

## Back to School

To help you stay safe and healthy this school year, McGruff the Crime Dog® says:

- Work out a safe route to school with your parents. Choose the quickest way with the fewest street crossings and use intersections with crossing guards. Stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields, and other places where there aren't many people around.
- Whenever possible walk to and from school with a friend, neighbor, brother, or sister. Don't go by yourself.
- Be sure you know your home phone number (including area code) and address, the numbers of your parents at work and of another trusted adult, and how to use 911 for emergencies.
- Never talk to strangers or accept rides or gifts from strangers. Remember, a stranger is anyone you or your parents don't know well and trust.
- If you bike or skate to school, wear a helmet. And don't forget to lock up your bike with a sturdy lock wherever you leave it.
- If you're home alone after school, check in with a parent or neighbor as soon as you walk in the door.
- Let parents and friends know if you stay late after school. Get permission first if you want to play with a friend instead of going home.

If you see anyone doing something that makes you uneasy or you think isn't right—a stranger hanging around the school playground, a bigger kid bullying younger children, vandalism or graffiti for example—tell your parents, a teacher, or another trusted adult. That helps McGruff Take A Bite Out Of Crime®!

## Back To School—A Checklist for Parents

- Be sure your child knows his or her home phone number (including area code) and address, your work number, the number of another trusted adult, and how to use 911 for emergencies. Make sure your child has enough change to make a phone call or they carry a telephone calling card.
- Plan a walking route to school or the bus stop. Choose the most direct way with the fewest street crossing and use intersections with crossing guards. Test the route with your child. Tell him or her to stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields, and other places where there aren't many people around.
- Teach children—whether walking, biking, or riding the bus to school—to obey all traffic signals, signs, traffic officers, and safety patrols. Remind them to be extra careful in rainy, foggy, or snowy weather.
- Make sure they walk to and from school with others—a friend, neighbor, brother, sister.
- When car pooling, drop off and pick up children as close to school as possible. Don't leave until they have entered the school yard or building.
- Teach your child never to talk to strangers or accept rides or gifts from strangers. Remember, a stranger is anyone you or your children doesn't know well or doesn't trust.
- If your child is home alone for a few hours after school:
  - Set up rules for locking doors and windows, answering the door or telephone.
  - Talk about what activities your child can and can not do while home alone.
  - Make sure he or she checks in with you or a neighbor immediately after school.
  - Agree on rules for inviting friends over and for going to a friend's house when no adult is home.
- Take time to listen carefully to children's fears and feelings about people or places that scare them or make them feel uneasy. Tell them to trust their instincts. Take complaints about bullies and other concerns seriously.