

INFORMATION BULLETIN
2011EDUC0071-001084
Aug. 31, 2011

Ministry of Education

Back-to-school tips to keep students safe

VICTORIA - With students heading back to school on Sept. 6, here are some tips to help them stay safe at school and at home:

All Parents:

* Ensure your children always wear a helmet and other protective gear when playing sports, riding their bikes, using scooters or skateboarding. Ensure helmets fit properly and that your children secure the chin strap every time they go for a ride.

Parents of Primary Students:

* Find a safe route to and from school and practise it with your children.

* Join an existing Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train, or start up your own with other parents in your neighbourhood. For details, visit the DASH BC website

http://www.dashbc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=57&Itemid=80

* Identify safe places along the route, such as a friend's house, where your children can go if they encounter trouble.

* Discuss how to safely interact with strangers:

www.safekidsbc.ca/parent_street_proofing.htm

* Ensure your children understand traffic safety, such as how to cross the street, board the school bus and what to do and whom to contact in the event of a natural disaster.

* If your child has food allergies, co-ordinate with the school principal on an updated emergency plan that best meets your child's needs.

Parents of Intermediate/Middle School Students:

* Help your children pack their backpacks, and ensure their backpacks weigh no more than 10 to 20 per cent of their body weight. Pack It Light, Wear It Right

<http://www.bcchiro.com/bcca/your-spine-your-health/health-tips/school-backpack-program.html>

* Make sure your children use both shoulder straps when carrying their backpacks. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles and may even increase the curvature of their spines.

* Discuss your children's safe route to school and ensure it is still effective. Note any changes in safe stops, such as friends moving to or from the neighbourhood.

* Talk to your children about appropriate school behaviour, and remind them what to do and whom to talk to if they encounter bullying, including online bullying.

* Help your children understand how to safely use the Internet and how to protect their privacy - for some tips, check out this video

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdZtApRKfaQ&feature=player_profilepage

Parents of Secondary Students:

* Talk to your teenagers about being safe drivers and passengers. Let them know it is okay to say "no" to getting into a car with someone they feel is an unsafe driver.

* Encourage your teens to talk to you about issues that are important to them, including peer pressure, drugs and alcohol, and sexuality.

* Let your teenagers grow and help to provide them with a sense of confidence. This is the best defence against peer pressure.

This Information Bulletin is available in French at:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/docs/2011/tips-safety_fr.pdf

In Chinese at:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/docs/2011/tips-safety_ch.pdf

In Punjabi at:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/docs/2011/tips-safety_pu.pdf

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