National School Bus Safety Week is coming up!

Every day from Monday 10/22, to Friday 10/26, be sure to educate yourself and share at least one fact about school bus safety!

Everything you need to know about school bus safety is here in this convenient kit! Every day of this week has a different, but equally important, theme to refresh your knowledge on. You will also find suggested social media posts for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to share if you would like to enter this critical conversation. You can use the available posts verbatim, or use them as an inspiration to create your own content!

Just make sure to use the hashtag:
#sbsw2k18

...on all of your School Bus Safety Week posts to make sure we’re all taking part in the same dialogue and can join each others’ conversations!
Monday’s School Bus Safety Theme is Distracted Driving Awareness!

Driving while distracted is not only dangerous for the individuals doing it, but subsequently for everybody else on or near the roads. Distracted driving is a topic in and of itself, but it becomes a topic of School Bus Safety when it compromises the safety of students. Distracted driving poses a hazard to many children around the times they commute to and get out of school, which also happen to be common work commuting times. Distracted drivers run the risk of passing stopped school buses or speeding in a school zone.

By definition, distracted driving is participating in any act that prevents you from just driving, therefore prevents you from driving to the best of your ability. There are three categories of distracted driving: **Manual**, which makes you take your hand(s) off the steering wheel, **Visual**, which makes you take your eyes off the road, and **Cognitive**, which makes you take your mind off the act of driving.

**Visual** and **Cognitive** distractions can cause drivers to overlook or ignore signs, like the school zone sign or a school bus’s stop arm, that are intended to keep children safe. Some of these distractions include, but are not limited to:

- Most obviously, texting on your cellphone.
- Using the voice to text feature on a smartphone.
- Taking pictures or videos while driving.
- Reading ANYTHING (books, papers, emails, texts, social media, etc.)
- Talking to somebody on your cell phone while holding the phone up to your ear OR while they are on speakerphone.
- Having an intense conversation with one of your passengers.
- Fiddling with your car’s entertainment system.
- Using voice commands to operate your car’s entertainment system.
- Using a GPS system.
- Looking at a map.
- Adjusting mirrors while driving.
- Listening and singing along to your music.
- Fixing your hair.
- Fixing your makeup.
- Looking or reaching for items on the passenger seat/backseat/floor.
- Driving while feeling strong emotions.
- Gawking at wrecks or other road drama.

Knowing the numerous activities that actually count as distracted driving is the first step to eliminating unsafe practices from our driving routines. Next time you get behind the wheel, take note of every time your eyes leave the road momentarily or your mind drifts off. What were you doing? Identify what activities cause you to drive distracted, and eliminate them to keep yourself and others safe!

**Time to share what you learned!**

**Images**
*(Click on image for high-res download)*

**Text**
*(Good for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram)*

It’s every driver’s civic duty to obey the rules of the road, and stop for school buses. Don’t compromise your ability to drive safely and protect kids; don’t drive distracted! #sbsw2k18
Tuesday’s School Bus Safety Theme is Passing the Reds!

“Passing the reds” is the act of driving past a stopped school bus that has its red lights flashing, stop arm extended, and is loading or unloading children. This is highly illegal because it endangers kids’ lives.

The legal implications of passing the reds, at least in the state of Pennsylvania, include all of the following:

- $250 fine
- 60-day driver’s license suspension
- 5 points on your driving record (the maximum amount of points given for any individual moving violation in the state of PA)

In a worst-case-scenario, if you pass the reds and hit a student, you’ll have to deal with numerous other legal repercussions, as well as immense guilt and sorrow after the incident.

Over 700 drivers annually in the state of PA get convicted of passing a stopped school bus, and many more are guilty, but never get caught or charged. We often wonder why people pass stopped school buses, and there could be several reasons why. Firstly, it could be due to the driver being distracted and simply missing the signals, hence why we dedicated a whole day to distracted driving. It could also be that the driver simply does not care, but people with that lack of compassion come few and far between. The perhaps most likely reason why people pass the reds is that they don’t know when to stop, or they don’t know they have to stop at all. It is very important to know when to stop:

- When a school bus turns on yellow flashing lights, it means they are preparing to come to a stop, so all other motorists should slow down.
- When following a school bus that switches on its red lights, you must stop behind it and not attempt to go around it.
- Even if you are on a road that has two or more lanes going in the same direction, if you...
Passing the Reds

Continued...

- When approaching in the other lane on the other side of the road, you must stop on roadways with ridged or grooved dividers
- When approaching in the other lane, you must stop on roadways with painted lines or dividers
- When approaching an intersection a bus is stopped at, ALL cars must stop regardless if it is an all-way stop or not.

Time to share what you learned!

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<th>Images (Click on image for high-res download)</th>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Just like any other time... STOP ON RED!" /></td>
<td>Passing a school bus with its red lights flashing is not only illegal, it puts children’s lives at risk. Always stop on red! #sbsw2k18</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Protect children’s lives!" /></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="ALL MUST STOP!" /></td>
<td>Know when to stop Part 1: You MUST stop when approaching a stopped school bus on a road with painted dividers. #sbsw2k18</td>
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are traveling in the same direction as a stopped bus, you must stop and not drive around it.
Know when to stop Part 2: You MUST stop when approaching a stopped school bus on a road with ridged or grooved dividers. #sbsw2k18

Know when to stop Part 3: You MUST stop coming up behind a stopped school bus, even if multiple lanes travel in the same direction. On roads with physical dividers like walls, cars traveling on the opposite side than a school bus can proceed. #sbsw2k18

Know when to stop Part 4: When approaching an intersection a school bus is stopped at, ALL cars must stop regardless if it is an all-way stop or not. #sbsw2k18

*Note: For Facebook and Instagram, the Parts 1-4 posts can be utilized as separate posts, or combined into one post
Wednesday’s School Bus Safety Theme is Safety Outside the Bus!

School bus safety, as we’ve seen these past few days, extends way past what happens ON the bus. In fact, the majority of issues regarding school bus safety are caused by actions people, including students, parents, and drivers, take outside and around the bus.

The problems facing students include crossing the street to get to and from their bus (as we’ve discussed the past two days, drivers sometimes pass stopped school buses due to distraction or negligence), getting out of sight of their driver, or being confronted by strangers at their bus stop. There are several things students can do to ensure their safety around the school bus:

- Don’t run outside the bus
- Stay out of the Danger Zone. This means you should always stay 5 big steps away from the sides and front of the bus
- Don’t walk behind the bus
- Always stay in sight of your driver, so don’t crouch down around the bus
- Always look both ways before crossing the street because sometimes cars don’t stop for school buses

There are also steps parents can take to ensure their kids’ safety around the bus and at the bus stop, including:

- Make sure your children know the rules of the bus, including how to safely board and exit
- Coordinate with other parents to make sure there is an adult waiting at the bus stop every day, especially with children under 10 years old
- Always make sure your kids are at the bus stop 5 minutes early to ensure nobody is rushing around
- When meeting at the bus after school, wait on the same side of the street as the kids will exit the bus on, so they don’t have to cross the road alone
- If you or another adult can’t be there, make sure the kids know to look both ways before crossing the road.

For both **kids and parents**, it is important to **get to know your bus driver**. They might have some safety tips or tricks that are specific to their areas or routes, such as a special hand signal to show their students when is safe to cross the road.

**Time to share what you learned!**

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<td><img src="image-url" alt="Danger Zone" /></td>
<td>The Danger Zone of a school bus is like the blind spot of a car; bus drivers have a hard time seeing their students when they walk in the Danger Zone. Stay out of the Danger Zone to minimize your risk of an incident! #sbsw2k18</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image-url" alt="Checklist" /></td>
<td>Parents play as big of a role in school bus safety as drivers and students do. Know what you can do to keep your kids safe at the bus stop! #sbsw2k18</td>
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Thursday’s School Bus Safety Theme is Safety Inside the Bus!

Student safety inside the school bus is ultimately up to how the students behave while riding the bus. There are several essential rules for kids to follow to ensure that their bus ride is as safe as it can be:

- Always stay sitting in your seat
- Keep feet and belongings out of the aisles
- Don’t stick your hands or head out the windows
- Be careful not to snag any clothing or backpack straps/drawstrings on any part of the bus
- Don’t scream or yell; doing so can distract your driver
- Stand up to get off the bus only when the bus has come to a complete stop
- Always listen to your driver’s rules, they will keep you safe

It is also crucial for students to get to know and trust their bus drivers. It’s important to recognize that school bus drivers first and foremost care about the safety and well-being of their students. A lot of bus drivers act as nurses, counselors, and friends to their kids, talking to them when they’re sad and comforting them when they get hurt.

Because of this, kids shouldn’t be afraid to come to their drivers to tell them about unsafe things happening on the bus. Students should always report if they see somebody being bullied, if they notice somebody breaking the school bus rules, or if they see anything else generally unsafe, and rest assured that their driver will take steps to resolve the issue.
The school bus RULES if you follow the school bus rules! See what we did there? ;) All jokes aside, there are a few basic rules kids need to follow to keep them safe on the school bus, so give your kids this little reminder in honor of School Bus Safety Week! #sbsw2k18

School bus drivers are kids’ safety heroes! All students should know that they can count on their drivers to make the school bus as safe as it can be. #sbsw2k18
Friday’s School Bus Safety Theme is the Safety of School Buses!

We’ve already discussed almost everything that parents, kids, and drivers can do to ensure school bus safety, but perhaps the simplest safety tip we can offer is: **encourage students everywhere to ride the school bus!**

School buses are the safest vehicle on the road. Due to a combination of factors, children are **70x more likely** to arrive to school safely when riding on the school bus rather than in a standard car. School buses are built like egg cartons- with a method called **“compartmentalization.”** The staggered seating and high, sturdy back supports keep kids safe by absorbing energy in the rare case of a collision. Also, because school buses can weigh over 30,000 pounds, and the average car is around 4,000 pounds, a school bus distributes crash force differently, and delivers **much less** force to passengers than standard vehicles.

The lack of seatbelts on buses seems to be the number one safety concern for many, but contrary to popular belief, seatbelts, on school buses at least, can pose **more** of a hazard than a benefit. Picture a situation where there is only one driver with a seatbelt cutter and around forty kids strapped in seatbelts; it would take much longer to evacuate a bus full of seatbelt-confined kids than kids who can freely get up and walk off. In bad situations, such as fires, quick evacuation is essential. As stated above, school buses are designed to absorb impact and distribute **very little** crash force to passengers, so seatbelts would not provide much help anyway in the vast majority of accidents.

In addition to the school buses themselves, their drivers play a key role in keeping children safe. School bus drivers love their kids and care about the safety of every student they transport. They are **trained professionals** who put a lot of effort and passion into their careers. All school bus drivers go through rigorous processes to make sure they’re able to provide the safest and most reliable transportation for children. School bus drivers, at least in the state of PA, must:

- undergo 4 different background checks
- take part in at least 20 hours of school bus-specific instruction
Drivers must also refresh their knowledge every 4 years with at least 10 hours of training to ensure that the students are always in good hands.

**Time to share what you learned!**

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<td><img src="https://via.placeholder.com/150" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Due to a combination of factors, such as the size and design of school buses and the professionalism of their drivers, kids are 70x more likely to get to school safely when riding in a school bus rather than any other form of transportation. Stay safe, ride the bus! #sbsw2k18</td>
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School buses are the safest vehicles on the road, and there are plenty of reasons, from the structure of the bus to the expertise of the driver, as to why this is. Stay safe, ride the bus! #sbsw2k18
Key Takeaways

Overall, school bus safety is the responsibility of school bus drivers, students, parents, and civilians alike, and it is the responsibility of those who know the facts about school bus safety to inform people who might not be aware.

Be sure to share what you learned in this kit, and use the hashtag:

#sbsw2k18

...on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to become part of the conversation!

School Bus Safety Week raises awareness and sparks conversation about a topic that should be discussed year round. Let this be a week full of learning that initiates an ongoing dialogue; let’s make a collective effort to educate others on school bus safety until commuting to school is safe everyday, at all times, for every student!

Thank you for reading,
and we hope to see you join our social conversation!

ROHRER
School Transportation • Shuttle Service

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