

Back to School Safety

The start of a new school year is an exciting time of fresh beginnings, reuniting with friends, and new routines. Whether your student is heading to elementary school, starting high school, or moving into a college dorm, a proactive approach to safety ensures they can focus on what really matters: learning and growing. Here's how to prepare for a safe and successful year ahead.



For K-12 Students & Families

- **Getting To and From School Safely**
- **Stranger Awareness:** Teach children to never approach or accept rides from strangers. Establish a safe word only your family knows for emergency pickups by a trusted adult.
- **Buddy System:** When possible, encourage walking to and from school with a group of friends or siblings. There is safety in numbers.
- **Bus Stop Safety:** Wait for the bus in a well-lit, visible area. Stand back from the curb and stay aware of your surroundings. Once on the bus, remain seated.
- **Digital Safety & Boundaries**
- **Privacy Matters:** Instruct children never to share personal information like their full name, address, school name, or phone number with strangers online or in person.
- **Open Dialogue:** Foster an environment where your child feels comfortable telling you about any uncomfortable interactions, both online and offline, without fear of getting in trouble.



For College Students

- **Securing Your New Space**
- **Dorm Room Safety:** Always lock your door, even if you're just going down the hall. Use a doorstop alarm or a portable lock for added security while sleeping or studying.
- **Fire Safety:** Locate the nearest fire exits and alarm pulls. Avoid overloading outlets and never leave candles or cooking food unattended.
- **Valuables:** Keep laptops, wallets, and other valuables out of plain sight. Use a locking drawer or safe to store important documents and valuable items.
- **Navigating Campus & Social Life**
- **Map Your Route:** Before the first day, walk your class route during daylight. Identify well-lit pathways, emergency blue light phones, and safe buildings to duck into if needed.
- **Trust Your Gut:** If a situation or person feels off, remove yourself immediately. Your intuition is a powerful safety tool.
- **Party Smart:** Use the buddy system. Always keep your drink in your hand and covered. Pre-arrange a check-in time with a friend and have a plan for getting home safely, like a trusted rideshare or campus shuttle.

For Everyone: A Strong Foundation

- **Emergency Contacts:** Ensure students have important numbers memorized or saved in their phones, including parents, campus security, and local police.
- **Cyber Safety:** Use strong, unique passwords for all school accounts. Be wary of phishing emails disguised as university communications.
- **Mental Health:** The transition back to school can be stressful. Learn the resources available, including school counselors, disability services, mental health hotlines, and student support groups. It's a sign of strength to ask for help.

A little preparation goes a long way in building a safe and confident school year. Here's to a year of great learning and even greater safety!