

A Safer Naper – Back to School Safety

It's hard to believe it, but it's time for students to return to school! Naperville Community Unit School District 203 begins classes on August 15th and Indian Prairie School District 204 starts on August 19th, which makes the August 'A Safer Naper' theme of "Back-to-School Safety" a timely one. Whether you are a parent with children attending school or not, it's important that every resident prepares for the start of a new school year to ensure the transition is smooth and safe. The Naperville Police Department asks that you make Back to School Safety a priority by following these tips.

SECTION 1: Safety Tips for Families

Before the first day of school be sure to talk to your students about the following:

- Students should know their home address and phone number, as well as, a parent's cell phone number. Help your child practice it so they have it memorized before school begins.
- Use the buddy system. Always walk to and from school with a friend or stay with a group at the bus stop. There is safety in numbers. If riding the bus, visit the bus stop with your child and be sure they know their bus number.
- Walk/ride in well-lit areas and never take shortcuts. Instruct children to avoid places they cannot be seen or heard and to stay on the [Safe Routes to School](#).
- Before the first day of school, walk to and from school with your child.
- Stay within the crosswalks and obey all traffic signals/signs. Obey the crossing guard, if one is available. If children ride their bikes to school, make sure they wear a helmet. Click here for additional [bicycle safety tips](#) (PDF).
- Teach children the safety rule, "Say NO, GO and TELL". If anyone approaches your child, offers them a ride, asks for directions, or makes them feel uncomfortable, instruct them to say "NO", get away from the situation (GO), and TELL a trusted adult. Be sure to discuss with your child who trusted adults may be: teachers, parents, friend's parents, neighbors, police officers, firefighters, relatives, etc.
- Make sure children understand NEVER to leave school with anyone they haven't been instructed to leave with by you. If someone comes up to them and tells them that there is an emergency and they want your child to go with them, be sure they know to check first with you or another trusted adult (school personnel) before doing so.
- If your students will be taking care of themselves after school, find helpful tips and additional safety rules taken from our [Third Grade - On Your Own program](#).

SECTION 2: Safety Tips for Motorists

Children will once again be walking to school through neighborhoods, waiting at bus stops and being dropped off at schools by parents and buses. The beginning of the school year is an especially important time to check your driving behavior and ensure you are practicing the

safest driving habits. Motorists can assist with keeping children safe when headed back-to-school by following these tips:

- Plan ahead and leave home earlier than normal to allow enough time to reach your destination without rushing.
- Always come to a complete stop at stop signs, and be sure to check carefully for children on sidewalks and in crosswalks before proceeding. Be sure to obey crossing guards and student safety patrols.
- Slow Down! Remember, school speed zones are reduced for a reason. When entering a school zone, slow down to 20 mph and be extra alert for children on foot and on bicycles.
- Being cautious when approaching school buses. It is illegal to proceed around a school bus with the stop sign arm engaged. Please be patient as children enter and exit school buses.
- Eliminate distractions. Leave time in the morning to eat and groom before entering your vehicle and stay off the phone while driving. As a reminder, Illinois bans the use of all hand-held devices while driving in Illinois as well as texting while driving.
- Follow each school's traffic and parking plans and signage. If you have questions or want more information on your school's traffic and parking plan, please contact your school.
- Lock your car doors and remove valuables before exiting your vehicle at schools and daycares. Even if you'll only be gone for a brief time, leaving valuables in plain sight or leaving your doors unlocked is an invitation for thieves.
- Talk to your teen. According to AAA, nearly one in four fatal crashes involving teen drivers occurs during the after-school hours of 3 to 7 p.m. Remind them to slow down, reduce distractions and be aware of their surroundings.

SECTION 3: School Crime Prevention Tips

- Get to know your School Resource Officer
- Always lock your locker. Never preset the combination to the last number for easy entry, or "jimmie" it so it stays unlocked
- Keep track of your valuables and secure them in your locker! Do not leave them on top of your locker, on benches, or in a classroom, bathroom or LRC.
- Never share your locker combination with anyone
- Lock your bike to the bike rack or other stationary object
- Lock your car, keep the windows closed, and keep valuables out of sight
- Keep valuables at home. Never bring large amounts of cash to school or wear expensive jewelry
- Don't bring weapons to school. If you see one, report it to the SRO and school officials immediately
- Be aware of your surroundings!

- Report suspicious activities to police, school officials, and your parents
- Tell a teacher, parent, or other trusted adult if you feel unsafe or if someone is bullying or threatening you
- Remember it's OK to say NO to adults or another student, if they ask you to do something you know is wrong or it makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable

SECTION 4: Campus Safety

College Campuses are like small cities within a city, and thus they are not immune to crime.

Following the tips below may help you stay safe while on campus.

Get to Know Your Campus

- Download the campus map to your phone
- Check your routes ahead of time and act like you know where you are going
- Learn the safest routes to your classes and buildings, remembering to stay in well-lit and well-traveled areas where you can easily be seen
- Know where the blue light emergency phone stations are located
- Visit the Campus Safety Office
- Sign up for Campus Safety Alerts
- Familiarize yourself with Campus Safety Resources, such as safe walk or safe ride programs
- Check out various Safety Apps. Some alert a specified individual if you don't reach your destination by a certain time. Others have you hold down a safe button and if you lift your thumb off the button it alerts that you need assistance.

Be Aware of Your Surroundings and Walk with a Friend

- Avoid Distractions- Keep your head out of your phone, and avoid wearing headphones when walking. If using earbuds, keep only one in.
- Look like you know where you are going, even if you don't. Walk confidently, keeping your eyes on your surroundings, including behind you.
- If walking at night, always stick with a friend or use the campus escort service
- Always tell someone, such as a friend or roommate where you are going and when you will be back
- When approaching your car, check around, under and inside before entering

Use Locks!!

- Always lock your dorm/apartment door, even if only leaving for a few minutes
- Never allow anyone to "piggyback" into a building. Have them use their own credentials to enter
- Keep your doors lock when inside

- Lock valuables such as laptops, iPad, cash in a closet, safe or locked drawer
- Register electronic devices with your school and keep a list of serial numbers with you on campus and one at home with parents.
- Lock your car and keep valuables out of sight
- Park in well-lit areas

Parties/Social Life

- Know and understand the law as it relates to drugs and alcohol
- Be sure to complete all drug/alcohol training your school requires
- Never go to a party alone, or stay at a party after your friends leave
- Avoid drinking in excess as others may take advantage of your vulnerable state
- Always keep your drink in hand and in sight to prevent others from tampering with it

Social Media

- Remember anything you post on line is permanent, even if you later delete it
- Social media sites should be set to private and only real-life friends should be accepted
- Avoid geotagging photos. Disable location services
- Never post that you are alone

Trust Your Instincts

- If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable in a situation, at a location, or with a certain individual, leave the area immediately and avoid that person in the future

Report Suspicious Activity!

- Depending on the situation, call 911, your local police department, or campus security

Defensive Resources

- Take a self-defense class and learn the basics. Learning how to get away from an attacker may help you feel more empowered and in control
- If carrying a whistle or pepper spray, be sure it's on the outside of your purse, wrist, or backpack, where it can be easily accessible