

# 16 Safety Tips

- Be aware of moving traffic.
- Leave plenty of time to get to the bus stop. Don't rush.
- Pay attention to your surroundings; listening to your music player or playing handheld video games may lead to distractions and potential injury.
- Don't wear a hood as it makes it more difficult to hear and see traffic.
- Stay at a safe distance from the street and don't play around while waiting for the bus.
- Stay 10 giant steps away from the outside of the bus while the bus is pulling up so the driver can see you.
- Wait for the bus to stop completely before you move towards it to get on, or before you stand up to get off.
- Be cautious of clothing or backpacks with drawstrings, toggles, or key chains that can get caught on the bus handrails and doors.
- Hold the handrail going up and down the stairwell so you don't trip.
- Find a seat and sit down as soon as you're on the bus.
- Be courteous and respectful to your driver. Listen to directions.
- Don't put your head, arms, papers or anything out the window.
- Don't pick up anything you drop near the bus. The driver may not see you. Instead, ask the driver for help.
- Wait to cross the street until the driver lets you know it's OK.
- Stay away from the bus wheels at all times - the driver cannot see you.
- If your parent meets you at the bus stop, make sure he or she waits on the same side of the street where you will be dropped off so you won't have to cross the street.



# Barnstable Public Schools

## Guideline to Protecting Your Child at School Bus Stops

The best protection for a child at a school bus stop is a vigilant parent. In today's world of dual working parent families, a parent waiting at the bus stop with a child is not always possible. According to The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Each year in the United States, between 1.3 and 1.8 million children are reported missing. These children may be kidnapped, lost, or runaways. Some children are taken by a non-custodial parent, still others disappear with few clues as to the reason. NCMEC points out that, in many cases, an abductor is not a stranger to the child. So, while the warning to "stay away from strangers" is good advice, it provides very limited protection. Children are more often abducted or exploited by people who have some type of familiarity with them, but who may not be known to the parents. NCMEC explains that the term "stranger" misleads children into believing that they should only be aware of individuals who have an unusual or slovenly appearance. Instead, it is more appropriate to teach children to watch out for certain situations or actions, rather than certain kinds of individuals.

### **Protecting Your Child At School Bus Stops**

- Work with other parents to have children walk to bus stops and wait in groups. Use the "buddy system" whenever possible.
- Create a Safe Walking Plan with your child using the safest and most direct path to the school bus stop.
- Establish "Safe Houses" along the route to the bus stop that your child can go to if approached while walking to the bus stop.
- Keep an updated color photograph of your child in a packet along with medical and dental records and your child's fingerprints.
- Avoid clothing and toys with your child's name on them.

### **Teach children to:**

- Notify your parent before leaving for the bus stop.
- Never go into a house unless your parent has given permission to use the house as a "Safe House".
- Tell your parent if you feel scared, uncomfortable or confused about waiting for the school bus.
- Tell the school bus driver, immediately, if you are approached while waiting at the bus stop.
- Tell the school Principal or designated school staff, immediately, if you are approached while waiting at the bus stop.
- NOISE is your best defense – yell, scream, shout, scatter books and belongings if You are approached and being forced into a car.
- Move safely away from any vehicle that pulls up to the bus stop.
- Never accept a ride to school if you are waiting at the bus stop.
- Follow the Safe Walking Plan and never to use shortcuts through empty parks, lots, alleys, fields, etc.

■ Run home or to a designated safe house if you are close to home and approached while walking to or at the bus stop.

■ Write a license plate number in the dirt if nothing else is available and only when you are safely away from danger.

Bus Drivers are always looking out for student's safety and are aware of their surroundings. If they see something suspicious they report to their office immediately and the police are called, as warranted. Bus drivers are mandated to have taken the National School Bus Watch training course, which includes looking for suspicious activities and to always be on the lookout.

At school start up, bus drivers are to go over the rules of the school bus as well as some safety issues in which we will have First Student add to the driver introduction the above referenced suggestions for students to be safe at bus stops.