

Back to school safety:

It is that time of year again, summer is gone and fall is fast approaching. The Queen Creek Fire Department has some advice for you as you and your children start another year at school.

Check student records at school.

- Is your contact information correct?
- Do they have your work and cell phone number?
- Do you have alternate contacts in case you cannot be reached?
- Are your student's medical records up-to-date, including allergies and current medications?

Discuss with your child the school's weapons policies.

Stress that no weapons can be brought onto school campus, including pocketknives, sling shots, and BB guns. Some schools will not let your children bring a plastic knife for lunch. Talk to them about what to do if they find a weapon. Under no circumstances should they touch the weapon. Find a responsible adult and tell them.

Contact the school for a copy of their emergency policies. Review with your student what will happen in an emergency.

- Where will students be located?
- When and where will parents reunite with children?

Contact the school for a copy of their safe school plan.

- Do they have a plan that has been practiced?
- What measures are being taken to ensure that your child's safety is a school priority?
- Do they have a visitor's policy? Is it enforced?

Discuss with students the importance of sharing information. Stress to them that if they hear students talking about being destructive or hurting someone, that it is OK to tell a trusted adult - parent, teacher, counselor, law enforcement officer or principal.

Before Leaving Home:

Ensure that your student has identification with them that includes emergency contact information such as work numbers and cell phone numbers.

If riding their bicycle, be sure they have and wear their bicycle helmet.

Clothing - if your student must walk to or from school or stand at the bus stop be sure that they wear light clothing or clothing with reflective stripes.

Bus Stop Safety:

Discuss with your student the importance of walking directly to the bus stop.

- No visiting neighbors before going to bus stop
- No playing at the playground or friends houses on way to the bus stop

Do not allow your student to be at bus stop alone. If the parent cannot accompany the child to the bus stop, they should go with a buddy or in a group.

Remind them not to talk to strangers, and never to get in a stranger's car. Stress to them they cannot help someone look for a puppy or other distraction.

Remind students that there should not be any horseplay at the bus stop.

Traveling to school:

Plan with your student the safest route to walk or bike.

Discuss with them the importance of staying away from unsafe areas.

Practice the route several times reminding them how to safely cross streets and what to do when they come to an intersection.

Managing Conflicts

Discuss with your child the importance of resolving conflicts peacefully.

Encourage your student to become involved with a peer mediation program or the SAVE program at their school.

After School

Be sure to have a plan for when your student returns home from school.

If your child will return to an empty house, upon his/her arrival he should know whom to immediately contact to verify arrival.

Discuss with your student daily what occurred at school. Be sure to explore any concerns they have.

By planning, preparing and practicing, parents can help their student have a safer and more successful school year. Remember that the more time you spend with your children, the more you make yourself available to them, the less chance of them going astray.