

Public Schools supports walking and biking as transportation to and from school for students and staff who live within a reasonable distance and where there are adequate facilities such as sidewalks, paved shoulders, and/or bike lanes. Walking and biking promote well-being by providing useful life skills and daily physical activity. Walking and biking decreases traffic congestion and the resulting pollution improving the safety of our school environments. Public Schools supports participation in programs like Safe Routes to School Programs to foster more bicycling and walking to school.

Public Schools will consider walking and biking as transportation to and from school as a priority anytime that school districting is revised or when new school facilities are constructed or existing schools and their environs are reconstructed or renovated.

The district regards walking or the riding of bicycles to school by students as an assumption of responsibility by students and their parents – a responsibility in the care of property, in the observation of safety rules, and in the display of courtesy and consideration towards others. The district assumes no liability for injuries occurring outside school property. The School District/Board or its subsidiaries are not liable for any equipment or property theft or damage.

The District strongly recommends that students and their parents – and all staff who walk and bike - follow walking and biking safety guidelines and always use their common sense and good judgment. Organizations such as the Bicycle Coalition of Maine and Go Maine offer bicycle safety programs for children and adults. The District recommends that every child participate in a similar walking and/or bicycling safety program. School employees and parents/caregivers are role models for all children, and older children should be models for younger children. Role models have a responsibility to follow laws and rules for safe walking, bicycling, and driving to ensure the safety of our school community.

The district will share the responsibility with parents and guardians to make students aware of bicycle rules and conditions and the safety reasons for supporting them. Students and staff who ride bicycles to and from school should follow these safety laws and guidelines:

- 1.) According to Maine State Law, anyone under the age of 16 that rides a bicycle must wear a helmet at all times (29-A MSR, §2323 (1)). Public Schools students under the age of 16 will not be permitted to leave school grounds with their bicycles without a helmet.
- 2.) In Maine, bicycles are defined as vehicles under the state motor vehicle code contained in 29-A MRS. Parents and students should be aware of these state bicycling laws and follow them at all times. Riders must follow the rules of the road including but not limited to:
 - a. Obeying all traffic lights and signals (29-A MRS §2057)
 - b. Using hand signals before making turns (e.g. left arm extended horizontally to left to indicate a left turn, and similarly with the right arm for right turns) (29-A MRS §2071 (5))
 - c. Only one rider per seat – never let a friend ride on the handlebars or wheel pegs (29-A MRS §2063 (3), (3A), & (4))

- d. Stopping and looking left, right, then left again before leaving driveways or entering any street
 - e. Riding with traffic (29-A MRS §2063 (5)). Don't ride too close to parked cars – doors can open suddenly.
 - f. Riding in a straight line, where drivers can see you, and not swerving between cars
 - g. Riding as far to the right as practicable except when passing, avoiding hazards, or preparing for a left turn (29-A MSR §2063 (2)) and yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks
 - h. Stopping for a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing to receive or discharge passengers – as a vehicle you must stop your bicycle before reaching the school bus, regardless of which direction you are traveling. You may not proceed until the school bus resumes motions or until signaled by the school bus operator to proceed (29-A MRS §2063 (9))
 - i. If you must ride at dawn, dusk, or after dark, you must use a white headlight and be sure your bike is equipped with a rear red light or reflector and foot/ankle/pedal reflectors (29-A MSR §2084(1)). A rear red blinking light is strongly recommended.
- 3.) Bicycles ridden to school should be roadworthy and regularly maintained. It is the responsibility of the student and their parent/guardian to test tires for air before riding and ensure that the brakes work (29-A MSR §2084 (1))

While at school, students and staff must comply with these rules:

- 4.) Bicycles may not be ridden on school grounds during arrival and dismissal; they must be walked.
- 5.) Bicycles must be parked in the racks provided. Students must bring and use bicycle locks.
- 6.) Helmets must be stored in locker, backpack, or attached to the bicycle.
- 7.) Students are not to interfere with any bikes, helmets, or other equipment (steal, unlock quick releases, bounce helmets, etc.)

The district expects parents and guardians to make students aware of pedestrian rules and conditions and the safety reasons for supporting them. Students and staff who walk to and from school should follow these safety guidelines:

- 1.) If there is a designated "Safe Route" to your school, use it.
- 2.) If there is a crosswalk, use it.
- 3.) If crossing guards are available, students and parents should cross where guards are located.
- 4.) Before crossing, look left, right, and left again to make sure the road is clear. Continue looking while you cross and listen for traffic.
- 5.) Do not cross the street between parked cars.
- 6.) If you are walking at dawn, dusk, or after dark, wear light-colored or reflective clothing.