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**City launches back-to-school road safety campaign**

They could be excited, distracted, or new to the neighbourhood – but whatever’s on their mind, kids heading to school this September will be crowding sidewalks and crosswalks to get there.

And the City of Campbell River is reminding drivers, cyclists and parents to watch out for students arriving by foot, bike, bus or car starting Tuesday, Sept. 4.

*“There’s a lot going on when kids are first going back to school. People might be rushing or feeling overwhelmed with a new routine, so it’s important for all of us to remember that the speed limit is 30 in school zones – and to leave the phone alone when driving,”* says Drew Hadfield, the City’s acting general manager of assets and operations.

*“To help keep this a positive time of year for everyone, the City’s back-to-school road safety photos will be featured on Facebook and in City Currents ads in the Mirror newspaper to remind everyone that we need to slow down and stay focused on travelling safely in school zones,”* he adds.

Photos taken near Cedar Elementary School complement reminders about simple measures to help keep everyone safe.

Find additional information about road safety for kids on ICBC’s website at <https://www.icbc.com/road-safety/teaching/Pages/road-safety-for-your-kids.aspx>

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**Safety tips for sharing the road in a school zone and getting children to school*****For dropping off children by car:***

- Don't double park; it blocks visibility for children and vehicles.
- Don't load or unload children across the street from the school.
- Always make sure your children exit the car on the side closest to the sidewalk.
- Never allow a child to cross mid-block.
- Arrange carpools to reduce the number of vehicles at the school.

***For children walking to school with or without adults:***

- Only cross the street at an intersection and use a route where the school has placed crossing guards.
- Walk young children to school for at least the first week to ensure they follow a safe route.
- Accompany children taking new routes or attending new schools.
- Arrange walking to school with a friend or classmate.

***For drivers travelling in a school zone:***

- A 30 km/h speed limit is in effect in school zones from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every school day, unless otherwise posted.
- A vehicle stopped in front or in the lane next to you may be yielding to children crossing so proceed with caution and be prepared to stop.

- Walk around your vehicle before getting in, to make sure no children are hidden from view.
- Always look for pedestrians when backing up.

***Sharing the road with a school bus:***

- Stay alert and aware of surroundings to prevent injury.
- When driving behind a bus, allow a greater following distance than for driving behind cars – to ensure you have time to stop well back when bus lights start flashing.
- Never pass a bus from any direction if lights are flashing; flashing lights indicate the bus has stopped to load or unload children.
- Traffic in both directions must stop and wait until the lights go off and the bus is moving before vehicles can start driving again.

**Sharing the road with children cycling:**

- When passing someone riding a bicycle, proceed in the same direction slowly, and leave at least one metre between car and cyclist.
- When turning left with a cyclist is approaching from the opposite direction, wait for the rider to pass.
- If you're turning right, shoulder check for cyclists and let the rider go through the intersection first.
- Be prepared for children on bicycles to turn in front of you without looking or signaling.
- Be extra vigilant in school zones and residential neighbourhoods.
- Watch for bikes coming from driveways, alleys and parking lots or from behind parked cars.
- Check side mirrors for oncoming bicycles before opening car doors.

**Use of electronic devices while driving:**

- Leave your phone alone. Let calls go to voicemail and ignore text messages while driving.
- Remember using a phone at a stoplight is prohibited.
- Plan to avoid distraction. Turn your phone off or place it in the trunk of your car so you won't be tempted to talk, email or text when you're on the road.
- Assign a designated texter. Ask your passengers to make or receive calls and texts for you.
- Keep your hands off. Hands-free means a Bluetooth or wired headset or speakerphone.
- Pull over to make or receive a call with a hands-free device where appropriate; remain aware of surrounding traffic.
- New driver? If you have a Learners or Novice license, you aren't allowed to use any electronic device behind the wheel, including hands-free headsets or speakerphones.