



Dear parents, guardians and families,

Across the country, it's back to school time, and as the summer draws to a close and children start heading back to school, it's time to talk to your children about back to school safety tips, including how to stay safe before, during and after school.

## Transportation Safety

Whether children walk, ride their bicycle or take the bus to school, it is extremely important that they take proper safety precautions. Here are some tips to make sure your child safely travels to school:

### Walkers »

- Review your family's walking safety rules and practice walking to school with your child.
- Before you cross the street, stop and look left, right and left again to see if cars are coming
- Make eye contact with drivers before crossing and always cross streets
- Stay alert and avoid distracted walking

### Bike Riders »

- Teach your child the rules of the road and practice riding the bike route to school with your child.
- Come to a complete stop before crossing the street; walk bikes across the street
- Stay alert and avoid distracted riding
- Make sure your child always wears a properly fitted helmet and bright clothing

### Bus Riders »

- Teach your children school bus safety rules and practice with them.
- Go to the bus stop with your child to teach them the proper way to get on and off the bus
- Teach your children to stand 6 feet (or three giant steps) away from the curb

## Peer confrontation

A new school year means new classmates and new personalities. People of all ages, not just kids, must constantly learn and grow in order to have healthy relationships with the people around them. Kids rely on us to learn how to navigate these relationships.

If your child is receiving bullying messages online, here are some actions you can take:

- Block the individual on the app, social network or device.
- Print or screenshot messages or interactions so you can share them with parents or school administration as necessary.



- Remind your child that everyone faces social problems from time to time, and it's not something they have to deal with on their own.
- As a parent, you also have resources. Reach out to teachers, school administration and/or child development professionals to tap into expert help for your child's challenges.

## After School Safety

Getting home from school safely is just as important as getting to school safely. All of the transportation rules that apply on the way to school also apply when coming home. If your child has a cell phone, make sure they have it on them at all times so you can reach them, they can reach you, and they can call 999 in case of an emergency.

For kids that stay home unsupervised after school, make sure that they let themselves in and lock the door immediately behind them. They should never let anyone in the house, especially a stranger, so they should not open the door for anyone. If you have an alarm, they should arm the security system immediately after locking the door behind them.

Households with on-the-go kids can also benefit from smart locks, video doorbells and security cameras:

- Smart locks allow you to give every family member or visitor customizable PIN codes to lock and unlock the door. Parents can use the accompanying smart phone app to see who comes home and when; kids will experience fewer lockouts because they won't have to remember a key.
- Video doorbells can send you activity alerts so you receive an update whenever someone's on the doorstep. Know when your kids get home, if they bring any friends with them, or if there's any suspicious activity in the area.
- Security cameras extend your eyes and ears into common areas. If you select a model with two-way communication, you can even talk to your kid right through the camera.

Crime and anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated in Sandwell and we work really hard with our schools and young people to ensure they are aware of this. Police Officers and PCSO's, together with colleagues from Sandwell Council will be out and about on patrol every day and are looking forward to some positive engagement with our young people.

Please stay safe, enjoy the return to school and we look forward to this term being a wonderful time for us all.

Yours sincerely,

*Kym Jones*

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