

Don't neglect school bus safety

FAMILY FEATURES

For millions of school-age children in the United States, each day begins – and ends – with a bus ride. While the school bus is the safest way to travel to and from school, according to the National Association of Pupil Transportation (NAPT), it's important for parents to teach their children how to stay safe in and around the school bus as obstructed views, distracted drivers and more can put kids at risk. These tips from the experts at NAPT and the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) provide parents with some additional measures to take and lessons to teach to increase safety going to and from the bus, and even during the ride.

BEFORE THE BUS ARRIVES

- Ensure backpacks are packed securely so papers and other items don't scatter as the bus approaches.

- Create a morning routine that puts kids at the bus stop five minutes before the scheduled pickup time. This helps avoid a last-minute rush, when safety lessons are easily forgotten, and ensures kids are safely in place for boarding.

- Encourage children to wear bright, contrasting colors so they can be seen easier by drivers.

- Walk young children to the bus stop or encourage kids to walk in groups. There is safety in numbers; groups are easier for drivers to see.

- * If kids must cross a street, driveway or alley, remind them to stop and look both ways before crossing.

- * Verify the bus stop location offers good visibility for the bus driver; if changes are needed, talk with nearby homeowners or school district officials to implement changes. Never let kids wait in a house or car, where the driver may miss seeing them approach the bus.

- * Remind children that the bus stop is not a playground. Balls or other toys could roll into the street and horseplay can result in someone falling into the path of oncoming traffic.

- * Instruct children to stay at least three steps away from the road and allow the bus to come to

a complete stop before approaching it.

ON THE BUS RIDE

- When boarding the bus, items can get bumped and dropped. Caution children that before picking anything up, they should talk to the driver and follow instructions to safely retrieve their possessions.

- Teach safe riding habits: stay seated with head, hands and feet inside at all times; keep bags and books out of the aisle and remain seated until the bus stops moving.

- Instruct children to never throw things on the bus or out the windows and to never play with or block emergency exits.

- Remind kids that just like when riding in a car, loud noises are off limits so they don't distract the driver. That includes cellphones and other electronic devices; instruct children to put them on mute or use headphones.

LEAVING THE BUS

- Remind children to look before stepping off the bus. If they must cross the street, teach them to do so in front of the bus by taking five big steps (approximately 10 feet) away from the front of the bus, looking up and waiting for the driver to signal that it is safe.

- For parents who meet their kids at the bus, remember that in their excitement kids may dart across the street. Eliminate the risk by waiting on the side of the street where kids exit the bus.

- Make the bus ride part of your daily "how was school?" discussion. Encourage kids to talk about the things they see and hear on the bus so you can discuss appropriate behaviors and, if necessary, report any concerns to school administrators. As bullying is prevalent and buses are no exception, ask your child to tell you about any bullying they observe, whether against another child or themselves, and talk about how to shut down bully behaviors.

For more information and additional school bus safety tips, visit BetterOurBuses.com.



With area schools back in session, it's imperative to abide by bus safety laws to ensure safety of children and pedestrians.



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Red Cross needs blood donations

As summer winds down, the American Red Cross urges individuals to give blood and platelets now and help end an emergency summer blood shortage that began last month.

A critical need remains as many regular donors delay giving to take final summer vacations and prepare for school to start. To ensure lifesaving treatments remain available for patients in the coming weeks, donations are needed now, especially type O.

In thanks for helping at this urgent time, all those who come to donate blood or platelets through Aug. 30 will receive a \$5 Amazon.com Gift Card via email. Restrictions apply. See amazon.com/gc-legal. More information and details are available at RedCrossBlood.org/Together.

Make an appointment to donate blood by downloading the free American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Those who donated blood earlier this sum-

mer may be eligible to give again. Blood can be safely given every 56 days, and Power Red donations can be given every 16 weeks.

Blood donations can be made locally at Caney Fork Electric, 920 Smithville Highway on Aug. 28 from 2 – 6 p.m.

HOW TO DONATE BLOOD

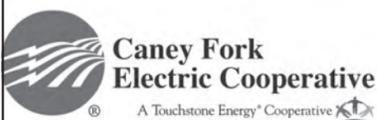
Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.



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