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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Motorists encouraged to use extra caution as school year returns**

**Kerrville, Texas (Aug. 8, 2022)** – With the 2022-23 school year starting next Monday, the Kerrville Municipal court would like to remind area drivers about school bus safety and ways to protect our kids.

#### **School Bus Safety; Important For Everyone!**

Pick-ups and drop-offs are the most dangerous times of the day for the estimated 1.4 million Texas children who ride a bus to and from school. Statistics indicate that student fatalities and injuries in the loading and unloading zone continue to occur. Drivers who pass a school bus stopped to pick up or drop off students put children in danger.



Texas law requires drivers to STOP for school buses with red lights flashing and stop arms extended when children are boarding or exiting the bus. Drivers must stay stopped until the school bus resumes motion, the bus driver signals you to go, or the flashing red lights are no

longer activated. This applies to both directions of traffic regardless of the number of lanes of traffic. The only exception to this rule is when the roadway is divided by a concrete barrier or another type of median. Very few, if any, of the roads used for school bus stops in Kerrville fall within these exceptions. Therefore, most, if not all drivers on Kerrville roads are required to stop for school busses.

### **Safety Tips for Drivers**

In neighborhoods, near schools, and at bus stops, drivers need to take special care because children do not behave like adults while in traffic. Young children:

- Become easily distracted and may start across the street without warning.
- Don't understand the danger of moving vehicles.
- Can't judge vehicle speed or distance.
- May be blocked from view by the bus.

For millions of students nationwide, the school day begins and ends with a trip on a school bus. Their greatest safety risk is not riding the bus, but approaching or leaving the bus. Knowing these few traffic safety rules can help protect our children.

- When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to school.
- When driving in neighborhoods with school zones, watch out for young people who may be thinking about getting to school but may not be thinking of getting there safely.
- Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in neighborhoods, or playing and congregating near bus stops.
- Be alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.

- Learn and obey the school bus laws.
- Learn the “flashing signal light system” that school bus drivers use to alert motorists of

pending actions:

- **Yellow flashing lights** indicate that the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.
- **Red Flashing lights** and extended stop arms indicate that the bus has stopped, and that children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop sign is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.

### **Legal Penalties!**

Child safety is the No. 1 goal. To ensure that goal, the Legislature has placed legal penalties for individuals who fail to follow the law. The first offense in Municipal Court for passing a stopped school bus will result in a \$1,000 fine, which is ineligible to be discharged through a drivers’ safety course. Of course, violations of this law that result in serious bodily injury carry more severe penalties. However, these penalties pale in comparison to the potential injury suffered by our youngest, most vulnerable citizens.

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