



OAKDALE JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Safe Routes to School Guide

SAFETY TIPS

Guidelines for Good Pedestrian Behavior

- Look both ways before crossing (left, right, left again)
- Walk, don't run across the street
- Cross only at safe corners, even if you walk farther
- Choose the route with fewest streets to cross
- When possible, cross streets at the crosswalk and where there are traffic signs and signals
- Obey traffic signs and signals
- Face traffic when walking on roads without sidewalks
- Watch for turning cars
- Keep from walking between parked cars
- Refuse to ride with strangers

Guidelines for Parents:

- Group children along school routes for better visibility and driver awareness. When larger numbers cross together it makes motorists more aware of kids crossing, increases driver compliance with stopping for crosswalks, and helps justify the installation of more extensive crossing protection devices. Look for adequate shoulder or sidewalk areas to provide refuge.
- Children are not small adults. They often act before thinking and may not do what parents or drivers expect. They assume that if they see the driver, the driver sees them. They have one-third narrower side vision, can't judge speed and are less able to determine the direction of sounds. They are shorter than adults and can't see over cars, bushes and other objects.

Helmets Can Save Lives:

- Bike helmet use can reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent when worn correctly.
- Each year more than 700 people are killed in bike crashes in the United States, and up to 50 percent of those deaths could have been prevented if bike riders had worn helmets.
- Helmets must be snug and level and cover the upper part of the forehead; you should have room for no more than two fingers between the straps and your chin. (NHTSA, AAA)

The Six simple Steps to Staying Safe:

- 1) When walking, stop at every curb or edge.
- 2) Always look and listen, especially while crossing. Look left; look right; then left again, before stepping past any curb or edge.
- 3) Always wear a helmet when riding a bike.
- 4) Always ride in the same direction as traffic.
- 5) Know what signs say. When walking or riding, follow all traffic signs and signals.
- 6) When riding, always stop; look left; look right; then left again before pulling out of a driveway.

HEALTHY HEARTS (Walking to school is healthy)

General Health

- It is well documented that developing healthy eating and exercise habits at an early age lead to a lifelong personal commitment to a healthy lifestyle.
- Public health officials and scientists agree that everyone should accumulate 30 minutes of physical activity every day to reduce the risk of chronic disease and early death. A brisk walk tops their list of recommendations. Unfortunately the Center of Disease Control estimates that as few as 20% of adults meet that standard.
- On top of the daily 30 minutes of moderate physical activity children need another 20 minutes of vigorous activity several days per week. Yet 78% of young boys and girls fall short of this recommended dose of exercise.

Exercise and Youth

- Nearly half of young people aged 12-21 years do not engage in vigorous physical activity on a regular basis. Participation in physical activity declines strikingly as children get older.
- Health professionals agree that exercise patterns need to be established in childhood so as to reduce the chances of coronary heart disease, reduce blood pressure, counter obesity, lower lipids, retard osteoporosis, improve psychological well-being and possibly reduce the risk of cancer.
- The process of cholesterol buildup of the arteries begins in childhood and continues through their teens.

Heart Disease

- Like any muscle, the heart needs a constant supply of oxygen and nutrients that are carried to it by the blood in the coronary arteries. Good nutrition combined with exercise can give your children the insurance they need to have a strong and healthy heart. Thirty minutes of exercise a day is recommended as enough to protect against future heart disease.
- Seven million Americans suffer from Coronary Heart Disease (CHD), caused by narrowing the coronary arteries that feed the heart. CHD is the number one killer of both men and women in the United States. Each year more than 500,000 Americans die of heart attacks caused by CHD. Many of these deaths could be prevented because CHD is related to certain aspects of the lifestyle, including high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity.

Physical Fitness

- Walking and biking are both excellent forms of exercise, since they stimulate and maintain muscular strength and good joint function; involve a large percentage of the body; can be maintained throughout life; and do not provoke hip, knee or other weight bearing injuries.
- California law requires school districts to administer physical fitness testing to all 5th, 7th and 9th grade students annually. In 1999, 80% of the students tested failed to meet the minimum standards to be considered physically fit.
- Physical activity is often limited to specific sports or games. In order for children to learn to love physical activity, it is necessary to provide a variety of options so that children can choose the activity they most want to learn and enjoy.
- Physical activity helps kids to concentrate, makes them stronger and more energetic, prevents weight gain, keeps bodies supple, keeps hair and skin looking good, and contributes to higher self-esteem, and lower anxiety and stress
- 70% of children watch at least one hour of TV each day. 35% watch five hours or more

Obesity

- Nationally, childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions with 4.7 million youths, ages 6-17 now overweight or obese. 22% of American children are now considered obese and that number is doubling every 10 years.
 - Children who are overweight often feel stigmatized, have lower self-esteem, and are less likely to engage in physical activity in order to avoid ridicule from classmates.
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ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Alternatives to driving

- If just one out of every 10 commuters who now drive to work switched to walking, we'd save 2 billion gallons of gas a year and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 25.4 million tons.
 - Switching for a month from a five mile car commute to a bike commute keeps close to a pound of hydrocarbons, six pounds of carbon monoxide and half a pound of nitrogen oxide from entering the air.
 - Every car commuter who switches to biking can save 400 gallons of gas a year.
 - Eight bicycles can be parked in the space required for just one car.
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SOME STATISTICS

- A pedestrian struck by a car traveling at 40 mph has a 15 percent chance of survival. At 30 mph there is a 55 percent chance of survival. At 20 mph there is an 85 percent chance of survival. (U.S. Department of Transportation)
 - Forty-six percent of traffic crashes involving kids as pedestrians occur when a child darts out into the street. (NHTSA)
 - Fifty percent of children who are hit by cars near schools are hit by cars driven by parents of other students. (Washington State Department of Transportation)
 - Less than 1 percent of children aged 7-15 now ride bicycles to school, a decrease of more than 60 percent since the 1970s. (Surface Transportation Policy Project, Caught in the Crosswalk)
 - It takes about 10 minutes to walk a quarter of a mile or bike an entire mile. (Pedestrian Federation of America)
 - Traffic Calming reduces collision frequency by 40 percent, vehicle insurance claims by 38 percent, and traffic fatalities by 50 percent. (Insurance Company of British Columbia)
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