



The safety of children on the school bus depends not only on the bus driver, but others on the road as well. First Student offers the following winter safety tips to students, parents and motorists:

### Students & Parents

- **Don't Rush to Catch the Bus.** When roads and walkways are slippery, rushing to catch the bus or driving faster to make it to your destination can have disastrous results. Children need extra time to get to the bus stop in cold, windy or snowy conditions. Encouraging them to leave a few minutes early and take their time can reduce the number of falls on slick pavement.
- **Bundle Up like Randy from "A Christmas Story."** Students need to keep warm at the bus stop, but they also must still be able to see and hear what's going on around them. When bundling up your child in the morning, make sure he or she still has an adequate line of sight and can hear traffic and other noises. And make sure your student can put his arms down.
- **Put Down the Phone.** As highlighted by the "Pokémon Go" craze, not looking where you are walking can have disastrous results. When walking on snow or ice covered surfaces, watch where you are walking, take shorter, more deliberate steps or do the "penguin shuffle."
- **Get a Grip.** Wear footwear appropriate for conditions. Avoid footwear with slick (no-tread) soles when walking on wet surfaces, snow or ice.
- **Just a Little Patience.** School bus drivers are very well trained to drive in inclement weather; however, snow and icy roads can slow down even the most experienced driver. Safety is each driver's top priority and extra time may be needed to get from stop to stop.
- **The Last Step.** The seemingly simple task of getting on and off the bus can be taken for granted. Always use the handrails!
- **Pay Attention to Weather Alerts and School Messages.** As hectic as mornings can be, parents should be aware of weather alerts and school cancellations or delays. Bad weather also can lead to early dismissals or a change in bus routes. Make sure your school has your contact information to receive late-breaking alerts, and be sure to check your school website or local media when inclement weather is expected.



## Drivers

- **You Snooze you Lose.** Don't hit the snooze button — give yourself extra time when weather is bad. Drivers who give themselves extra time to get to their destination help ensure a safe and appropriate speed for road conditions, and an adequate following distance.
- **Sharing the Road with School Buses.** In all 50 states, it's illegal to pass a school bus that has its stop arm out and red flashing lights on. It's estimated that 70,000 drivers break this law every school day, causing close calls and injuries to children. Everyone plays a role in ensuring students get to school safely, so please use caution and maintain a safe following distance.
- **An Ounce of Prevention.** Make sure the wiper blades, tires, battery and defroster are in good working condition before inclement weather hits. Keep the vehicle's gas tank full and check window washer fluid levels. Driving is a visual task, so always be sure your windows and mirrors are clean and clear and your visibility is good.
- **Be Aware.** Pedestrians are more likely to be rushing during cold temperatures and could be hidden by poor visibility or snow banks. Remain alert for children who may be hidden or standing in or near the street at the bus stop due to mounds of plowed snow.
- **Drive for Conditions.** Adjust your driving behavior to the weather conditions. During winter, this often requires slowing down and increasing your following distance. Anticipate that bridges and overpasses may be frozen, even if the roadway is not, and minimize acceleration and hard-braking.