

# KNOW THE RULES...

## For Going To and From School More Safely



**E**very day millions of children take to the streets and roadways to get to and from school. For many children this experience is a new one, and they may not understand or be able to use the safety rules. Young children do not have the same frame of reference for safety as adults do. They may not "look before they leap," which is why it is so important for families to supervise young children and practice safety skills with their older children. The tips noted below will help prepare for a safer journey.

### Tips for Parents or Guardians

1. Instruct your children to always **TAKE A FRIEND** and walk and ride in well-lit areas and never take shortcuts or go into isolated areas. When walking and biking teach them to stay aware of their surroundings and observe all traffic rules in place to more safely share the roads and sidewalks with others.
2. Walk the route to and from school with your children pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they're being followed or need help. Make a map with your children showing acceptable routes to and from school. If your children wait for a bus, wait with them or make arrangements for supervision at the bus stop.
3. If anyone bothers your children while going to or from school, teach them to immediately get away from that person and **TELL** you or another trusted adult. If an adult approaches your children for help or directions, remember grownups needing help should not ask children for help; they should ask other adults. Instruct your children to never accept money or gifts from anyone unless you have told them it is **OKAY** to accept in each instance.
4. Even though there can be more safety in numbers it is still not safe for young children to walk to and from school especially if they must take isolated routes anytime during the day or night. Always provide supervision for your young children to help ensure their safe arrival to and from school.
5. Instruct your children to leave items and clothing with their name on them at home. If someone they don't know calls out their name, teach them to not be fooled or confused.
6. Ensure current and accurate emergency contact information is on file for your children at their school. If you, or another trusted family member or friend, need to pick your children up, make sure to follow the school's departure procedures. These procedures need to include the school's confirmation of your children's departure with only those you authorize to pick them up.





7. Teach your children if anyone tries to take them somewhere they should quickly get away and yell, "This person is trying to take me away" or "This person is not my father/mother/guardian." If anyone tries to grab them, teach them to make a scene and every effort to get away by kicking, screaming, and resisting.

8. Teach your children if anyone follows them on foot to get away from that person as quickly as possible. If anyone follows them in a vehicle they should turn around, go in the other direction, and try to quickly get to a spot where a trusted adult may help them. Advise them to be sure to **TELL** you or another trusted adult what happened.

9. Instruct your children to never leave school with anyone they don't know. If anyone tells them there is an emergency and they want your children to go with them, teach your children to always **CHECK FIRST** with you before doing anything. Also teach your children to always **CHECK FIRST** with you if they want to change their plans before or after school. Make sure your children always play with other children, have your permission to play in specific areas, and let you know where they are going to be. Instruct your children to **TELL** a trusted adult if they notice anyone they don't know or feel comfortable with hanging around them.



10. Remember to practice these safety rules with your children to make certain they really know and understand them. Make the walk to and from school a "teachable moment" and chance to put their skills to the test. Teach your children to trust their feelings.

### Key Tips to Reinforce With Your Children

1. Always **TAKE A FRIEND** with you when walking, biking, or standing at the bus stop. Make sure you know your bus number and which bus to ride.

2. **Say NO** if anyone you don't know or a person who makes you feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused offers a ride unless I have told you it is **OKAY** to do so in each instance.

3. Quickly get away and yell, "**THIS PERSON IS NOT MY MOTHER/FATHER/GUARDIAN**" if anyone tries to take you somewhere or is following you. If anyone tries to grab you, make a scene and every effort to get away by kicking, screaming, and resisting.

4. **NEVER LEAVE SCHOOL GROUNDS**. Always check with the school office before leaving school.

5. **NEVER** take shortcuts or walk through alleys to get to or from school faster. We will talk about which way to go to and from school. Remind me of activities in which you participate causing you to leave earlier or arrive later than usual. Remember to call me once you have arrived home.



For more information about school safety or other child-safety topics, visit NCMEC's website at <http://www.missingkids.com> or call 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678). For additional information about specific modes of transportation to and from school visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's website at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>.

**1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)**

**<http://www.missingkids.com>**

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