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## FACTSHEET

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Ministry of Education

### **BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS TO KEEP KIDS SAFE**

#### **Elementary Students**

- Find and practice a safe route to and from school with your children.
- Identify safe places along the route such as a friend's house your children can go to if they encounter trouble.
- Discuss traffic safety concerns like crossing the street, safely boarding the school bus and what to do and who to contact in the event of a natural disaster.
- Discuss how to safely interact with strangers.

#### **Intermediate/Middle School Students**

- Discuss your children's route to school to make sure it's still effective. Note any changes in safe places, such as friends moving to or from the neighbourhood.
- Ensure that they always wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or scooter.
- Help your children pack their backpacks. Ensure that they are no more than 10 to 20 per cent of the child's bodyweight.
- Make sure children use both shoulder straps of their backpacks. Slings a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles and may increase curvature of the spine.
- Talk to them about appropriate behaviour at school. What to do and who to talk to if they encounter an instance of bullying behaviour.
- Help your children understand how to surf the Internet safely and how to protect their privacy.

#### **Secondary Students**

- Encourage your teenagers to talk to you about issues that are important to them including peer pressure, alcohol and drugs.
- Let your teenagers grow, and help by providing them with a sense of confidence. This is the best defence against peer pressure.
- Talk about being a safe driver and passenger. Let them know it's okay to say no to getting into a car with someone they feel is unsafe.
- Insist that teenagers wear a helmet when cycling and appropriate protective gear when engaging in other sports or recreational activities such as skateboarding.