

SCHOOL'S OPEN

Drive Carefully!



ATTENTION TEACHERS

Help keep our children safe! You can make a difference by bringing traffic safety messages into the classroom. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths among school children ages 5–18. School zones are especially dangerous for children. Many drivers exceed the posted speed limit in school zones and roll through stop signs in residential areas. This, coupled with distracted drivers and congested school zones, can make for a dangerous situation for children who are not quite mature enough to accurately and safely judge distance and maneuver through these zones.

This lesson provides basic principles of pedestrian safety. Not only is it important for children to be safe in school zones, but also any time they are on the road: walking, bicycling, skateboarding, riding a scooter or in a vehicle. This lesson can be shared in class and supplemented with the optional student bookmark highlighting the important tips and a take-home resource for parents.

DISCUSSION POINTS FOR CLASS LESSON

Pedestrian Safety

Walking to school is great exercise and helps cut down on pollution and congestion around schools. It is always a good idea to walk in a group, never alone. Always make sure you and your friends get to school safely. There are traffic rules to help you stay safe when you're walking to school . . . or anywhere else. Do you know and follow them?

What is a pedestrian?

A pedestrian is someone who is walking or using a human-powered vehicle, such as a wheelchair, skateboard or roller skates.

Do drivers have to stop when I am in the crosswalk?

Yes, they do! Drivers must stop for pedestrians who are crossing the road within any marked or unmarked crosswalk or intersection. However, you must be very careful and always pay attention . . . because people in cars might be distracted by other things and not see you in a crosswalk.

What if there is no sidewalk?

Hopefully this will never happen. But here's how to handle it: When sidewalks are unavailable, pedestrians should walk on the left-hand edge of the road facing traffic, so you can see the cars coming.

What do all those signals mean?

- ▶ If you're at the crosswalk (with no pedestrian signal) and you are facing a green light, you can proceed across the street. However, remember to pay careful attention to cars around you and make sure you are seen before stepping into the crosswalk.
- ▶ If you see a green arrow . . . that means cars are turning into the crosswalk. So, remember not to enter the crosswalk on a green arrow.
- ▶ A yellow signal or arrow is a warning that there is not enough time for you to cross. That means you need to wait until you see a green light to cross.
- ▶ Red means stop. You definitely don't want to cross.
- ▶ The white walking person symbol indicates that you can cross the road in the direction of the signal. Watch for vehicles!
- ▶ The flashing or steady orange upraised hand or symbol of the words "DON'T WALK" mean, that you must not start to cross.

If you are in a crosswalk at an intersection, it is a good idea to wait for the white walking person or "WALK" sign, look all ways and THEN cross only if SAFE. If the light is already blinking when you approach . . . wait for the next one.

TIPS FOR SAFE WALKING:

- ▶ Only cross at corners so drivers can see you. Never cross mid-block or between parked cars.
- ▶ Always use a crosswalk when it is available.
- ▶ Cross when the light has just turned green so you have time to cross safely.
- ▶ Use the crosswalk push-button signal when available and cross when the signal says to.
- ▶ Look all ways before crossing; look and listen for cars, pedestrians and bicyclists.

- ▶ Watch for cars that are turning left or right when you are crossing.
- ▶ Walk on a sidewalk when it is provided. If you must walk in the street, walk facing traffic and on the left side of the road so you can see cars coming.
- ▶ Make it easy for drivers to see you—dress in light colors, wear reflective material and/or use a flashlight.
- ▶ Remove headphones and put away cell phones and other electronic devices when crossing the street.
- ▶ Watch for vehicles turning or backing out of driveways or coming out of parking lots.
- ▶ Go directly to and from school or the school bus stop. Do not make stops along the way.
- ▶ Avoid walking alone. Walk with a friend or in groups.
- ▶ Be extra careful in bad weather. Drivers may not see you and cars may not be able to stop as fast.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO? DISCUSSION ACTIVITY:

- 1. If you are walking where there is no sidewalk, what should you do?**
answer: Walk on the left side of the street facing traffic so cars can see you.
- 2. What is a pedestrian?**
answer: A pedestrian is someone who is walking or using a human-powered vehicle, such as a wheelchair, skateboard or roller skates.
- 3. What should you wear if you are going to be walking at night?**
answer: Wear light or bright clothing, reflective material and/or use a flashlight.
- 4. During a walk, you come to an intersection where the "DON'T WALK" hand is flashing. What should you do?**
answer: Stop and wait until you see a solid "WALK" sign or the pedestrian symbol. Look all ways and cross only when safe to do so.
- 5. You are at a crosswalk with a push-button signal. How do you safely cross the street?**
answer: Press the button, wait for the "WALK" or white pedestrian symbol and look all ways before crossing.



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