Safe school travel
A lesson for everyone

Queensland Government
Queensland Transport
Each year dozens of Queensland children are injured travelling to and from school.

As adults it's our responsibility to reduce the risk and make our streets safer for children.

Children need to learn road safety survival skills first-hand. These skills are easy to learn, but sadly many children miss out. Make sure you always set a good example for children. They learn more from what you do, than what you say.

This booklet offers some simple safe school travel tips for everyone - motorists, families with school children and students who drive to school.

We all have a role to play in school road safety, and with a little extra care, the roads can be safer for children.
Lesson #2
Driving near schools

Children can be unpredictable so always slow down around schools. Watch for children riding, walking or getting out of vehicles.

Observe school zone signs. These require you to travel at lower speeds at certain hours.

Keep an eye out for children at pedestrian crossings and always stop for them.

Be alert when driving past a stationary bus as children often dash out in front of and from behind buses to cross the road.

Never double park.

Never park in “no standing” zones.

When you see a School Crossing Supervisor obey their instructions. Stop if they tell you to stop, and wait until they return to the kerb before proceeding.

Make sure you don’t park on pedestrian crossings. This is an offence because it makes it difficult for children to cross and difficult for other motorists to see children.

When driving your children to school, use the time to remind them of what they need to do to be safe on or near the road. Explain possible dangers to them and point out safety strategies such as wearing a seat belt.

Set a good example to children by always wearing your seatbelt. Ensure everyone is buckled up before proceeding.

If the school has a passenger set down area, use it. If not, park your car on the same side of the road as the school so your children do not have to cross the road. Ask them to get in and out of the car on the kerb side, not the road side.

Don’t call children across the road to meet you - many young children die this way. It is safer for you to cross the road to meet them.
Lesson #3
Catching a bus

Walk children to the bus stop for some time, particularly if they are in primary school.

Make sure your child stays well back from the kerb when the bus comes, so it becomes standard practice when they do it on their own.

It is also important to make sure your child knows which bus to catch and where they need to get off. Write down the bus number, company or colour of the bus for them if you think they may forget.

Have the right money, their bus pass or ticket ready.

Make sure your child knows that they should wait for the bus to stop before getting on or off it.

Teach your child to be courteous to the driver and other passengers, and not to distract the driver during the trip. They should also keep their hands, head and legs inside the bus at all times.

Many children dash onto the road in front or behind buses when they get off. Make sure your child knows that they should wait until the bus has gone before crossing the road.

Meet your child at the bus stop after school so they learn to walk home or cross the road safely. Don’t call them across the road...walk across to meet them.
Lesson #4
Walking to School

Walking to school is great exercise and gives children the chance to learn about road safety. However, it is recommended you walk to school with primary school children and point out the dangers to them.

Show them the safest route to school. It is usually the way with the least traffic and fewest roads to cross.

The footpath is always the safest place to walk. Encourage children not to play with balls or other toys when walking to school as they may dash onto the road to retrieve them. Teach your child to look out for vehicles coming in and out of driveways.

While you are walking with children, explain what they need to watch for. Teach your child the following simple rules: Stop at the kerb, look right, look left, then right again, listen for cars approaching and think before crossing.

Ask your child to explain these steps back to you, so you can make sure they really understand what to do.

Get your child thinking about some of the dangers that might exist. Ask:
- Is this a safe place to cross?
- Is there somewhere better to cross, like a pedestrian crossing?
- Can I be seen by motorists?
- How fast is the traffic moving?
- Do I feel safe crossing here?

Remind your child that they should only cross at lights when the green “walk” sign is showing and only at pedestrian crossings when cars have stopped for them.

If there is a School Crossing Supervisor, teach your child to obey them at all times and only cross when the supervisor has signalled that it is safe to do so.
Lesson #5
Riding a bike

Deciding when your child is ready and able to ride safely to and from school is very important. Riding a bike is a great way to get to school, however, it's a good idea to accompany your child until you are confident they have the necessary skills to get there safely.

It is recommended that unaccompanied primary school children do not ride on the road, as they generally do not possess the necessary skills to be aware of, and deal with, on-road traffic.

Don't just give your child a bike for Christmas or their birthday. Give them the skills to ride it safely by enrolling them in a Bike Ed course. Call your local Road Safety Consultant (under Queensland Transport - Road Safety in the White Pages) for details.

If your child rides to school show them the safest possible route.

Make sure you buy them a correctly fitted bike helmet. Helmets should always be worn securely for proper protection. Police issue fines for helmets not worn or incorrectly worn. A correctly fitted bike helmet stays securely in place and does not move backwards or forwards when the child moves their head.

Brightly coloured shoes and clothing help motorists to see children.

If your child is in primary school they should ride on the footpath rather than the road.

Make sure you tell your child not to be towed by a vehicle, to never 'double' other children, and to ride no more than two abreast, only when it is safe to do so.

Ensure your child always rides on the left hand side of the road.

Place a flag plus a red reflector at the back of the bike and a white reflector at the front to help motorists to see riders.
The more young people in the car, the higher the chance of a crash. So whether you're the driver or a passenger, your attitude is very important.

Passengers

Be responsible and consider how your behaviour can affect the driver. You are responsible for your own actions, regardless of what your peers may say or do.

Driving is a complex task. Distracting the driver could cause a crash.

Always buckle up. Even passengers can be fined $105 for not wearing a seat belt.

Drivers

Slow down around schools. Human bodies are not designed to withstand crashes. Stay alert and scan the environment. Don't be distracted by passengers or music and don't take any risks.

Drivers should make sure everyone buckles up. Don't risk losing $105 and three points.

Young drivers are especially at risk of the Fatal 4 - speeding, driving tired, drunk driving and driving unbuckled. Use your common sense to avoid these dangers. Watch your speed at all times... every K over is a killer. If you're driving a long way, remember to take a break every two hours. Always wear a seat belt and remember it's illegal to drink and drive.

Parents and young drivers

Help young drivers get plenty of experience behind the wheel with an adult passenger, before they go solo.

The risk to young motorists rises the more young occupants there are in the vehicle. Talk this over with your young driver so they understand the risks.

Explain to them the financial, personal, social and legal consequences of unsafe driving.
For more information
www.roadsafety.net
www.transport.qld.gov.au