



# SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Back-To-School Safety Reminders

SAN DIEGO – With the new school year beginning on Tuesday, September 5, it is important for students and the public to remember they need to exercise additional caution on or around school campuses. To ensure maximum safety of all students, San Diego Unified School District suggests students and parents abide by the following guidelines set by the National Safe Kids Campaign.

#### Walking to School

Pedestrian injuries are the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths among children ages 5-14. To avoid an injury, parents should:

- Never let a child under age 10 cross the street alone.
- Choose the safest route between home and school and practice walking it with children until they can demonstrate traffic safety awareness.
- Make sure children use the same route everyday and teach them to avoid shortcuts.
- Teach children to recognize and obey traffic signals and pavement markings. A flashing “walk” signal at a cross walk does not mean it is safe to cross. Children should know they must still look both ways for traffic before proceeding.
- Teach children to cross streets only in crosswalks and to walk - not run - across intersections.
- Emphasize to children that they should never enter streets from between parked cars or from behind shrubbery. Such darting between objects results in the majority of child pedestrian deaths.
- Remind children not to speak to strangers (someone they don’t know). If a stranger approaches a student, they should tell their parents or a teacher.

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#### **Riding the Bus**

More than 22,000 San Diego Unified students take the bus each day. Although bus travel is one of the safest ways to travel to and from school, injuries can still occur, and most of them take place when children are getting on or off the bus. Some safety tips for riding the bus are:

- Have children arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes before the scheduled arrival of the bus. Children should stay out of the street while waiting and not horseplay.
- Urge children to remain seated on the bus at all times and not shout or distract the driver. Children should know to keep their head and arms inside the bus at all times.
- Make sure children know to wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before getting on or off. Children should be made aware that the driver has a “blind spot” - the area from the front of the bus to about 10 feet in front of the bus - and they should not walk in this area after getting off.

#### **Riding Bicycles**

Bicycle riding is a favorite mode of transportation for children, but it can often be dangerous – bicycles are associated with more childhood injuries than any other consumer product except the car. To make sure children are safe when riding bicycles to school, parents should:

- Check with the school principal to make sure children are allowed to ride their bicycles to school, as some schools do not allow it.
- Make sure children wear their bicycle helmets at all times while on their bicycle. Head injury is the leading cause of death in bicycle accidents. Studies say helmets can reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent.
- Teach children to obey the rules of the road. They should know that the same rules that apply to other vehicles apply to them also. Bicycle riders should be on the right-hand side of the road, and should travel in the same direction as other traffic. They should also know and use appropriate hand signals.
- Choose the safest route between home and school and practice it with children until they can demonstrate traffic safety awareness.

#### **Driving**

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths among children age 14 and under, according to the National Safe Kids Campaign. Some 75 percent of these accidents occur within 25 miles of home, and 60 percent take place on roads with posted speed limits of 40 mph or less. Important safety guidelines parents should follow are:

- Always use child safety seats and/or safety belts correctly when driving or riding in a car.
- Drop children off as close to school as possible so they do not have to cross streets. Make sure children enter and leave the car on its curb side.
- Use the school’s designated student drop-off and pick-up zone.

It is important for parents to remember to always set a good example for children, whether walking, riding or driving.

Serving more than 132,000 students, San Diego Unified School District is the second largest school district in California, with 216 schools and 34 additional educational facilities, and approximately 16,000 employees. The district is committed to accelerating gains in student performance, supporting schools and enhancing the classroom learning environment through modernized facilities and resources, and strengthening parent, community and higher education support of the educational process.