

SAFETY ON THE BUS

TEN TIPS FOR PARENTS

If your child is going to start travelling to school alone by bus, here are some ideas you may find useful to help them to "Stay Safe".

1. Make the journey with them a few times before they try it alone. Point out places of interest to help them to "find their bearings". If possible, arrange for your child to meet up and travel as part of a group, or with a friend who lives nearby.
2. Make sure your child has extra money to get home in an emergency. They should inform the school office if they lose their money or need to contact you. A phone card is also a useful insurance. Make sure he/she memorises the contact numbers of some responsible adults in case of difficulties.
3. If your child has a special medical condition, e.g. an extreme allergy, diabetes or epilepsy, make sure they always wear a bracelet or carry a card with details, in case of an attack. On a regular school bus, think about sharing this information with the driver, and asking if he/she has the required First Aid training.
4. Make sure your child's belongings are all clearly marked.
5. Keep to the routine of the same "drop off" point - it avoids confusion and the possibility of mistakes occurring.
6. If your child's other parent has restricted access through a court injunction, make sure you have notified relevant responsible adults.
7. Arrange a safe word that only you and they know. If you choose the word "fish" for instance, they could call you and say "I forgot to feed the goldfish this morning" and you would know they needed to be met at the bus stop, or helped out of an awkward situation. Make sure you change the word if they've ever had to use it.
8. Make sure you have talked to your child about what is safe behaviour on the bus.
9. If your child is bullied on the bus:
 - Ask the driver if they can sit near the front, and away from the bully.
 - Report the problem to the school.
10. Play "What would you do if....?" with your child, as a way of discussing things which may worry them, and talking through strategies to deal with their concerns.

USEFUL SKILLS....

Work with your child on the following skills to keep them safe.

1. **Positive Body Language.** Stand straight, head up, look relaxed and confident. Avoid looking at the floor, hunching shoulders or displaying obvious tension.
2. **Eye Contact.** Look people in the eye when you speak. Don't stare or look afraid - just hold their eyes, calmly and confidently.
3. **Say No!** Say or shout "No!" if there is a bullying problem to get the attention of others who may help.

MORE ABOUT KIDSCAPE

Kidscape is committed to keeping children safe from abuse and to preventing bullying. Kidscape works with children and young people under the age of 16, their parents / carers, and those who work with them.

Kidscape offers:

- A Helpline (08451 205 204) offering support and advice to parents of bullied children
- Confidence Building Sessions for children who are bullied
- A national comprehensive training programme on child safety and behaviour management issues

For more advice about how to deal with bullying, visit the Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk

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