

Safety Tips for Families Walking or Biking to School

- **Establish Safe Walking Route.** Before school begins, walk the routes with your children. Children learn through experience and practice. Choose the safest route to school by selecting a walking route with sidewalks, paths that are separated from traffic. Be sure to communicate potential dangers and safe havens on the walking route. Children should always use sidewalks. Urge your children to walk against traffic and ride bikes with the traffic whenever possible. Make sure there is a safe alternative route in case of an emergency.
- **Do Not Talk to Strangers.** Teach your children to be wary of strangers and to report any suspicious contacts to a trusted adult or 911. It's never okay to accept a ride without parent's permission—even from people who they know. Good rule-of-thumb: never talk to strangers or get close to strange car. [Download Safety Tips from Snohomish County Sheriff's Department.](#)
- **Walk in Groups.** Since there is safety in numbers, urge your children to walk or bike with a buddy.
- **Bike Safety.** Insist that your children wear bike helmets and teach them the bicycle rules of the road. Make sure your child's bike is safe; check the brakes, reflectors, and chain guard or take it to a bike shop for a check-up.
- **Be Visible.** Encourage your child to wear highly visible clothing by wearing bright, light-colors. Provide your child with a flashlight or put reflective tape on the back of backpacks, on helmets, or on bikes.
- **Be on Alert.** It's not safe to wear headphones because you may be unable to hear approaching vehicles.
- **Crossing the Street.** Teach your children to obey all traffic signals, signs and crossing guards. Children should only cross streets at marked crosswalks and always watch for turning vehicles. They should make eye contact with drivers before stepping out into the roadway. Always look both ways and behind/in front before crossing and then continue to keep looking for traffic until finished crossing. Teach children to look around parked cars or other objects blocking their view before crossing the street. It is recommended that children under 10 should cross the street with an adult or older child; however, there is no magic age when children are old enough to walk without an adult.
- **Stay on Route.** Children should always use sidewalks, pathways away from traffic. Teach children to never use "short cuts" that would take them into a wooded, dark area. Make sure there is a safe alternative route in case of an emergency.

Call 911 in the event of an emergency.

[\(Tips for calling 9-1-1 from Snohomish County Sheriff's Department\)](#)