

Montgomery County Public Schools Strategy to Support Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Traffic Safety

Overview:

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) places the physical, social, and psychological well-being of our students as a priority. Physical well-being focuses on pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic safety. Following the recent pedestrian incidents across Montgomery County, MCPS is increasing the focus on student pedestrian safety.

Department of Transportation (DOT):

- **Current State:** School bus transportation is provided to students who: live more than one mile from their elementary school, 1.5 miles from their middle school, or two miles from their high school; do not have an age-appropriate safe walk route to school even within the non-transported distances above; and have special needs that make walking to school unsafe.
- **Ongoing work includes the following:**
 - DOT works with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD), State Highway Administration, and other partners involved in the safety of student pedestrians and bicyclists to maximize safety for student pedestrians and cyclists.
 - Non-transported areas are reviewed at least annually, and anytime there is a change to the pedestrian safety characteristics of the area.
 - Whenever there is no age-appropriate safe walking route to school, school bus transportation is provided regardless of distance to or from school.
 - Changes could include the addition of sidewalks, pedestrian signals, or other factors that would change an area from not walkable to walkable.
 - Changes could include the removal of sidewalks, construction of a new roadway, or other factors that would change an area from walkable to not walkable.
 - Some walking routes that would otherwise not be walkable are made walkable by the presence of an adult crossing guard.
- **What we will do:**
 - DOT will conduct a review of all walking routes in spring 2019, to find opportunities to add buses for fall 2019.
 - DOT will partner with the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (MCCPTA) on seeking engineering enhancements to areas where students walk to schools and school bus stops and wait at school bus stops. This action started on November 2018 and will go on through December 2019.

Pre-K–12 Curriculum:

- Pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic safety are concepts presented through health and physical education classes from elementary grades through high school.
- Instruction is presented in the Safety and Injury Prevention Unit and incorporates self-management as a health literacy skill.
 - **Safety and Injury Prevention:** Students will demonstrate the ability to apply prevention and intervention knowledge, skills, and processes to promote safe living in home, school, and community.

- Self-Management: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks.
- The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP) partners with Safe Routes to Schools and works with MCDOT and MCPD on several projects to heighten awareness of pedestrian safety to include Walk to School Day and AAA Safety Patrol programs.
- Curriculum Goals:
 - Communicate expectations and frequency of the taught curriculum in pedestrian and bicycle safety to teachers by January 2019. Sample student products will be collected from each grade level to ensure students have been exposed to the topic.
 - Pedestrian, Bicycle and Traffic Safety Instruction Overview:
 - Elementary Schools: Marking Period 2, Week 9 (Pre-K, Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3)
 - Middle Schools: Grade 6, Safety and Injury Prevention Unit
 - High Schools: Self-management Instruction
 - Continue to update health and physical education curriculum with current data, trends, and resources for students, families, and the community by spring 2019. For example, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey 2015 data, MCDOT data, and MCPS materials and resources that are updated through these work efforts.
 - Annually share MCDOT You Only Live Once (YOLO) campaign materials and educators toolkit for use in schools.

Student Engagement and Advocacy:

MCPS staff engaged student leaders through sharing pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic safety concerns and received ideas from student leaders between November 9–26, 2018.

- Student leaders from the Montgomery County Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils (MCR) and the Montgomery County Junior Council (MCJC) will continue to review pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic safety; brainstorm ideas; and take action to enhance the physical well-being of all students in MCPS as follows:
 - Providing feedback on expanding the MCPS video about pedestrian safety to include cyclists and drivers and depict the hazards and consequences using real life videos.
 - Students viewed resources at the December 13, 2018, MCR and MCJC Joint General Assembly, and provided feedback on how to improve them for secondary school student use from February–June 2019.
 - Shared resources at the December 13, 2018, Joint MCR and MCJC General Assembly to initiate the conversation and take the information back to their schools.
- Discuss creation of a student-led social media campaign to increase direct student-to-student advocacy and awareness on December 13, 2018. Students can encourage others to highlight and post their own pictures, videos, memes, and use a special hashtag. Student Government Association members can return to schools to lead this campaign at the school level through spring 2019.
- Advocating for safety needs through the student lens; and sending student representatives to participate with the MCDOT Pedestrian, Bicycle and Traffic and Safety Advisory Committee (PBTSAC).

- PBTSAC is an advisory committee of a group of citizens, elected officials, and government representatives focused on pedestrian and bicycle safety issues in Montgomery County and the implementation of the County's Pedestrian Safety Initiative.
- The meeting dates for PBTSAC are held on the fourth Thursday of the month.
 - March 28, April 25, and May 23, 2019

Communication Campaign:

- During spring 2019, promote pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic safety through the Student Member of the Board (SMOB), Ananya Tadikonda's SMOB minute.
- Develop resolutions for the Board of Education meetings:
 - National Youth Traffic Safety Month—May 2019
 - Bike to School Day—May 8, 2019
 - Walk to School Day—October 2, 2019
- Leverage MCCPTA outreach network to share pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic safety information and the MCPS developed video resource, elementary and secondary tip sheets, to distribute with MCCPTA families and school communities in a future MCCPTA Delegates Assembly meeting.
- Communicate via memorandum to all principals to highlight arrival and dismissal processes at the local school; and disseminate [Parent Tip Sheets for pedestrian](#) elementary and secondary for bicycle, and traffic safety information tip sheets and MCPS video resources on school webpage, parent/guardian communication forums, Parent Teacher Association, SGA, student and parent portals from Dr. Andrew Zuckerman, chief operating officer, by spring 2019.
- Continue safety patrol work and partnerships at local schools with MCPD.
- Communicate with health and physical educators on the pedestrian and bicycle safety instructional materials implementation January–June 2019.
- Enhance the [MCPS website](#) and online resources for pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic safety, spring 2019;
 - For snow, ice, and weather delays: add a pedestrian, bicycle, and/or traffic safety tip to the MCPS Alert system.
 - MCPS Social Media:
 - Add pedestrian, bicycle, and/or traffic safety tips for MCPS delays, school closures;
 - In May 2019, add a safety campaign linked to the resolution to the National Youth Traffic Safety Month (May 2019), Bike Safety Month (May), and Bike to School Day (May 8, 2019).
 - In October 2019, add a pedestrian safety campaign linked to pedestrian safety resolution and Walk to School Day—October 2, 2019.
- Continue partnerships with MCDOT; [YOLO](#).

Tips for Parents and Other Adults For Teaching Pedestrian Safety to Children

SafeRoutes

National Center for Safe Routes to School



TIP SHEET

Walking is a fun and healthy way to spend time with your children while teaching them skills that can serve them well throughout life. The walk to school is a great time to use these safety tips.

Be a walking role model

Children learn through experience. Walking with parents or another caregiver is an important way for children to practice crossing real streets and picking safe places to walk. There is no magic age when children are old enough to walk without an adult. But, as a parent, you should decide when your child has the skills and experience to deal with traffic safely without you.

As you walk with your child, remember these safety tips:

- Wear bright-colored clothes, and carry flashlights or wear reflective gear if it is dark or hard to see.
- Look for traffic at every driveway and intersection. Be aware of drivers in parked cars that may be getting ready to move.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Cross the street safely:
 1. Stop at the curb or edge of the street.
 2. Look left, right, left and behind you and in front of you for traffic.
 3. Wait until no traffic is coming and begin crossing.
 4. Keep looking for traffic until you have finished crossing.
 5. Walk, don't run across the street.



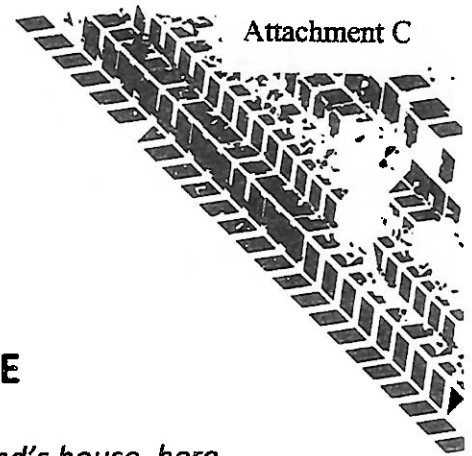
Choose the safest route to school

Select a walking route with less traffic and intersections.

- Pick places where there are sidewalks or paths separated from traffic. If there are no sidewalks or paths, walk as far from the motor vehicles as possible and, if possible, on the side of the street facing traffic.
- Limit the number of street crossings. When available, cross at a location with an adult school crossing guard.
- Avoid crossing busy or high-speed streets.

Understand your child's limitations

Children are not small adults. It will take time and practice for a child to develop the ability to deal with lots of traffic. Over time, children develop the ability to accurately judge the speed and distance of oncoming traffic. Young children may think that a car is able to stop, when in fact, it is not. Also, children may think that if they can see a driver, the driver can see them. But, children are smaller and harder for drivers to see. Get down to a child's height to experience their perspective and see what they see.



HELP US KEEP STUDENTS SAFE

Whether teens are walking to school, the park, or a friend's house, here are a few tips to make sure they get there safely.

Drive safely – drivers are often the cause of crashes!

- Slow down and watch for teens and others walking.
- Stop for people in crosswalks.
- Yield to pedestrians, especially when turning.
- Never drive distracted.

Engage your teen.

- Ask about his or her walking pattern. Emphasize the importance of looking up, listening, and making eye contact when crossing the street.
- Act out various scenarios that your teen might encounter while walking. Demonstrate that it's easy to put your phone down or take headphones off before crossing the street.
- Set a good example by putting away your phone when driving or walking.

What to say to your teen:

- Pedestrians don't always have the right of way. Cross at crosswalks and wait for the walk signal.
- Look up! Keep your head up and devices down while crossing the street.
- Make eye contact with drivers to be sure they see you.
- If you're wearing headphones, pull them down or turn the volume off before you cross the street.
- If you need to use your phone, stop on the sidewalk and find a safe area to talk or text.