



# SAFE SCHOOL RUN GUIDE

Practical, handy tips to ensure your family is set up for a safe school run





# WELCOME

## Welcome to our Safe School Run Guide!

As the new school year begins, lazy summer mornings are quickly replaced with packing lunches, finding lost school shoes, and managing a mix of excitement and nerves.

That's where this guide comes in. It's designed to support you with key safety considerations for the school commute - whether you're walking, riding, scooting or driving - helping bring a little calm to the back-to-school rush.

Inside, you'll find practical tips and gentle reminders for every stage of the journey, from leaving home to arriving safely at the school gates.

Together, we can make school mornings smoother and help keep children safe every step of the way. Here's to a positive and safe start to the school year!

# AT HOME

We totally get that mornings can be a whirlwind! That's why we've put together some timely reminders to help keep your family safe as you prepare to head out the door.

## GETTING READY



### Be sun smart

Schools make sure students wear sun hats during playtime, but it's important to remember that UV rays are present all day long, even during your morning and afternoon school runs.

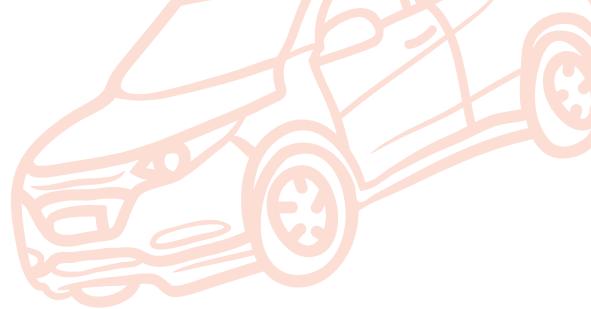
Be sure to apply sunscreen in the morning and wear a hat while commuting, especially if your child's school hat stays in the locker before and after classes.



### Keep gates locked

When there are lots of people moving around in the morning, it can be easy for a child to slip out the door unnoticed. Restrict access to the driveway from the house and front yard by using fences and gates.

# EVERYONE IN THE CAR!



## Legal requirements

Did you know children aged between 4 and 7 years of age MUST use either a forward-facing child car restraint with in-built harness OR a booster seat with a properly fastened and adjusted seatbelt when travelling on Victorian roads? **It's the law.**

It's important to remember that the laws outline the **minimum requirements**. Evidence shows that there is more that can be done above and beyond these minimum requirements to help keep children safe when travelling in the car.

Children should use a booster seat as long as possible, until they can fit properly into an adult seat belt.

The **Best Practice Guidelines** provide information and advice to help you keep your children safe on every trip.



## Front seat is not a treat

Kids are always eager to sit in the front seat of the car, but when is it actually safe for them to do so? Research shows that injury risk to children aged 12 and under is nearly double in the front seat compared to the back seat, regardless of restraint type.

It's important to remember that 'the front seat is not a treat' – we recommend that all children under the age of 12 sit in the back seats where possible.



## Checking your restraints

To make sure your child has the maximum level of protection, ensure that their child car restraint or booster seat:

- **Meets the Australian Standard**

**AS/NZS1754:** All child car restraints and booster seats sold and used in Australia must comply with this standard.

- **Is the right size for them:** Leave your child in their child car restraint or booster seat until they have reached the maximum size limits, rather than graduating them because they have turned a certain age.

- **Is installed correctly:** Familiarise yourself with your child car restraint or booster seat and follow the manufacturer's instructions on installing and using the restraint.

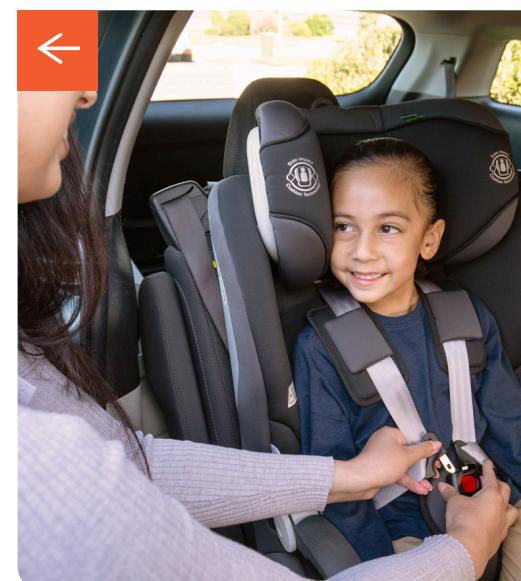
- **Is properly adjusted and fastened to fit them on every trip:** You will need to constantly check and adjust the child car restraint to fit your child as they grow.



## Correctly buckled, every trip

"I'll do it myself!" Encouraging your child's independence is important, but always double-check their seatbelt when they buckle and unbuckle themselves. Children may accidentally unbuckle other child car restraints while trying to help.

Before every trip, make sure all children are correctly fastened, and remind them not to undo their seatbelts until you say it's safe to do so.





## The 5-step test

Ensure your child stays in their current restraint until they have outgrown the size limit. Children aren't ready to move out of a booster seat until they can pass the 5-step test – most children won't pass this test until they are around 10-12 years old.

If the answer is '**yes**' to the following 5 steps, your child is ready to use an adult seatbelt:

- Can your child sit with their back against the vehicle seat?**
- Do your child's knees bend in front of the edge of the seat cushion?**
- Is the lap belt sitting low across your child's hips and touching their thighs?**
- Does the sash belt sit across the middle of your child's shoulder?**
- Can your child stay seated correctly like this for the entire trip without slumping?**



# TIME TO GO

## Keeping your driveway safe



Driveways can be busy places in the morning rush to work and school, and at the end of the day when everyone returns home.

Children are unpredictable, inquisitive and surprisingly quick, all of which increases their risk of injury around driveways.

Remember to always **SUPERVISE, SEPARATE and SEE:**

- **SUPERVISE:** Supervise children at all times around driveways, car parks and vehicles.
- **SEPARATE:** Where possible, separate children's play spaces from garages and driveways.
- **SEE:** All cars have a large blind spot, some extending back as far as 15 metres, which can make it hard to see children when reversing.

While modern technology has improved car safety with reversing cameras and sensors, they should never be relied upon on their own to keep children safe. It's a good idea to walk around your car and check for children before reversing.



# ON THE WAY

## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

If you're lucky enough to live close by, you and your children may walk to and from school each day. Set a good example by always using a designated school or pedestrian crossing to cross the road.

Hold your child's hand near traffic and teach them safe pedestrian behaviours such as **STOP, LOOK, LISTEN** and **THINK**.

- **STOP** one step back from the curb, or shoulder of the road if there is no footpath.
- **LOOK** in all directions for approaching traffic.
- **LISTEN** in all directions for approaching traffic.
- **THINK** about whether it is safe to cross the road – when the road is clear or all traffic has stopped.

When crossing, walk straight across the road. Keep **LOOKING** and **LISTENING** for traffic while crossing.



### Prams

As older siblings head to school, you might still have a little one tagging along in the pram. To help keep your baby or child safe on the walk:

- Make sure your pram or stroller meets Australian Standard AS2088, and has a five-point harness, tether strap and brake.
- Always buckle your child in using the harness.
- Put the brake on every time you stop and place the tether strap around your wrist to help prevent the pram rolling away.
- Avoid hanging bags on the pram handles or overloading the pram storage compartment, as this can make the pram tip over.
- On warmer days, avoid any coverings over the pram to allow for sufficient airflow and dress them in lightweight clothing.



# BICYCLES, SCOOTERS AND SKATEBOARDS

To help keep children safe when using wheeled devices, there are a few key steps to follow:

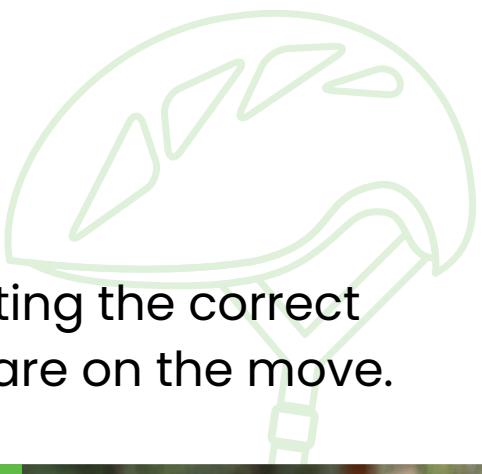


- Always supervise children when they are using wheeled devices.
- Always use correctly fitted and appropriate safety gear like helmets, wrist guards and knee/elbow pads.
- Children should always learn to ride their wheeled device in a safe environment e.g. away from roads and driveways.
- Ensure that the wheeled device is the right size for your child and is appropriate for their development and motor skills.
- Use in a safe manner. Pedestrians have right of way, so keep left and give way.
- Ensure supervised riding. Children under the age of 10 should cycle with responsible adults. Most children in that age group do not have the skills to cycle safely without supervision.
- Children should know the driveway is dangerous and can pose a safety risk. They should always stop before entering the road, scan by looking in all directions, listen and think about if it is safe to cross the road. Do not encourage children to ride their bikes in the driveway.

## E-SCOOTERS AND E-BIKES

It's important to remember that e-scooters and e-bikes can cause serious injuries and, in some cases, death among children. In Victoria, it's illegal for anyone under the age of 16 to ride e-scooters.

# HELMETS



Below are some handy tips on selecting the correct helmet for your little one when they are on the move.

- **Check for safety first:** Look for the Australian Standards sticker (AS2063) to ensure the helmet meets safety standards.
- **Let them pick:** Involve your child in choosing their helmet. If they love it, they'll wear it!
- **Stand out:** Bright colours help your child stay visible to cyclists, pedestrians and drivers.
- **Get the perfect fit:** Measure your child's head (above the eyes and ears) and choose the matching helmet size.
- **Snug and secure:** Make sure the helmet fits your child's head snugly and doesn't shift around.
- **Size matters now:** Don't buy a larger helmet for them to grow into - it needs to fit properly to protect them today.
- **No to second-hand:** Never use a second-hand helmet. Even if it looks fine on the outside, hidden damage could make it unsafe.



Remember, if your child decides to hit the playground before or after school, it's important they take their helmets off before playing on equipment or climbing trees, as this can pose a strangulation hazard.

# AT SCHOOL



Slow down and be extra vigilant around school zones – school speed limits will be back in action, so look out for road signs advising speed reductions during school hours. Also make sure that any mobiles or other distractions are out of reach or turned off while you are driving.

## AT THE SCHOOL GATES

### Drop-off zones

It's important to drop your children off and pick them up on the school side of the road in the designated drop-off and pick-up area.



### Parking

Always actively supervise children around cars, driveways and carparks. Never leave keys in vehicles.



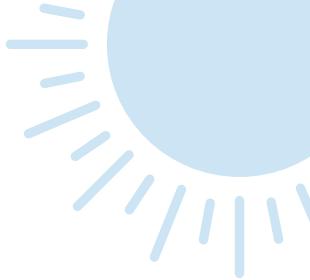
### Dogs

Remember, any dog can bite – even cute and cuddly ones! Always supervise children around dogs, whether familiar pets or those near the school gate. Kids may unintentionally provoke dogs by grabbing fur, pulling ears or tails, or climbing on them – these actions seem playful to kids but are irritating to pets. Teach children to ask an adult before approaching any dog.





## Children in hot cars



Leaving children unattended in a car, even for a short period of time, can be fatal. **The temperature inside a car can be 20–30° hotter than outside.**

Never leave children alone in cars, even if they are asleep and you can see them, and never leave the car motor running.



## Fatal distraction

Fatal distraction happens when parents or carers unknowingly leave their children in a car. It is a condition that impacts short-term memory and can happen to anyone.

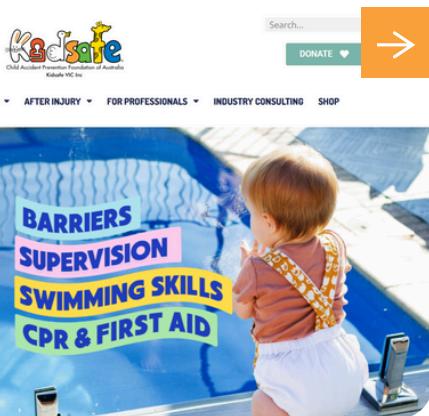
There have been incidents in Australia and around the world where parents or carers, believing a child to be safe elsewhere, have unknowingly left them in a car with tragic outcomes.

There are actions parents and carers can take to help lower the risk of inadvertently leaving a child in a car:

- Open the back door every time you park, even if there is no one in the back seat.
- Place a child's bag or cuddly toy in the front seat as a reminder that children are in the car.
- Leave something you need, such as a bag, phone or wallet, in the back seat of the car.
- Use a mirror for rear-facing child car restraints.
- Create a mental checklist each time you leave the car: 'baby, keys, wallet, phone'.

# WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE?

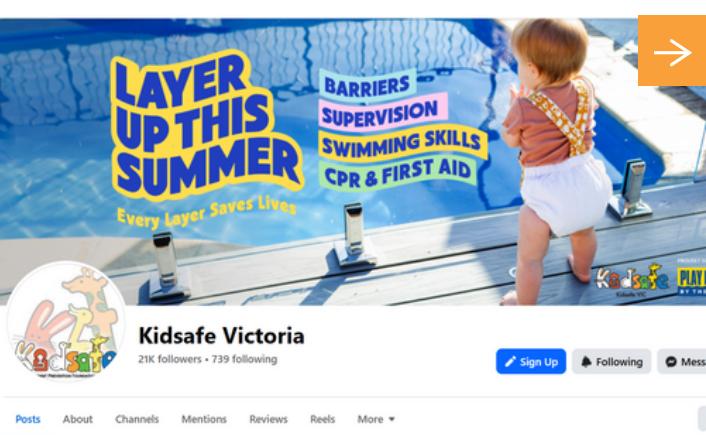
- Talk to your friends and family about child injury prevention.
- Give safety products and first aid kits as gifts to friends and relatives.
- Make a list of emergency contact numbers and place it in a spot near your phone.
- Learn first aid – Kidsafe Victoria has teamed up with **Emergcare** to deliver an innovative program that provides parents and carers with essential skills and knowledge around injury prevention and paediatric first aid training. To find out more, please visit our [website](#).



## Visit our website

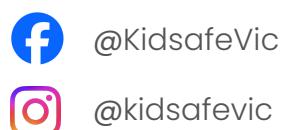
The Kidsafe Victoria website is your one-stop shop for safety information, resources and products. It has everything you need to keep your little ones safe and sound.

[kidsafevic.com.au](http://kidsafevic.com.au)



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# SAFE SCHOOL RUN CHECKLIST

 **Getting ready**

 **Everyone in the car  
and buckled up**

 **Time to go**

 **On the way**

 **At the school  
gates**

 **Share with a friend**

We hope you found our resource super helpful in keeping your little ones safe during the school run.

If you did, we'd be thrilled if you would consider supporting us with a donation.

Every little bit helps us continue our mission to make the world a safer place for kids. Thank you for being part of our journey!

[kidsafevic.com.au](https://kidsafevic.com.au)

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