

August 2026 – Back to School Safety

As Naperville school children begin the 2026-27 school year, the Naperville Police Department asks that families and motorists make back-to-school safety a priority to ensure a safe and successful start to the new school year.

Basic Back to School Safety for Families

Before the first day of school, parents should talk to their students about safety and make sure to follow these tips:

- Students should know their home address and phone number, as well as a parent's cell phone number. Help your child practice this information 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 as there is safety in numbers.
- Before the first day of school, walk to and from school with your child. If riding the bus, visit the bus stop with your child and be sure they know their bus number.
- Walk or ride only in well-lit areas and never take shortcuts. Instruct children to avoid places where they cannot be seen or heard, and stay on the [safe routes to school](#).
- Stay within the crosswalks and follow all traffic signals and signs. Obey the crossing guard, if one is available. If children ride their bikes to school, make sure they wear a helmet.
- Teach children the following safety rule, "Say NO, GO and TELL". If anyone approaches your child, offers them a ride, asks for directions, or makes them feel uncomfortable in any way, instruct them to say "NO", get away from the situation (GO), and TELL a trusted adult. Be sure to discuss with your child who their trusted adults may include, such as parents, teachers, relatives, friend's parents, certain neighbors, police officers, firefighters, etc.
- Make sure children understand NEVER to leave school with anyone they haven't been instructed to leave with personally by you. If someone approaches your child saying there is an emergency and wants your child to go with them, be sure they know to check first with you or another trusted adult (such as school staff) before doing so.
- If your students will be taking care of themselves after school, you can find helpful tips and additional safety rules directly from our [Third Grade - On Your Own](#) school program booklet.

Safety Tips for Motorists

Children will once again be walking to school through the neighborhood, waiting at various bus stops and being dropped off at schools by parents and buses. The beginning of the school year is an especially crucial time to check in with your own driving behavior and ensure that you are practicing your safest driving habits. Motorists can assist with keeping children safe when headed back to school by following these tips:

- Plan to leave home early enough to allow time to reach your destination without rushing.

- Always come to a complete stop at stop signs, then check carefully for children on sidewalks and in crosswalks before proceeding. Be sure to obey any crossing guards and student safety patrols around schools.
- Slow down! Remember, school speed zones are reduced for a reason. Before entering a school zone, slow down to at least 20 mph and be extra alert for children on foot, or on bicycles/scooters.
- 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 and allow them to cross the street if needed.
- Eliminate extra distractions. Try to eat and finish personal grooming before entering your vehicle to drive. As a reminder, Illinois bans the use of all hand-held devices while driving in Illinois as well, including texting while driving.
- Follow each school's traffic patterns, parking plans and any additional signs. This includes adhering to parking signage on nearby streets. If you have questions or want more specific information on your school's traffic and parking plan, please contact your individual school directly.
- 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 your doors unlocked is an invitation for thieves.
- Talk with your teens about driving safely. According to AAA, nearly one in four fatal crashes involving teen drivers occur during the after-school hours of 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. Remind teen drivers to slow down, reduce distractions and always be aware of their surroundings.

School Crime Prevention Tips

- Get to know your [School Resource Officer](#) (SRO).
- 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 around the LRC.
- Never share your locker combination with anyone.
- Lock your bike securely to the bike rack or other stationary object.
- Make sure you lock your car, keep the windows closed, and remove valuables or try to keep out of sight.
- It is best to keep valuables at home. Never bring large amounts of cash to school or wear expensive jewelry.
- Don't bring any type of weapons to school. If you see one, report it to the SRO and school officials immediately.
- Always be aware of your surroundings!
- Report any suspicious activities promptly 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 always OK to say "NO" to an adult or another student if they ask you to do something you know is wrong or it makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Safety for the College-Bound Student

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, walk confidently.
- 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, and be sure to sign up for campus safety alerts and messages.
- Familiarize yourself with campus safety resources, such as safe walk or safe ride programs.
- Check out various safety apps on your phone. Some will alert a specified individual if you don't reach your destination by a certain time. On some others, you have to hold down a safe button, and if you lift your thumb off the button, it alerts that you need assistance. Share your location and plans of who will be with you, and where you will be, with trusted adults and friends in case there is a problem.

Be Aware of Your Surroundings and Walk with a Friend

- Avoid distractions. Keep your head up walking, and do not look down at your phone. Avoid wearing headphones when walking, if you must use earbuds, keep only one in so you can listen around you.
- Look like you know where you are going, even if you don't. Walk confidently, keeping your eyes on your surroundings, including frequently checking behind you.
- If walking at night, stay on a well-lit path and 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, always check around, under and inside before entering.

Use Locks!!

- Always lock your dorm or apartment doors, 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 locked when inside.
- Lock valuables such as laptops, iPad, and 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 all valuables out of sight.
- Park only 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 your personal view to prevent others from tampering with it.

Social Media

- Remember anything you ever post online or in messages is permanent, even if you think you deleted it.
- Social media and gaming sites should be set to private, “friends only” and only real-life friends should be accepted.
- Avoid geotagging photos. Disable location services on social media.
- Never post anywhere that you are alone.

Trust Your Instincts

- If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable in a situation, location, or with a certain individual, leave the area immediately and avoid that person in the future. Choose a special code word shared only with family that can be used via phone or text if you need to be picked up immediately without questions.

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 accessed and you have a hand free to use it.