



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Back to School Bus Safety and Driver Awareness

ROBERT G. ORTT August 31, 2018

| ISSUE: **SCHOOL SAFETY**



A reminder from Senator Robert G. Ortt

As children across the country head back to school next week, I want to remind all parents, children, and motorists the rules for school bus safety. As always, use caution and drive carefully, especially when students are coming and going from school buses and bus stops.

Please pay close attention and remember the following:

- Coming to a complete stop is required by law of drivers approaching a school bus with its red lights on. This is required when approaching from either direction and also on divided highways, multiple lane roadways, parking lots and on school grounds.
- The Sheriff's Office has a strict zero-tolerance for those passing a stopped school bus, and those pulled over for it will be ticketed. Passing a stopped school bus is a serious offense in NYS, and the penalties are severe.
- When the lights on the bus are yellow, it means that the bus is about to stop. In this situation drivers are advised to slow down and prepare to stop for the bus; do not try to get past the bus before it stops.
- Be aware that in some cases children may be standing near the edge of the roadway waiting for the bus; drive slowly and use extra caution in these areas.
- When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or riding a bicycle to school.
- Be alert that children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.
- Always avoid cell phone use while driving.
- Yield to students in crosswalks.
- Obey the speed limit, particularly near schools.
- Look for students walking when you are turning, backing up or driving at night for after-school activities.

Students should pay special attention to school bus safety in and around school zones, and near bus stops. Schoolchildren and parents should take notice of the following bus safety

tips:

- Children should get to the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive, to avoid rushing.
- When waiting for the school bus, children should wait at the bus stop, and stand back five giant steps from the curb.
- Children need to avoid returning to the bus for any items left behind.
- Remind children to never bend down near the bus.
- If a child needs to cross the street in front of the bus, he/she should make eye contact with the driver and wait for the signal that it is safe to cross in front of the bus. Children should always look both ways before crossing the street.
- Behind the bus is the “danger zone.” Remind children to never go behind the bus where the driver can’t see.
- If walking to school, only cross the streets at marked crosswalks and intersections; use pedestrian pushbuttons; avoid cell phone use and be visible.