



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT SHERIFF RICHARD J. BEHNKE

### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY ALERT: STOPPING FOR SCHOOL BUS AND OTHER SAFETY TIPS

With schools starting across Michigan, Sheriff Richard J. Behnke, County Sheriff wants you to know the laws for school buses. **Passing a school bus that is loading or unloading students is prohibited under any circumstances.** The law requires motorists to come to a complete stop at least 20 feet from a school bus whenever a bus is stopped and employing the use of its two red flashing signals. The driver may proceed once the bus resumes motion.

#### Tips for Motorists

- Slow down and prepare to stop whenever you see yellow school bus lights flashing.
- The law now requires motorists to come to a complete stop at least 20 feet from a school bus whenever a bus is stopped and employing the use of its two red flashing signals. The driver may proceed once the bus resumes motion.
- Never pass a school bus when children are loading or unloading. That is the Law!
- Remember that children are unpredictable in their actions. Take extreme caution when traveling in a school zone.
- If you live in an area where there are no sidewalks, drive cautiously. Be more alert to the possibility of children walking in the road.
- Be more aware of children playing near school bus stops.
- Take extra time to look for kids at intersections, on medians and on curbs.
- Enter and exit driveways and alleys slowly and carefully
- Reduce any distractions inside your car so you can concentrate on the road and your surroundings.
- Put down your phone – don't talk or text while driving!

#### Tips for Students

- Always arrive at the bus stop early.
- Prior to boarding, wait until the bus has come to a complete stop, the door is opened and the bus driver says that it's OK to board.
- Once on board proceed quickly to your seat and stay sitting until the bus arrives at your school or other drop off location.
- Do not move around on the bus.
- Always walk on the sidewalk when preparing to cross the street near a bus. Make eye contact with the driver so that you are sure he or she sees you.
- Never walk behind the bus.
- If you are walking beside the bus, make sure you are at least 10 feet (10 "giant" steps) away.
- Take extra precaution to make sure that clothing with drawstrings and book bags do not get caught in the hand rail or door.
- Never stop to pick something up you have dropped while the bus is stopped. Wait until the bus has driven off to avoid not being seen by the driver.

## Traveling to and from School

- Plan a walking route to school or the bus stop. Choose the most direct way with the fewest street crossings and, if possible, with intersections that have crossing guards.
- Walk the route with your child beforehand. Tell him or her to stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields and other places where there aren't many people around.
- Teach your child never to talk to strangers, accept rides from strangers or accept gifts from strangers. Remember, a stranger is anyone you or your children don't know well or don't trust.
- Be sure your child walks to and from school or the bus stop with a sibling, friend or neighbor.
- Teach your kids – whether walking, biking or riding the bus to school – to obey all traffic signals, signs and traffic officers. Remind them to be extra careful in bad weather.
- When driving kids, deliver and pick them up as close to the school as possible. Don't leave until they are in the schoolyard or building.
- If your child bikes to school make sure he wears a helmet that meets safety standards. Research indicates that a helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85%.
- If your child rides a scooter to school, make sure she wears sturdy shoes, a helmet, kneepads and elbow pads. Children under 12 should not ride motorized scooters.
- Be sure your child knows his or her home (or parents' cellular) phone number(s) and address. They should also know where you work, your work phone number, the phone number of another trusted adult and how to call 911 for emergencies.

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