

**For Immediate Release**

## Be alert and be responsible, back-to-school safety starts with you

*CAA provides tips to pedestrians and motorists on ways they can keep school zones safe.*

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**Thornhill, ON, August 30, 2019** – As students get back into the swing of a hectic school routine, [CAA South Central Ontario](#) (CAA SCO) is reminding everyone travelling through school zones to slow down and put safety first.

According to a new CAA study, 9 out of 10 parents said they have seen one or more bad driving behaviours in a school zone. The top five behaviours include:

- Speeding
- Illegal parking or stopping
- Distracted driving or texting and driving
- Not stopping at a marked crosswalk
- Not stopping for a school bus

“Everyone plays a role around safety in school zones. It is important for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists to have patience to ensure everyone’s safety. As we embark on a new school year, it is a timely reminder for everyone give yourself ample time to get through school zones, follow posted speed limits, and focus on safe driving habits,” says Elliott Silverstein, manager of government relations for CAA SCO.

School zones become high traffic areas in the morning and afternoon. CAA SCO urges pedestrians, cyclists and motorists to be fully aware of their surroundings by putting away any distractions such as electronic devices.

Silverstein adds that there is no excuse for distracted driving and unsafe behaviours behind the wheel. “Nearly 6 in 10 parents say they have seen an increase in unsafe driving practices in school zones in the last two years. Parents and guardians can do their part by slowing down in school zones, avoid driving distracted, and remembering to be considerate to others on the road. ”

For motorists, it is essential to take extra care around school buses. Drivers who pass a stopped school bus with its arm extended and red lights flashing face a fine of up to \$2,000 and receive six demerit points for a first offence.



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### Tips for pedestrians:

- Stop before stepping onto the road
- Look in all directions before crossing the street
- Listen for traffic
- Walk, don't run, across the road

### Tips for drivers:

- Check for children on sidewalks, driveways and behind your vehicle before backing up
- Remember to slow down in school zones
- Be ready to stop at all times as children may dart out between parked cars
- Try to make eye contact with children waiting to cross the street
- Come to a complete stop for school buses when red lights are flashing

### How to share the road with school buses:

- Drivers in all directions must stop when they see red lights flashing on a school bus. The only exception is roads separated with a median
- Drivers must stop at least 20 metres behind the bus

### If you see a driver who doesn't stop for a school bus, safely pull over and record:

- Location (street or intersection), date and time
- The description of the vehicle including make, model, colour and license plate
- Status of the bus (moving or stopped, were lights flashing, children boarding or not)
- A record or photograph of the scene
- Contact the police with as much information as you can

CAA supports safety in school zones through the [CAA School Safety Patrol®](#) program. This year the program is celebrating its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The program was developed to protect, educate and empower elementary school children on safe road-crossing practices. Today the program is delivered across Ontario in partnership with over 55 police services. It is available in over 800 schools, reaching approximately 20,000 elementary school students.

For a limited time, visit your [local CAA Store](#) to pick up a free reflector tag for your child's backpack or coat to help make them more visible. Available while supplies last.

### About CAA South Central Ontario

For over a hundred years, CAA has been helping Canadians stay mobile, safe and protected. CAA South Central Ontario is one of nine auto clubs across Canada providing roadside assistance, travel, insurance services and Member savings for our over 2 million Members.

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