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National School Bus Safety Week (Oct. 19–23) Promotes Safety Aspects of Yellow School Bus

Austin, Texas – Annually held during the third full week of October, National School Bus Safety Week encourages parents, students, teachers, motorists, school bus operators, school administrators and the public to promote the importance of school bus safety. The yellow school bus saves hundreds of lives every year, has a positive impact on the environment and connects children to essential learning opportunities.

A recently distributed American School Bus Council (ASBC) brochure noted the safety benefits of the school bus:

- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), school buses are the safest form of transportation to and from school.
- School buses meet 48 federal safety standards—more than any vehicle on the road.
- Riding a school bus is 70 times safer than riding in a passenger vehicle and 10 times safer than walking to school.
- School buses are driven by professionals who undergo extensive pre-service training, driving certification and additional testing to ensure that they can drive safely and protect students.
- School buses replace 36 passenger cars, thereby helping reduce traffic by keeping more than 17 million cars off the road in the U.S. each year.
- Technology isn't just for passenger cars. School buses are becoming even safer, thanks to features like stop-arm cameras, student tracking, lane departure systems and more.

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School Bus Safety Tips in Response to COVID-19

“The yellow school bus epitomizes the gold standard of safety in transporting children to school,” says Curt Macysyn, Executive Director of the National School Transportation Association (NSTA). “School buses are the safest way to get to and from school. And even in a COVID-19 world, that remains true. But this year, as we promote the importance of taking an active role in school bus safety, the presence of COVID-19 has required implementing new safety measures to specifically address COVID-19.”

In the midst of COVID-19, the school bus industry has been on the forefront of promoting a safe return to school. Student Transportation Aligned for Return to School, or STARTS Task Force—a collaboration of the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), National School Transportation Association (NSTA) and school bus manufacturers—have been working together to research, review, and report on matters relating to COVID-19 and student transportation. The goal of this task force is to provide resources for student transportation professionals and their stakeholders to be used in the design and development of school opening plans and the development of sustainable operational support in a time of COVID-19.

“The task force knows that education starts with transportation, so we continue to work to prepare school districts across the nation for the challenges of in-person school start and operations in 2020–21,” said Mike Martin, executive director of NAPT.

While the school bus is and will remain one of the safest ways for students to get to and from school, there are now added precautions that students and school administrators must consider for a safe ride. National School Bus Safety week is a great time to remind students and parents of these extra precautions that individuals in the industry are taking to ensure a safe ride for students.

- School bus drivers, bus aides and all members of the transportation staff will undergo ongoing monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms via screenings, self-monitoring, and routine testing. Individuals who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be asked to stay home until it is deemed safe for them to return to work.
- Drivers, aides and staff will wear a mask and possibly other PPE in accordance with state and local guidelines and sanitize their hands throughout the day.
- Schools will increase ongoing and routine cleaning and sanitization of high-touch surfaces within school buses such as handrails, seat backs, etc. Increased deep cleaning will also take place as needed.
- Students may be required to wear face coverings, and parents may be expected to ensure they do not allow their children to board the bus if they exhibit COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed to the virus.
- Based on reopening plans and locally adopted school schedules, many districts may alter routes, seat assignments and plans for extracurricular travel.
- School districts will also have additional procedures and requirements in place for special needs students.

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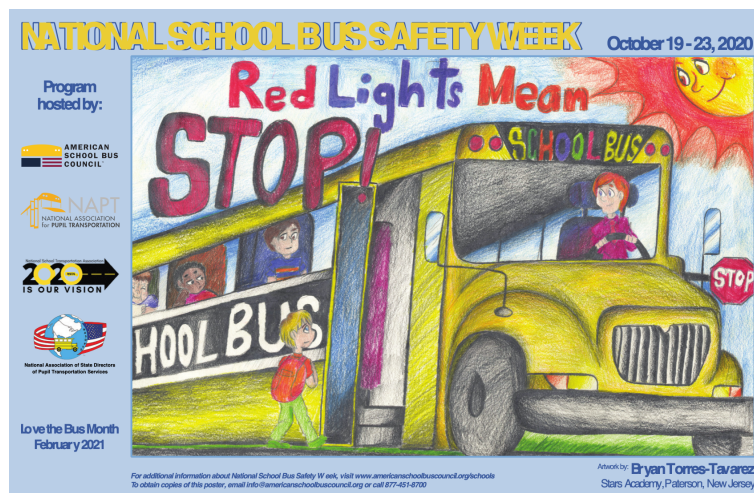
In addition to these new COVID-19 measures, Charlie Hood, NASDPTS Executive Director, also encourages the public to treat students as pedestrians to help keep them safe while traveling to school. He noted that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has designated October as National Pedestrian Safety Month and encourages motorists to be aware of students by following slower speed limits in school zones and in neighborhoods where children are present.

“Knowing when to stop for a bus if you are a driver and how to approach and leave the bus if you are a passenger is imperative,” adds Hood.

National School Bus Safety Week Poster Content

Annually, ASBC encourages students to enter its poster contest to help artistically represent the safety theme through a child’s eyes. Thousands of school districts in more than 40 states participate in local- and state-level competitions. The winning posters are used to promote safer school transportation for everyone. State winners advance to the national contest.

“Red Lights Mean STOP!” is the 2019/2020 School Bus Safety Week theme. The theme highlights the importance of motorists knowing when to stop for a school bus that is picking up children. Annually, the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) conducts a one-day study of illegal school bus passing incidents throughout the U.S. In 2018, school bus drivers in 38 states recorded 83,944 incidents during that one-day count, suggesting that as many as 15 million vehicles could be illegally passing school buses and their students each 180-day school year.



In 2019, a poster drawn by Bryan Torres-Tavarez, a 12th grader at Stars Academy in Paterson, NJ, was chosen to promote the “Red Means STOP!” theme. As the overall winner, Torres-Tavarez received a \$500 check, and 54,000 copies of his poster have been printed and distributed across the nation to schools and other locations to promote bus safety.

ASBC and the industry is already looking toward next year’s National School Bus Safety week when the theme will be “Be Safe-Know the Danger Zone.” Posters can be drawn anytime between September 2020

and February 12, 2021. The posters must be submitted to state directors by January 1, 2021 or the designated individual state deadline.

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For information on the Danger Zone or to download material, please check out American School Bus Council's flyers and animated video on the Danger Zone at <http://schoolbusfacts.com/safety/>.

Each participating U.S. state, Canadian province, or overseas U.S. military installation may submit one (only *first-place* winners) winning poster to ASBC in each of the following categories:

- **Division #1** - Grades K–2
- **Division #2** - Grades 3–5
- **Division #3** - Grade 6–8
- **Division #4** - Special Education (Grades K–12)
- **Division #5** - CAD (Computer-Aided Drawing)
- **Division #6** - International entries

Prizes will be awarded for each division as follows:

- 1st Place and Overall Winner - \$500 check
- 1st Place Winners of remaining 3 divisions - \$250 check
- 2nd Place Winners of each 4 divisions - \$100 check
- 3rd Place Winners of each 4 divisions - \$50 check
- 1st Place Winner – CAD division - \$50 check
- 1st Place Winner – International division - \$50 check

Poster winners will be notified, and prizes will be sent in May 2021. The 1st Place/Overall winning poster will be used to promote National School Bus Safety Week for 2021.

For information on the poster contest or to obtain copies, email deb@americanschoolbuscouncil.org.

Resources

[COVID-19 Safety Tips](#)

[COVID-19 Safety Flyer](#)

[School Bus Safety Tips](#)

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About ASBC

ASBC is a coalition of public and private transportation providers, school bus manufacturers and state officials responsible for pupil transportation. The Council's members include NAPT (National Association for Pupil Transportation), NASDPTS (National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services), NSTA (National School Transportation Association), Blue Bird Corp. of Fort Valley, Georgia, IC Corporation of Lisle, Illinois, and Thomas Built Buses of High Point, North Carolina.

