




GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Proceed with caution during school bus safety week

Texas School Bus Safety Week is October 17-21 and Goose Creek CISD officials are urging Baytown and Highlands area residents to pay extra attention to school bus safety and the safety of children as they go to and from school.

"The safety of our kids is Goose Creek CISD's top priority. To keep bus riders safe, motorists need to be cautious when children get on and off the bus," said Goose Creek CISD Superintendent Dr. Toby York.

School buses remain one of the safest modes of transportation in Texas and transport 1.4 million Texas children every school day. School buses account for less than one-half of one percent of all Texas roadway crashes.

Nationwide, students are nearly eight times safer riding in a school bus than with their own parents and guardians in cars, according to a 2002 study from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The most serious threat to school bus safety is drivers passing stopped school buses when their lights are flashing.

"Passing a school bus while loading and unloading students is illegal in all 50 states," Dr. York said. "The flashing red lights and stop-arm are obvious signals for motorists to stop."

According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, reckless drivers can face fines of up to \$1,000, plus court costs if they are convicted of disregarding laws related to school zones or school buses.

Goose Creek CISD has 198 school buses on the road each week, serving nearly 13,000 students.

On Tuesday, Oct. 18, Goose Creek CISD bus drivers, along with over 25,000 other bus drivers across the state, will be conducting a survey by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). The purpose of this survey is aimed at bringing awareness of illegal passing incidents involving school district buses.

"Our drivers will be collecting data on the number of times and locations of illegal passing of your child's bus," said Goose Creek CISD Transportation Director Rick Walterscheid.

"This data will then be collected by DPS in hopes to bring awareness to the seriousness of illegally passing a bus while loading and unloading students," Walterscheid adds that Goose Creek CISD has been selected by DPS to participate in their "ride along program."

During School Bus safety Week, it may be common to see a uniformed DPS trooper riding on some Goose Creek CISD buses with marked and unmarked patrol units waiting.

"The purpose of their ride along will be to conduct bus driver observation, educate students, and stop arm violation observations," said Walterscheid. "It is very possible during this week that violators of the 'bus stop arm' law could be ticketed and/or cited for creating a hazardous situation for the children we serve."



Safety Tips for Students –

- Stay away from the Danger Zones. Areas within 10 feet to the front, back, and sides of a bus are the most dangerous spots.
- If you drop something near the bus, never bend down or crawl under the bus to get it – ask your driver for help.
- If you must cross the street, always do so in front of the bus. Make sure the red lights are flashing and always walk outside of the Danger Zone so the driver can see you.
- Be on time for your school bus. Never run after or next to a bus.
- Pay attention. Listen and look both ways before stepping off the bus or crossing the street. Don't let sweatshirt hoods or headphones block your vision or hearing.

Safety Tips for Parents –

- If you drop off or pick up your child at school, do not park in a bus only zone. You risk the possibility of collision in a limited space, and pose a great risk to the safety of kids walking through a danger zone area.
- Check your child's clothing and backpack to make sure there are no loose drawstrings or long straps that could get caught in a bus door.
- Make sure your child gets to the bus stop on time.
- Remind your child that if they are late for their bus to never run across the street, never run after the bus, and don't bang on the side. It's better to miss the bus than rush and risk getting hit by a car.

Safety Tips for Motorists –

- Stop at least 10 feet away from a school bus that has its red lights flashing and stop arm extended.
- Never pass a school bus when its stoplights are flashing.
- Be aware that every school vehicle must come to a complete stop at every railroad crossing.
- Be extra vigilant driving around school hours; assume a child might run out at any moment.
- Be courteous to school buses, give the buses room and let the bus drivers change lanes when they need to.

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