



The Carson City School District asks drivers to slow down and increase caution in school zones, around bus stops and near crosswalks in Carson City.

COURTESY

Plea for driver caution on roadways, near schools and crosswalks throughout Carson City

The Carson City School District and Board of Trustees are pleading for drivers in the greater Carson City area to take extra caution in school zones, around bus stops and near crosswalks throughout the city.

Seeing a recent rash of student vs. vehicle accidents happening in Carson City and the quad county area, the district is reminded of a similar plea for caution it made to community drivers four years ago. In the 2019 Winter Issue of the district's quarterly newsletter, pedestrian and crosswalk safety

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was the primary focus. The district reiterates this same concern today.

When it comes to student and pedestrian safety, we want all drivers to treat their vehicles with as much respect and attention as they would a loaded gun. As safe and as cautious as you might feel while driving your car, van or truck, we encourage you to repeatedly reevaluate and assess your speed, focus, attention and

respect while traveling around and through school zones, drop-off and pick-up lanes and surrounding side streets.

It only takes a split second and an unexpected bolt from an unfocused, inexperienced teen or grade-schooler. It may be dark or the sun shining too bright. It may be the behavior of another impatient, uncourteous driver. You may be distracted by music, cell phones, breakfast or lunch. You may not have seen the posted speed limit or school zone. You

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may be late. You may be mentally focused too deeply on deadlines that need to be met. It only takes a split second, and all can be lost.

The Carson City School District believes the increase of inattentiveness from both students and drivers may not only be isolated to school zones and crosswalks, but similar near-misses are being reported around bus stops as well.

Jessica Weisser, driver trainer with the transportation department at the Carson City School District, said several of her bus drivers have reported people blowing through flashing red stop lights and signs when buses were stopped and dropping students off, who were crossing streets.

"Our drivers are doing the best they can to ensure safety, but something needs to change among drivers in our community," Weisser said. "We need to see a cultural shift in the way people drive in school zones and around buses and near crosswalks."

"We have some incredible individuals within our school district working in transportation and as crossing guards, and they are doing an amazing job ensuring the children get to and from school safely." Andrew Feuling, superintendent for the school district, said. "They are out there in the traffic, and it is really tough for

them sometimes. So we are pleading with the driving members of our community to please operate their vehicles safely and be more alert."

Feuling also said he has had many conversations with Carson City Sheriff Ken Furlong, and they have indicated there will be a more hyper-focused effort to target drivers making poor decisions and those who are distracted.

Furlong said there has been an outcry from all sorts of people about the conduct of both drivers and pedestrians. Much of the problem is people just not paying attention. Drivers and pedestrians are on their phones, snacking, not obeying lights and signs.

The school district hopes parents and families will take time to have critical conversations with their children about street safety. To help facilitate, the district is offering the following safety tips. Similar discussions are being had among teachers and students and administrators and employees.

- Slow down. Speed may likely be the No. 1 contributor in most accidents.

- Stay alert and free of all distractions. Put all cell phones, away and refrain from eating, drinking or adjusting the radio.

- Make visual eye-contact with pedestrians. Be prepared to stop at all marked crosswalks. Wave them across if you are stopped at a marked crosswalk.

- Make sure your windshields

are clean, clear and unobstructed. Turn on your headlights.

- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and at intersections. Be courteous to other drivers. Let another car back-out of parking stalls or go before you.

- Remain in your vehicle at all times in the drop-off and pick-up lane.

- Be aware of bicyclists and skateboarders whose approaches to crosswalks may be much swifter than those of pedestrians.

- Come to a complete stop providing adequate distance if pedestrians are crossing or preparing to cross.

- Never pass another vehicle that has stopped or is slowing down at a crosswalk.

- Do not perform a U-turn within school zones.

PENALTIES FOR COMMON SCHOOL-RELATED TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

It may be a jaw-dropping experience to read the ticket fee associated with traffic offenses in school zones, and rightly so. It should sting a little bit, officials said. It should be somewhat of a hardship to help thwart future infractions. With the looming possibility of seriously injuring, or worse, a death of a student or beloved child in our community, below is a list of penalties and fines associated with common school-related traffic violations.

- Failure to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk earns a \$195 ticket and 4 demerit points on your driver's license.

- Performing a U-turn in a school zone may cost you upwards of \$115 and 3 demerits.

- Using a cell phone while driving in a school zone or anywhere else may land you with a minimum \$115 fine.

- Speeding in excess of 10 miles-per-hour over the limit in marked school zones may fit you with a minimum \$115 fine and as many as 2 demerit points.

- Passing a school bus while the lights are flashing and stopping arm is extended will cost you \$250 on your first offense, \$500 on the second and \$1,000 on your third or subsequent violations with your driver's license suspended for 6 months and 3 demerits for each offense.

- Running a stop sign may also cost you as much as 4 demerits and a minimum \$150 in traffic violation fees.

- Exiting or entering a vehicle in an active lane of traffic may land you a \$115 fine.

- Parking unlawfully on the sidewalk, crosswalk, driveway or in a bike lane may cost \$90 in parking fines.

- Parallel parking more than 18 inches from the curb may cost as much as \$115.

- Parking in a handicapped zone or stall will cost a minimum of \$355 in fines and court fees.