

# The route to school should always start with safety.



The CAA School Safety Patrol program – an extra measure of safety.

CAA has a long-standing history of delivering top-notch road safety initiatives. Helping children get to and from school is important to us – that's why we started the CAA School Safety Patrol program over 80 years ago. Today, the program is even more relevant with the increased number of drivers, buses, cyclists and pedestrians in school zones.

If your school doesn't have a CAA School Safety Patrol program, consider starting one to add that extra measure of safety.

Visit [caasco.com/schoolsafety](http://caasco.com/schoolsafety)  
Email [schoolsafetypatrol@caasco.ca](mailto:schoolsafetypatrol@caasco.ca)

## Tips for Students.

### Busing to school.

Over 800,000 students in Ontario ride the bus every day. A safe ride begins with following a few simple rules:

#### Crossing the street to get on and off the bus.

- Walk along the side of the road in front of the bus, at least 10 big steps ahead.
- Make eye contact with the bus driver and wait for a signal that it's clear to cross.
- Look both directions before crossing the street.
- Walk along the side of the road to where your parent/caregiver is waiting.

#### When riding the bus.

- Be at your school bus stop ahead of time.
- Stand back from the edge of the road in a safe location and don't play in ditches or snow banks.
- Hold the handrail when entering the bus in single file.
- Quickly find your seat and sit down, facing forward.
- Keep the aisle clear of all items, including backpacks.
- Don't throw things, roughhouse or make excessive noise that could distract the driver.
- Follow the bus driver's instructions.
- When exiting the bus, move six big steps away – you should not be able to touch it.
- If you drop something near the bus, ask an adult to pick it up; the bus driver may not be able to see you.



## Walking your kids to school.

**When are they ready?** Children mature at different rates, so the decision as to when your children should walk to school by themselves is best left up to you. Remember, walking to school at a young age is a positive choice. Start by walking them halfway, which will help to increase their confidence and sense of responsibility.

**Buddy up.** Find walking buddies, such as a sibling or neighbour, and have a parent or older student lead the walk. The larger the group, the more visible it will be to drivers.

**What's the best route?** Decide on a route to school with your child. Point out the crosswalks, stop signs, landmarks, traffic safety hazards and family friends' homes, in case of emergency.

**Put away the electronics.** Store music players and mobile devices in your child's backpack, or leave them at home. Remind your child to be alert, especially when crossing the street.

**Don't let weather get in the way.** Walking is great in any kind of weather! Dress your child warmly for cold days and in proper rain gear for wet days.



## Riding bikes to school.

When your child is ready to ride to school, here are some tips for a smooth ride:

**Gear check.** Go through regular maintenance and repairs of your child's bike. Make sure their helmet fits properly and they know what to do in case of a flat tire.

**Whatever the weather.** Don't let the weather deter your child from riding to school. If the conditions are safe to bike ride, then dress them appropriately and keep them visible with bright and reflective clothing.

**Test ride.** Take a ride with your children and make sure they are ready to ride. Outline the route to school. Enforce traffic safety rules and potential dangers.

**Safe and stowed.** Find out about storing your child's bike at school. Let your child practice using the bike lock to become familiar with it.



## Driving your child to school.

### Pedestrian safety begins with drivers.

You're a role model for your children through your actions. So let's work together to make our school zones a safe experience for us all.

Be cautious and avoid:

- Double parking or stopping on crosswalks; this can block pedestrians' visibility.
- Stopping on the opposite side of the street, requiring children to cross through traffic.
- Stopping in moving traffic, requiring children to rush out.
- Driving up alongside or blocking a school bus to keep children from missing it.

Suggestions to help maximize safety:

- Form a carpool to reduce the number of cars in school zones.
- Work with school officials to designate specific car pick-up/drop-off locations and staggered times for walkers and riders.
- Comply with the speed limit in school zones.
- When you see a stopped school bus with flashing red lights, you must stop, regardless of the direction you're travelling\*.
- Don't move until the red lights stop flashing and the bus begins to move, or risk a fine and losing demerit points.



### Reporting unsafe drivers.

If you witness a driver who doesn't stop for a school bus, pull over and record the following:

- Location, date and time
- Vehicle make, model, colour and licence plate number
- Status of the bus (moving or stopped/ flashing lights on or off)
- Whether children were boarding or exiting
- Whether the driver passed from the front or from behind the bus
- Photograph or sketch the scene (safely, when stopped)

Immediately contact police with as much information as you can, including the names of any witnesses.



\* The only exception is on highways separated by a median. The traffic coming from the opposite direction is not required to stop.

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