



## CAPS TIPS

Brought to you by the Chicago Police Department  
Your Partners for Safe Neighborhoods

### SCHOOL SAFETY TIPS

More and more, our schools are centers of the community as well as centers of learning. Our schools should also be centers of an active partnership for promoting neighborhood safety. With that in mind, we'd like to offer a few ideas on how you can help keep your children, your school and your neighborhood safe.

#### **CREATE AND MAINTAIN A SCHOOL SAFETY ZONE:**

The Illinois Safe School Zone Act is designed to help ensure that criminal activities don't occur in or around our schools, in part by increasing the penalties for such activities. But "Safe School Zone" signs alone aren't enough... parents and other community residents need to be actively involved in creating safety zones. Parent Patrols are an effective way of ensuring that the areas around our schools are free from crime. Parents, community residents and school staff monitor and observe all activities in and around schools and can serve as a powerful deterrent to criminal activity. Many schools now have Walking School Buses -- groups of children that walk to school under the care of a responsible adult -- to complement the activities of the Parent Patrols. Get involved with your school's Parent Patrol or Walking School Bus or help organize one.

In addition, each District has a Court Advocacy Subcommittee. These subcommittees follow cases of concern to the community through the court process. Working with the subcommittee, parent groups can help ensure that the court system imposes stiff penalties for violations of Safe Zone laws.

#### **CHECK YOUR CHILDREN'S ROUTE TO SCHOOL FOR**

**HAZARDS:** Abandoned buildings, abandoned cars and uncleared vacant lots can pose a danger to your children. Not only can these seem to your children to be exciting places to play, they can often become centers for criminal activity. Another benefit of a Walking School Bus is that it can help to identify such conditions on your children's route to and from school and report them to your beat team.

Working together with the Police and other City agencies, you can ensure that these kinds of hazards are removed from your neighborhood.

#### **MAKE SURE YOUR CHILDREN ARE IN SCHOOL EVERY**

**DAY:** Youngsters are most likely to get into trouble when they are not in school when they should be. Try to sit down and have a 10 minute conversation with your children every day about what they did in school. Not only will this help you to ensure that your children are going to school, it can help you identify problems or challenges that your children may be facing and help them to address those problems. Also make sure that your children's school has a well-developed anti-truancy policy that can help you address truancy problems should they occur.

#### **ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILDREN HAVE SOMETHING TO DO AND SOMEWHERE TO GO AFTER SCHOOL:**

There are a variety of activities available to broaden your children's interests and abilities as well as provide a safe place to be after school. Many Chicago Public Schools offer after-school programs and activities, in areas such as art, music and sports. In addition, the Chicago Park District sponsors a wide range of activities at park facilities throughout the city. Other programs include the YouthNet and the Police Explorers.

The Chicago Police Department wants to make sure that this school year is a safe one for all of Chicago's school children and hopes that these tips will help achieve that goal. If you need more information on how you can get involved in keeping your neighborhood safe, call 311 or visit the CAPS home page at [www.cityofchicago.org](http://www.cityofchicago.org)

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