

Feeling and Staying Safe Travelling to and from school

Ideas for young people, and their
parents, guardians and carers



A guide for feeling and staying safe during the times
before and after school for young people.

This guide has information on:

- problems some young people have experienced
- what to do if you have a problem
- ways of avoiding or preventing problems during the time
before and after school
- some advice for your parents, guardians and carers



Designed by the Street Life safety for young
people research team.

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"Life is a jungle" - when you have problems before and after school

Did you know...?

A 2007 report found that more than two thirds of young people had been assaulted and/or the victims of theft. More than half of the young people had their property deliberately damaged, while others said that they had been the victims of threats or verbal abuse. These incidents mostly happened in schools or playgrounds, and "much of the rest between school and home." (Howard League report, 2007).

Researchers in eight European countries (Cyprus, England, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain) have surveyed and interviewed young people, age 11 to 16, about their experiences and worries about victimisation during the journey to and from school.

The most important thing they found out was most young people do feel safe and happy during the journey to school. They enjoy spending time with their friends, without parents or teachers around they can enjoy some freedom to choose where to go and what to do. However, some young people can have problems during the time before and after school. There are many types of problems, from being ignored by friends or peers, to name calling, or being physically harmed. All of these problems can make you feel hurt, sad or angry.

All young people should feel safe and happy during the time before and after school. This toolkit will give some examples of some problems experienced by young people during the journey to and from school, ideas for what you can do to feel and stay safe, and some advice for parents, guardians or carers on what to do when a young person they care for is having problems during the time before and after school.

Everybody can feel safe in the street!

"there are always these small groups nearby the school...they provoke others, as there are always more of them...they can be violent...they do it just for fun." Male, 16 years old, Italy



Some young people have told us that they have seen or were harmed by groups of other young people on the streets near to the school.

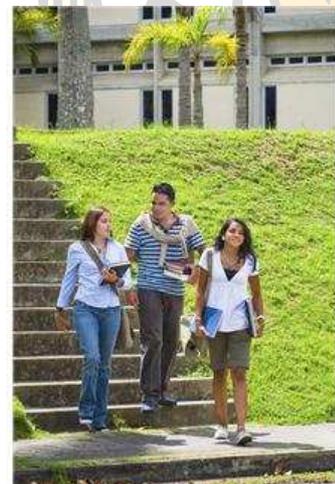
Often, these groups are older teenagers, and they can behave in ways which are intimidating or frightening.

This is a problem which can be solved, and there are things you can do to avoid being harassed or harmed in this situation.

You can report problems with groups of people harassing you on the street to your parents, guardians or carers, or to your school. They can alert adults in the community who work to make everyone feel safe, who can take action.

You can feel safer in this situation by staying with a group of friends, and making sure that your mobile phone, mp3 player or wallet/purse are not in sight. This can help to prevent your possession being stolen.

Everybody should feel safe on the streets, and you should always talk about things that make you feel unsafe. This can help to solve problems, making you and others feel safe!



Everybody has a role in making travel a safe and happy time for all!

"There were two (kids) on our bus and the others were making fun of them. They were ridiculing them because they couldn't speak properly." Female, 12 years old, Cyprus.



Research in eight European countries showed that of the young people who said they travelled by public transport (bus, train or tram) 24% said they had been the victim of crime, bullying and anti social behaviour during the journey to and from school.

Buses, trains and trams are used by school pupils, other young people and adults during the times before and after school. All of these people want to feel and be safe during the journey, and can work together to make sure that everybody 'travels first class'.

Public transport stations should feel safe, with lots of light and adults around who can help you on your journey.

If you feel worried about a station you use, talk to other pupils from your school to see if they feel the same way. You could write a letter to the station manager (you can find out this information at the station or on the internet) to say why you feel worried, what actions you would like them to take, and ask them to reply to you so you know that they are going to do something to solve the problem.



Your views on safety issues are important, travel companies want all their passengers to feel safe - so if you have a problem, speak up!

What can I do to feel and stay safe?

- Peer mentoring - the journey between school and home is a safe and happy time for most young people. However, for a few young people who are bullied, stolen from, harmed or intimidated, it can be a frightening time. If you or other pupils you see are having problems, ask your teacher about peer mentoring during the journey, so that young people feel happy that there is someone who can help them during this time, to deal with any problems.
- 'Travel safety meetings' - you can ask if your school can set up meetings with school teachers, students and parents to discuss problems during the journey to and from school, and come up with strategies to solve the problem, such as reporting broken street lights, contacting bus or train companies to ask what they can do to make their bus or train feel safer for you.
- Try to avoid carrying expensive valuables, they can put you at risk of theft. If you do carry valuables, keep them out of sight at all times.
- Keep talking - telling your friends, parents and teachers about anything that happens during the journey which has worried you will help to find a solution to your problem and may prevent others having the same problem, as some action could be taken to solve the problem.
- Check travel plans - it is always safer to travel with a group of friends. To avoid walking by yourself, find other people travelling the same route as you at your school, especially if they travel alone too. Make sure you use well lit, busy routes to travel between school, transport stations, parks and home.

Advice for your parents, guardians and carers on how to help you with problems during the journey to and from school

“With your mates it is so much better than with the parents, they understand you, are the same age, while parents see everything from a different perspective.” (Female, 13 years old, Italy)

- If your child says they are having a problem, keep calm whilst they talk to you. Young people are put off talking to parents, guardians and carers about problems they may be having because they are worried the adult will overreact, and make the problem worse.
- Talk to your child about possible safety issues during the journey to and from school, so that they feel confident that you will understand the problem; no matter how 'small' or 'big' it may seem to you, your child may feel differently.
- Talk to your child about strategies to prevent the problem, such as travelling with a friend, taking a different route or avoiding the other person. If this is not possible, discuss talking to the school about this problem.
- Report any incidents that you feel are serious to the school and or transport company. They may not be aware of the problem and may be able to act to prevent it happening again.
- If your child is worried about a place they travel through, e.g. a street which is not well lit, talk to the school about this issue, and write to express your concern to the local authority who may act to address the problem.
- If your child has had a problem caused by another child, do not speak to or contact that child, either by speaking to the child in person, or by sending the child a text message, email or Facebook message. Any issues should be resolved through the school.