

If you have questions about any of these safety tips, contact the Office of Safety and Security at 226-5550.

May:

Even though it sometimes feels a lot more like summer, it is spring, and that means flip-flops, sandals and rain/wind jackets are back in season. Not always do we remember how important it is to ensure our kids are wearing the right clothing and footwear to school, so, here are a few pointers to keep in mind when sending your little ones off in the morning:

1. **Flip-Flops and Sandals.** Are flip-flops or sandals really the safest footwear? Especially for our elementary students, making sure they have the proper footwear is extremely important. Our students have recess every day, and not wearing the proper footwear can prevent them from being able to participate in many outside activities.
2. **Rain/wind jackets.** Even though it is getting warmer outside, we are still having those cool mornings and rainy days. Make sure you check your child's jacket for drawstrings. Injuries and strangulation can occur if the drawstrings from the hoods and necks of jackets get caught on playground equipment or objects such as doors, tree branches or fences. Instead, consider using jackets that have Velcro, snaps or elastic fasteners.

April:

The flowers are blooming and the sun is shining. It's springtime! Now is also the time when students enjoy walking to school rather than riding the school bus or being dropped off. Here are a few safety tips to review with your children before they start walking to school:

1. Make sure the route to school is a safe one. Does your child have to cross over a busy intersection?
2. Remind your children of the traffic laws. Do they know what side of the street to walk on or to look both ways before crossing?
3. Select a safe zone along the route. Is there somewhere safe your children can go if they feel threatened or are injured?
4. Make sure your children know not to accept rides from strangers. Let them know who they can and cannot accept rides from.
5. Remind your children to check-in before leaving for school and after getting home.

March:

Each of Henrico County's public schools has a definitive traffic safety plan that has been designed to maximize school safety while getting hundreds of students to and from school in a very small window of time. At each school, every day, staff and students converge on the school in the morning, and then exit the school in the afternoon by walking, riding in a car, driving, riding a bicycle, riding in a day care van, or riding a school bus. The traffic plans are carefully crafted to blend the traffic while ensuring the safety of students, staff, and visitors. If you are not completely familiar with your school's traffic safety plan, please ask your child's principal. Please ensure that you are you are doing your part to contribute to safety by following the procedures that have been established when you drop off or pick up your child.

Remember though, the safest route to school for our students, is on the school bus. If you would like more information about riding the bus, contact the Department of Pupil Transportation at 226-5577

February:

Allergies - Five steps you can take to help ensure your child medical safety at school:

1. **Read the “[Managing Allergies](#)” document** provided by Henrico County Public Schools and **fill out the Allergy Action Plan.**
2. **Meet with key people at your child’s school** to review the Allergy Action Plan and ensure it accommodates your child’s needs.
3. **Teach your child to say “No, thank you”** if he or she is unsure of what is in it.
4. **Teach your child to recognize trigger foods.** They may be so protected from trigger foods that they are unable to recognize something that is dangerous for them.
5. **Provide your child’s school with a spare Epi-pen.** If your child has severe allergies, ensure they have at least one Epi-pen readily available for them at school.

For more questions on managing your child’s allergies, visit the Henrico County Public Schools School Health website. You can also find the Managing Allergies/Allergy Action Plan document on this site:
<http://www.henrico.k12.va.us/HealthNutrition/HealthServices/index.html>

January:

How many parents gave their child the best, coolest, biggest toy gun, pocket knife or fake sword this year for Christmas? How many remembered to tell their children not to bring the toy or pocket knife to school to show friends? Our students love to show off their new toys that they received for Christmas, including that new, cool air soft pistol, BB gun or pocket knife. It is important to remind our children that it is against school policy to bring these toy and knives into school. Even though these look-alikes are in fact “toys,” students are not allowed to bring them onto school property. The possession a weapon, including toys, is prohibited and could result in possible suspension from school. So, let’s remind our children that even though their new toy guns or pocket knives are incredibly awesome, they must remain at home and not be taken to school. Keep it safe and enjoy the New Year!

December:

Safety does not take a holiday. How much time will your child spend online during the upcoming winter break? Internet safety is very important to us at HCPS and we work hard to monitor students’ computer usage while they are at school and to inform them about how to be safe online. In December students will be spending a lot of days on holiday and we are asking you to consider the importance of Internet safety in your home. Our recommendations are to monitor your child’s Internet activities closely, know their passwords and talk to them about being safe online. You are probably already taking these important steps to keep your child safe, and for more information about Internet safety visit Netsmartz at <http://www.netsmartz.org/Parents> .

November:

With the winter months ahead of us, we need to remember a few things about making sure our children are properly dressed for the weather. Unlike adults, our kids’ little bodies have a much harder time maintaining heat, so it is very important that we are making sure they are dressed warmly before heading out the door. Make sure your child has a hat to wear for the chilly mornings. Did you know that 50% of body heat is lost through the head? By wearing a hat, they will be able to stay much warmer! Make sure all skin is covered by having your child put on their gloves and scarves before going outside. Dress your children in layers and always have them wear their jacket. If your child has snow boots or rain boots, make sure they wear them when there is rain, slush, or snow on the ground. Have your kids avoid tight clothing. Wearing tight clothes restricts the body from being able to circulate heat properly. Remembering these tips will ensure your child is nice and toasty for the winter months! Don’t forget, there are many children out there who could use warm clothing too! Check out the Henrico Christmas Mother website for information on how you can help children and families in our community stay warm this winter. <http://henricochristmasmother.org/>

October:

Trick or Treating can be one of the great adventures of youth! Kids dress in fun costumes and go door to door, begging "Trick or Treat!" in the neighborhood or at the local mall. It should be a fun time, without trouble or pain, so following some easy tips can keep your child safe this Halloween.

1. Children should always go out trick or treating accompanied by a responsible adult. If children do go without an adult, make sure they stay together as a group and don’t wander off alone.

2. Make sure you have planned out a route in advance and that it is in a familiar neighborhood.
3. Have your children wear or carry something lit such as a flashlight or glow bracelet or necklace.
4. Have your children only trick or treat at houses that have lights on.
5. Instruct your children not to eat any treats until they bring them home to be examined by you.

Enjoy your Halloween activities and think of safety first!

September:

Back to School Reminders: With the first week of school completed and students settle into their daily routine, and get over their initial excitement, we want to bring some simple safety tips to your attention. First, make sure your child's backpack is not too heavy and is being worn properly. Improperly worn backpacks can result in neck, shoulder, and back pain as well as poor posture. Second, if your child is riding the bus, make sure they are familiar with the safety rules on the bus. Remind your child that while they are on the bus, they need to remain seated at all times, keep the aisles clear, and not distract the bus driver by shouting or throwing objects. Finally, make sure you are familiar with your specific role in the event of an emergency. The Crisis Preparedness: Parents & School Emergencies Handbook is a helpful tool which you can find on your child's school website, as well as the Henrico County Public Schools website. If you have any questions about back to school safety, contact Chris Bailor with the Office of Safety and Security at 226-5550.