

School zone road safety – advice for motorists



Practising safety while driving in school zones

School zones can be busy places, especially during the start and end of the school day – making them risky environments for both motorists and pedestrians.

School zones are frequented by some of the most vulnerable members of the community including children and their families. Children do not always understand the dangers of roads and vehicles, so it is important for motorists to follow road safety rules and model correct road safety behaviour to protect children and teach them how to behave.

Pick-up and drop-off are the busiest times outside a school. With an increased number of pedestrians and vehicles around, motorists need to take care and abide by the enforced 40 km/h school zone limit to keep the roads safe for everyone.

Here are some tips for motorists to practice road safety around school zones.

Key advice for driving safely in school zones

- Drive slowly in school zones: stick to the 40km/h limit.
- Stay alert: be mindful of pedestrians, bike riders and other motorists and look out for crossings.
- Avoid U-turns, three-point turns, and other complex manoeuvres as they disrupt the flow of traffic and can be dangerous.
- Always give way to pedestrians, including when entering and leaving driveways.
- Follow the direction of school crossing supervisors at supervised crossings.



We're all responsible as drivers to follow the road rules.

Always stick to the speed limit to keep our children safe.

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School zone speed limits

When entering the zone, you will see a sign which displays:

- the reduced speed limit
- times when this limit is in place.

School zones in South East Queensland operate from **7 am – 9 am** and **2 pm – 4 pm** on school days, Monday to Friday.

The Queensland Police Service enforces a 40km/h speed limit in its school zones. This slows traffic on the roads around schools at the busiest times and helps protect children on their way to and from school. If you are unsure if it is a school day, slow down to the speed limit displayed on the school zone sign.

Picking up and dropping off

Many schools have a designated pick-up and drop-off area where longer term parking is not allowed – but where you can collect your children in a fast and safe way. These are sometimes known as 'kiss and go' zones. Use these designated areas as they have been specially allocated to optimise traffic flow and keep children safe during the busiest times of the school day.

For school zones to be safe, parents and carers need to:

Be timely

- Stick to a 2 minute time limit in school pick up and drop off zones.
- If the children you are picking up are not ready, drive around the block and re-join the queue.
- Teach children to look out for your vehicle and to get in quickly once you have safely stopped at the front of the queue.

Stay in the car

- Don't get out of your vehicle. It is not recommended for parents to get out of their vehicles as this slows the flow of the loading zone. Invite children to get into the car quickly, and discourage the use of the car boot for schoolbags to help keep the flow going.

Stick to the 40km/h school zone speed limit even when you can't see any children nearby.

More information about speed limits in school zones is available on the Department of Transport and Main Roads website at www.tmr.qld.gov.au > **Safety** > **School road safety** > **Safe school travel (SafeST) program** > **Speed limits in school zones**

For more on school term dates in Queensland visit the Queensland Department of Education website at: www.education.qld.gov.au > **About us** > **Calendar** > **School holidays and term dates**

Move forward

- Think of the zone as being like a smooth flowing taxi rank.
- Stop as close as possible to the head of the zone to allow other vehicles access to the zone behind you.

Keep children off the road

- Make sure your children use the rear footpath side door to get in and out of the car. This keeps them off the road and makes it the safest door to use.

Driver distractions: mobile phones

Driving while using a mobile phone held in your hand is illegal, so even if you're stopped, you can't:

- Hold the phone next to or near your ear with your hand.
- Write, send, or read a text message.
- Turn your phone on or off.
- Operate any other function on your phone.



Safe parking

- Obeying parking signs and road rules is key to creating a safe environment for children and other road users. Sometimes this means parking further away and walking children to their school gate in order to park safely and legally.
- Don't park on footpaths, across driveways, or in the entrance to the school car park.
- Never double park.
- Never park in a bus zone or bus bay.
- Be aware that road and parking rules may differ during school hours.

Parking signs and markings

You should always check parking signs carefully near schools as they are often stricter than normal parking rules. The type of parking restriction, and the times that it applies, will be on the sign.



Traffic offences near schools

Top offences

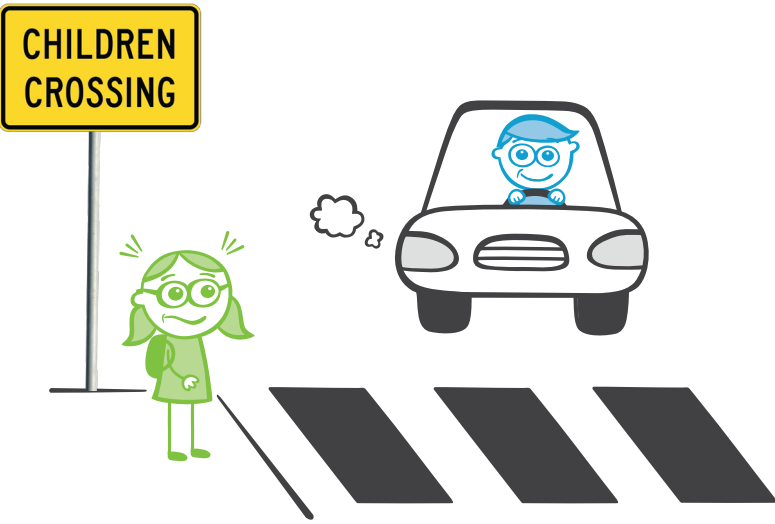
It is an offence to stop:

1. 20 metres before or 10 metres after a signposted pedestrian or supervised children's crossing.
2. 20 metres before or 10 metres after a bus stop or within a bus zone (bayed area).
3. Within 10 metres of an intersection or corner.
4. On a footpath or nature strip within a built-up area.
5. In a way that restricts access to a driveway.
6. In a no parking zone for more than 2 minutes, in a no stopping zone, or on a yellow painted line.
7. Double parked at any time, as it blocks visibility and causes cars to overtake each other to proceed, creating a traffic hazard.

Accessible parking

- If you park in a disability accessible parking space without a valid permit, you will be fined.
- Display your disability parking permit clearly inside the vehicle. Have your permit number and expiry date clearly visible from outside the vehicle.
- Make sure the permit holder is using the vehicle, either as a passenger or driver, and will be entering or exiting the vehicle.

Did you know that it's an offence to stop 20 metres before or 10 metres after a signposted pedestrian or supervised children's crossing? This is because it restricts vision for school crossing supervisors as well as children using the crossing, making it a safety hazard.



What to watch out for

Motorists must stay aware of their surroundings and of other road users at all times, especially while in and around schools.

While driving in and around school zones, actively look out for:

- **Pedestrians** – of all ages walking to school, including children, youth, parents, and grandparents. Remember to give way to pedestrians on or entering a children's, pedestrian or marked foot crossings, and give way to pedestrians on or entering a road you're turning into.
- **Bike riders** – using on-road bicycle lanes and off-road paths. School zones naturally are frequented by children who often have basic riding skills and experience. Motorists must stay at least 1m away when passing bicycle riders in a 60km/h or less speed zone, and remember to give way when required; treat bicycle riders like any other vehicle.
- **Active travellers** – travelling to school on skateboards, scooters or e-scooters and e-bikes. Again, leave a safe distance when passing and remember to give way when required.
- **Bus stops** – including buses arriving and departing, and their passengers preparing to board and leaving buses. Remember to give way to merging buses.

Motorists should also take care to:

- Check your surroundings, blind spots, and indicate before negotiating a parking space, turning or when opening your car door.
- Travel at a speed that will allow you to stop safely at a crossing if needed.
- Travel carefully in areas with children – including schools and playgrounds.

More information

More information about road safety on the Gold Coast is available at www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au under > The Gold Coast > Traffic & Transport > Road Safety

More information about the City's Active School Travel is available at www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au under > The Gold Coast > Traffic & Transport > Active Travel > Active School Travel

Driving safely near children's crossings

Children's crossings are pedestrian crossings that operate part-time, usually in school zones before, during and after school hours.

Visible 'Children Crossing' flags mean the crossing is in operation. If pedestrians are waiting to cross, motorists must stop at the white line and remain stationary until the crossing is clear of pedestrians.

If there is a School Crossing Supervisor you must not proceed until their hand-held sign is no longer displayed, or until they indicate that you may proceed through the crossing.

Driving safely near buses

There are different rules in place for motorists driving near buses.

When driving near a bus, remember:

- **Watch for flashing lights**
Lights on the front and back of the bus will flash to indicate that there may be children crossing or about to cross the road.
- **Give way to buses**
Buses have right of way, so be sure to give way as they pull out from bus stops to re-enter the road.
- **Avoid parking in or near a bus stop or bus zone**
Parking near bus stops and bus zones creates a traffic hazard.
- **Be aware of informal school bus stops in rural areas**
Informal bus stops are usually found in rural areas and are often not sign posted. They may be on the side of the road or at the front of a property, making children difficult to see.