

Press Release



School Starts August 16 – Please Drive Carefully to Protect Our Students

School starts Thursday, August 16, 2018 for the Ponca City Public School District. Ponca City Public School officials would like to remind motorists to slow down in school zones and watch for children heading back to school.

“School zone speed limits are in place to save lives,” said Mary Ladd, Ponca City School Public Information Coordinator. “Everyone who drives has the responsibility to be especially careful during the morning and afternoon hours when school children are walking to and from school. Children tend to be at greater risk during the back-to-school period because they tend to be thinking more about seeing old friends and new teachers rather than watching for cars and trucks. Others are going to school for the first time. Another critical issue is distracted driving. Please abstain from distractions such as cell phones, eating, etc. Research shows that taking your eyes off the road for just two seconds doubles your chance of crashing.”

The Ponca City Public School district employs school crossing guards at various sites. Ladd continued, “These guards ensure that children safely cross the roadway at schools or nearby intersections. Drivers are never to turn into a school crossing zone while the crossing guard is in it! In addition to helping students cross safely, these employees are vigilant and trained to look for suspicious vehicles or persons in the area of their posts and know to quickly report anything. Let’s work together to keep our children safe and have a great school year!”

According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, a pedestrian struck by a vehicle traveling at a reduced school zone speed of 25 mph is nearly two-thirds less likely to be killed compared to a pedestrian struck by a vehicle traveling just 10 mph faster. To help keep kids safe, here are some pedestrian-safety tips:

Tips for Students

- Look all ways before crossing the street
- Use sidewalks when available
- Cross with Crossing Guards or at corners. Crossing in the middle of the street is dangerous.
- Cross only when the sign says “walk” if there is a light. If it says “don’t walk” before you get across, make eye contact with drivers and quickly walk to the other side. Do not stop in the middle.
- Obey police officers, school crossing guards, traffic signals
- Watch for turning cars
- Be aware of distracted drivers
- Be especially alert in bad weather
- Play away from the traffic

Tips for Drivers

- Ditch distractions such as cell phones, eating, etc.
- Do NOT turn into a cross walk while the Crossing Guard is in it!

- Always stop for loading and unloading school buses. Surveys showed that over 75,000 vehicles pass stopped school buses on a typical day, with more than three percent passing on the right. Not only is it dangerous, it's against the law.
- Stay alert – Don't rush into and out of driveways. Expect pedestrians on the sidewalk, especially around schools.
- Stop at stop signs. Research shows that more than one third of drivers roll through stop signs in school zones or neighborhoods.
- Watch for bikes. Children on bicycles are often unpredictable; expect the unexpected.
- Plan ahead. Leave early for your destination and build in extra time for congestion. If possible, modify your route to avoid school zones.