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BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY
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Traffic will begin to increase in Morgantown this August as West Virginia University students return to classes. At the same time, children will be out and about on their way to Monongalia County Schools.

Classes begin on August 17 for grades 1 through 12. Kindergarten will be back in session on August 21 and pre-K on August 23.

Motorists should keep an eye out for children walking, either to school or to the bus stop. Use extra caution when you see a school bus, either slowing down or, of course, coming to a complete stop for a bus when the stop arm is out. And keep this in mind: More school-age pedestrians have been killed during the hour before and after school than at any other time of day, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA). Although drivers are required by law to stop for a school bus when it’s loading or unloading passengers, they often don’t and children should not rely on them to do so.

Parents also should discuss good behaviors that their kids should follow while waiting for the school bus and also how to board, ride and disembark the bus safely. Those include not roughhousing while waiting for the bus, using seat belts when they are available and refraining from distracting the driver. Those and more school bus safety tips can be found on the National Safety Council’s website at www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/pages/news-and-resources-school-bus-safety-rules.aspx.

There are also plenty of other ways to make sure students’ school experiences are full of injury-free reading, writing and arithmetic. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) lists several ways to make sure students get to and from school safely.

For instance, if your children will be walking by themselves for part or all of their trip to school, make sure they understand pedestrian safety. Teach them to cross the street at designated crosswalks or intersections. And if your child has a cell phone, impress upon him or her to keep it stowed away for the walk to school so they can avoid distractions and concentrate on the road.

If you are driving your child to school, remember that car seats, booster seats and seat belts—depending on your child’s age—can help reduce the risk for death and injuries by a substantial amount. Also, if you have a car seat, make sure you...
are using it correctly. Studies shown that 46 percent of car and booster seats are misused in a way that can reduce effectiveness.

And for teens who have reached the age where they can drive themselves, there is a way to help ensure that they are being as safe and cautious as possible. A Parent-Teen Driving Agreement lays out the rules teen drivers will follow and the punishment if they fail to do so. The CDC has a downloadable agreement, available at [WWW.CDC.GOV/PARENTSARETHEKEY/AGREEMENT/INDEX.HTML](http://WWW.CDC.GOV/PARENTSARETHEKEY/AGREEMENT/INDEX.HTML).

For more information, check out the CDC’s website at [WWW.CDC.GOV/FEATURES/SAFESCHOOLS/INDEX.HTML](http://WWW.CDC.GOV/FEATURES/SAFESCHOOLS/INDEX.HTML).

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