

Streetsville Village Times Article- September 2011

It's back to school time again! As the school doors open, traffic gets a little heavier on our streets. People are back from holidays, school buses and public transit are on regular routes, and more people are walking, cycling, or driving to school. In fact, there is a 25% increase in traffic at the beginning of the school year, so make sure to allow more time for commuting to school in the mornings. To help you and your family stay safe this school year, here are some useful tips for back to school time:

School Safety Tips

1) Observe School Zone Speeds

Although you should always obey posted speed limits, it is especially important during the school year. Children crossing the road on their way to and from school can easily get distracted and step into harm's way. Slowing down and being vigilant is crucial to keeping kids safe. Children are often out throughout the day at recess, lunch, and for certain classes, so it's important to drive slowly throughout the day.

2) Obey the Crossing Guard

A crossing guard is there to keep children safe. If you come up to a set of lights, and the light turns green, but the crossing guard still says stop, follow his/her direction and not the traffic light. There might be a child still crossing the street that you can't see.

3) Watch for Darting Children

Kids are small and easily distracted, and for drivers, this can create dangerous situations on the roads. Be vigilant and alert behind the wheel. You never know when a small child might step out from between parked cars or off a sidewalk.

4) Walking to School

If your children will be walking to school, make sure you discuss walking routes with them. Perhaps you can walk to school a few times with your children to make sure they are comfortable with the route. Always choose a safe and direct route to school and identify any hazards on this route (train tracks, busy intersections, water bodies, etc.). Stay on sidewalks whenever possible, and if there is no sidewalk, use the left side of the road facing traffic. Remember to cross streets only at crosswalks, wait until traffic comes to a stop before crossing, and learn to look to the left, the right and then left again before proceeding, even at intersections with pedestrian walk signs.

5) School Buses

School bus safety is very important! Make sure children wait well away from the road and stay back until the school bus makes a full stop and the doors open. Children must walk at least three metres (10 feet) away when crossing in front of the bus so the driver can see them. When driving your car near a school bus, please note that extra caution is needed and you should always watch for school buses. You shouldn't pass a school bus when the signal lights are flashing (as children are often crossing the road at that time), and drive slowly as a general precaution. Remember to be patient at this time of year— school bus drivers are still learning the bus routes and have nervous kids on board!

Also, if your child does not qualify for bussing due to distance requirements call the school after the second week and ask for a "Guest Pass" under the "Fill Up the Bus" Policy (usually issued on a first come, first served basis).

Last but not least, have children be aware and be careful near the Credit River or Mullet Creek, as well as the CPR tracks. No walking is permitted along any railroad tracks, and there is a fine for trespassing. As always, if you need any assistance on this or any other municipal matter, please don't hesitate to call my office at 905-896-5011, or e-mail at george.carlson@mississauga.ca. Have a safe and happy 2011-2012 school year!