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**National School Bus Safety Week**

Oct. 22-26 is National School Bus Safety Week and serves as a reminder to drivers the importance of making sure children taking the bus are getting to and from school safely. The Ventura Police Department supports national efforts to promote school bus safety and inform drivers what they need to do around buses.

California law requires drivers in both directions to stop whenever a school bus has activated its flashing red lights and stop signal arm. Drivers must stay stopped until the flashing red lights are turned off. Flashing yellow lights means drivers should slow down and prepare to stop.

“Passing a school bus with flashing red lights is not only dangerous, but also illegal,” Sergeant Michael Brown said. “For the safety of children and bus drivers, we are urging the public to be aware of school buses and to stop on red.”

If the school bus is on the other side of a divided road or road with two or more lanes in each direction, drivers do not need to stop.

During National School Bus Safety Week, the Ventura Police Department will be cracking down on vehicles that illegally pass school buses, conducting enforcement operations looking for drivers who fail to stop for a school bus with flashing red lights. If caught, drivers face at least a \$150 fine, with multiple [violations](#) resulting in up to \$1,000 in fines and a suspended license for one year.

A May 2018 [survey](#) by the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services found that nearly 14,000 drivers statewide failed to stop for a school bus that was stopped to pick up or drop off students. The survey involved reports made by 4,474 bus drivers. School buses are the safest way for children to get to school. Teaching drivers and children to follow these safety tips will ensure that children are as safe as possible when traveling to and from school.

**Drivers:**

- Before making a turn, make sure the path is clear. Let pedestrians with the right-of-way safely cross intersections before turning.
- Avoid distractions like texting, talking on the phone, grooming or eating while driving.
- Be careful backing up. Look for pedestrians who may be behind your car.
- Always keep an eye out for children, especially during pick-up and drop-off times.
- Flashing red lights on a bus school means “STOP.” On a two-lane road, cars traveling in BOTH directions must stop until students exit the bus and the flashing red lights are turned off.

**Children:**

- When boarding or getting off a bus, play it SAFE.
- Stay five steps away from the curb
- Always wait for the bus driver to tell you when to board
- Face forward when riding on bus
- Exit bus when it stops, looking both ways before stepping onto sidewalk.