
- Check to see if the student assigned to sit next to you got off the bus. If he/she is missing, inform the bus driver.
- If you are hurt, tell the bus driver, police, or paramedics as soon as possible.

Driving Children to School

Some parents prefer to drive their children to school themselves. If you do, there are some safety measures you can take that will help your child and other children as well.

Parents can unintentionally cause problems by:

- Double parking and blocking traffic;
- Getting in the way of school buses;
- Dropping children off in the middle of the street or on the side of the street opposite to the sidewalk of the school entrance; or
- Failing to observe loading zones and parking regulations.

Problems become worse during bad weather. Your school should have a plan for reducing traffic congestion around the school during arrival and departure times. Ask your principal. If there is no plan, urge the principal and the Local School Council to draw one up. It will help protect the lives and health of the children. Plans should ensure that children being dropped off by parents/guardians or school buses do not need to cross other traffic to enter the school.

The following can help to ensure that children arrive at school safely:

- Children (and adults) should always wear their safety belts and utilize cell phone earpiece when talking and driving. It is the law in Illinois. More importantly, it can save your child's life or protect him/her from serious injury.
- If your car is equipped with a passenger side air bag, any child under the age of 12 should ride in the back seat. While air bags can and do save lives, they can also be harmful to small children.
- Children should be careful when exiting an automobile. Always let your child out on the sidewalk side of the school so that he/she does not have to cross the street to enter the school.
- Make sure your child is alert when walking near or around other vehicles. Doors might be opened or "parked" cars might suddenly back up.
- Arrange to pick up or drop off your child in a safe area, away from the congestion of cars and buses.
- Do not block intersections, cross-walks, or areas designated as School Bus Loading Zones.

Bicycle Safety

When riding a bicycle to school or in their neighborhood, children should follow these safety rules:

- Choose a safe cycling route to school. Stay away from high traffic routes and fast-moving vehicles. Watch for other vehicles sharing the roadway.
- Wear a helmet every time you ride your bike. Wear bright, reflective clothing that will help others see you in the roadway or on the sidewalk.
- Always obey the same traffic laws as other vehicles do when traveling on a roadway. Travel with the flow of traffic when traveling on a roadway and always use the proper hand signals to indicate turns and stops.
- When riding through an intersection, look left, right, and left again and only continue through when it is safe to do so.
- When riding on the sidewalk, yield to pedestrians and always be careful when riding near other children.
- Don't ride a bicycle after dark unless it is equipped with an adequate lighting system that can be seen by other vehicles.



Special Situations

Student Absence

If your child is going to be absent from school for any reason, **please let your bus company know as early as possible. You should also call the school.**

Late Bus

Occasionally, a bus may be late because of traffic, weather, or other problems. **If your child is being picked up at a school, tell him/her to wait there for the bus.** Children should not leave the school grounds unless told to do so by the principal at the sending school.

Missing the Bus

If your child misses the bus in the morning, he/she should go into the site pick-up school for the day. School staff should inform your child's school that he or she is spending the day there. You may also be called and told by the school where your child is spending the day.

Illness at School

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be called at once. Please make sure that the school has a phone number where you can be reached during the day. If you are unable to come to the school, your child will be kept at the school until the regularly scheduled departure time. If your child becomes seriously ill, he/she may be taken to a hospital and you will be called immediately.

Traffic Accident

If your child's bus is involved in a traffic accident, you will be called and given all available information.

Buddy Up

Encourage the use of the "buddy" system for children going to, and coming home from, school. Whether walking or riding to school, two young people are not as open to danger as one may be.

- Your child should pair with another young person (preferably if they are in the same grade and classroom) for the purpose of creating a safer walk or ride to and from school. Two people following all the rules of safety create a strong web of security.
- Buddies who ride school buses can remind each other of safety violations (not wearing seat belts, being in the Danger Zone, etc.), as well as provide support for each other in the

event of unforeseen circumstances.

- A buddy can also inform the bus driver or bus attendant if a child has fallen asleep and may miss his/her stop.

Neighborhood Safety

The first step for parents in safeguarding your child is to acknowledge your personal concerns and anxieties about safety issues. The next step is to identify potential risks and give clear instructions to your child about how to avoid danger and how to respond to threatening situations. The following guidelines will assist you in ensuring that your child is safe both at home and in your community.

Tips for Parents of Young Children

- Teach your child about fire safety, evacuation routes, and pre-designated family meeting areas outside the home. Identify neighbors that your child can trust for help in the event of an emergency.
- Teach your child the difference between appropriate touching and touching that makes him/her feel scared and/or uncomfortable.
- If your child has been abused, make sure the child knows it is not his/her fault. Contact your pediatrician, family practitioner and the police.
- Ensure that children aged three and older know their first and last name, the first and last name of their parent or guardian, their telephone number and home address, and how to dial 911 or an appropriate emergency number.
- Identify a relative or neighbor the child can contact or go to if you or another family member cannot be located.
- Play “What if...?” games with your child and ask how he/she would respond to dangerous and threatening situations.
- Know your child’s friends and where they play.
- Know your child’s whereabouts when he/she is not in school. Obtain the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of your child’s friends.

Tips for Parents of Teens

- **Participate in gang awareness workshops** so that you can learn how to recognize gang behavior in your children, how to cope, and how to fight back. Find out where and when a gang awareness workshop will be given in your area by contacting CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy) at 312-745-5900 or the Preventive Services Section of the Chicago Police Department at 312-745-5838.
- **Become aware of the identifiers gangs use** and be aware if they begin to appear on the personal articles of your children. Visible gang identifiers, innocently worn or displayed by children, may attract violent acts of retaliation.
- **Remove graffiti from your property as soon as possible**, as it is often an indicator of gang activity in your neighborhood, and may attract retaliation. To have graffiti removed from your property call the City of Chicago non-emergency number “311.”
- If there are any weapons in the home, be sure they are locked up so that your child does not have access to them.
- Monitor your child’s access to the Internet. Keep the computer in a central location and be sure to use parental controls.
- Be aware of these danger signs in your child: mood swings, secretiveness, withdrawal from friends and/or peers, behavior or attitude changes. If you note danger signs, consult with the school counselor or psychologist.
- Monitor your child’s school attendance. Skipping school, class cutting and truancy are often early warning signs of academic problems. These may also be warning signs of a child being involved in gang activity.

Responsibilities for Students

- Never open the door for someone you do not know and keep doors locked at all times if you are home alone.
- Never give out personal information over the telephone or volunteer family members’ schedules or whereabouts to unknown callers.
- Use a buddy system and stick together with friends while away from home. Stay alert and be aware of your surroundings.

- Be cautious with, but not fearful of, strangers. Never approach the car of someone asking for directions or agree to help an adult search for something. If you sense trouble from a stranger, run away to the nearest public place and ask for help.
- If you feel that you are being followed, cross the street, run to the nearest well-lit, populated area, or pretend to see a friend and wave or call out to that person.
- Never pick up anything that looks suspicious or dangerous.
- Never put something you find into your mouth.
- Tell your parent right away if any person — a family friend, neighbor, babysitter, or relative — tries to touch you in an inappropriate way.

Communities

Creating a safe community for children requires the involvement and commitment of the entire community, including parents, students, school personnel, neighborhood crime watch groups, religious groups, civic organizations, local businesses, and community social agencies. Join in the effort to make communities safer by utilizing the following tips.

- Participate in your local police district’s CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy) activities. For contact and program information, visit the Chicago Police Department web page: <http://www.chicagopolice.org>, and click on “Get Involved in CAPS”, or contact the CAPS Implementation Office at 312-745-5900.
- Visit the Chicago Police Department’s “CLEARMAP” web page on the Internet: <http://gis.chicagopolice.org/CLEARMap/> and at bottom of map, under “Search By”, click on “School” to map conditions surrounding your child’s school. At this website, Safe Passage-related information about school areas can be found.
- Encourage the local police district CAPS officer to give talks and/or presentations at your local school, community centers, civic meetings, and places of worship.

- Report any suspicious neighborhood activities to the police.
- Build community spirit among your neighbors. Get to know them and agree to look out for one another.
- Call for help if there's domestic violence in a neighbor's home.
- Clean up litter and graffiti in your community to help ensure that children live in a community of which they can be proud. Call City Services (311) to submit a request for graffiti removal.
- Volunteer time at your local parks and recreation department. Help organize before- and after-school programs, sports leagues, or neighborhood centers.
- Involve your child in local crime prevention activities. This teaches children that they can constructively affect their community.
- Organize or join a neighborhood watch unit or violence prevention task force with other parents, teachers, and community residents and leaders.
- Distribute violence prevention materials to parents and community groups.
- Work with other parents and school officials to set up Drug-Free School Zones. Write letters to local government and community leaders to gain their support.
- Encourage local retailers to display violence prevention messages on advertisement boards or in their place of business.
- Organize first-aid/CPR/AED training programs in your community.
- Encourage your child to advise you of areas in the neighborhood in which they feel unsafe or suspect criminal activity.
- Help increase attendance and reduce truancy in your local school. Be aware of the school calendar in place at your community school. Know when students are expected to be in school. When school-aged children are not in school, call the Chicago Public Schools' Truancy Hotline at (773) 553-4000. To report students who appear to be hanging out in a particular location during school hours, call the Chicago Police Department.

Tips for Principals

Making sure that children are safe on the way to and from school is everyone's concern. The schools, in partnership with the parents, the police, and the community, can take steps to make the daily journey safer for all children. The following are recommendations for school principals to improve safety for children:

- If a significant number of your students are driven to school, you should have a plan for reducing traffic congestion around the school during arrival and departure times. If necessary, contact your local police district for assistance.
- If any of the students at your school receive school bus transportation, it is important that you have an adult present when the children arrive and when they board the buses in the afternoon. You may wish to consider developing a plan to monitor students who board and exit buses.
- Buses should load and unload children at a safe place, away from traffic and away from other students.
- Students who receive school bus transportation should be taught basic information about bus safety and about conduct on the bus. Among the topics that should be covered are: (1) how to behave while waiting at the bus stop, (2) safety around buses, and (3) rules for behavior while on the bus. (See "Riding the Bus" on page 7 for more information.)

In addition to monitoring student safety on the way to and from school, the principal and the entire faculty and staff are responsible for ensuring student safety within the building. The following can assist in ensuring that students remain safe while on school property:

- Have visible security for the building: security cameras, metal detectors, and security personnel.
- Have an emergency security plan worked out with the local police district.
- Share with students the concern for safety in the building and enforce the Student Code of Conduct.

- Enlist student support for security measures; ask that they contact an administrator, counselor, or teacher if they know of any weapons in the building or any students who are speaking or behaving erratically.
- Make all necessary updates to your school’s emergency plan on the Facility Information Management System (FIMS). Direct any questions regarding this to the Bureau of Risk Management and Emergency Planning.
- Work with your local police and fire departments and encourage participation in emergency drilling. The Illinois School Safety Drill Act requires that schools conduct six (6) drills for each school building occupied by students aged 21 and younger. The required drills include:
 - 3 Evacuation Drills (Fire)
 - 1 Shelter-in-Place Drill (Severe Weather)
 - 1 Law Enforcement Drill (may be consolidated with an evacuation or shelter-in-place drill)
 - 1 Bus Evacuation Drill
- Ensure that faculty and staff are familiar with your school’s Emergency Management Plan.
- Encourage faculty and staff to take the free online Emergency Preparedness NIMS courses at <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslst.asp>.
- Distribute an Emergency Contact form at the beginning of each semester to parents so that any necessary updates can be provided.

Important Telephone Numbers

Parent Work Number: _____

Relative/Friend Emergency Number: _____

School Telephone Number: _____

School Bus Company Name: _____

School Bus Company Number: _____

Site Pick Up Number: _____

School Pick Up Number: _____

Other Important Telephone Numbers: _____

Chicago Police Department

Emergency Number: 911

Non-Emergency Number: 311

Local Police District:

Chicago Fire Department

Emergency Number: 911

Non-Emergency Number: 311

CAPS Implementation Office

312.745.5900

CPS Office of School Safety and Security

773.553.6902

Student Hotline for Violence Prevention

1.888.881.0606

Callers remain anonymous & information is kept confidential.

CPS Truancy Hotline

773.553.4000

Department of Children and Family Services

1.800.25 ABUSE (22873)

Notes



CITY OF CHICAGO

Richard M. Daley, *Mayor*

CHICAGO BOARD OF EDUCATION

Michael W. Scott, *President*

Clare Muñana, *Vice President*

Members:

Norman R. Bobins

Tariq H. Butt, M.D.

Alberto A. Carrero, Jr.

Peggy A. Davis

Roxanne Ward

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Ron Huberman, *Chief Executive Officer*

Barbara Eason-Watkins, Ed.D., *Chief Education Officer*

Flavia Hernández, *Chief Officer*

Office of Elementary Areas and Schools

David Gilligan, *Chief Officer*

Office of High Schools and High School Programs

Michael Shields, *Director*, Office of School Safety and Security