

Watch out for school buses, starting this week

With school now started for another year, there are now school buses on the roadways in the Caledon area. Caledon OPP is pointing out that through the summer, drivers sometimes become distracted and complacent. Extra precautionary measures should be taken when sharing the road with a school bus. Be mindful of school bus safety always. Police would like to remind drivers the rules of the road where school buses are concerned and to make sure they know the rules and help keep school children safe.

Driver rules

? Drivers travelling in both directions must stop for a stopped school bus with its upper alternating red lights flashing.

? When approaching the bus from the front, stop at a safe distance to let children get on or off the bus and cross the road.

? If coming from behind the bus, stop at least 20 meters away.

? Do not go until the lights have stopped flashing or the bus begins to move.

As well as the upper alternating red flashing lights, school buses use a stop sign arm on the driver's side of the bus. This arm, a standard stop sign with alternating flashing red lights at top and bottom, swings out after the upper alternating red lights begin to flash. Remain stopped until the arm folds away and all lights stop flashing.

Drivers can be charged if they pass a stopped school bus with its upper red lights flashing.

The first offence carries a fine ranging from \$400 to \$2,000 and six demerit points.

A second offence (within five years) could result in a fine between \$1,000 and \$4,000, six demerit points and possible jail time (up to six months).

In Ontario, school bus drivers and other witnesses can report vehicles that have passed a school bus. The vehicle's registered owner (even if they were not driving), can have the fines applied to them.

They can be reported to police immediately by calling 9-1-1. People making reports should record the date and time of the incident; the vehicle's make, model, colour and licence number; who was driving; the name of bus company and bus number; if the bus was stopped with the upper red lights flashing and the stop arm out; if there were passengers boarding or leaving the bus; and whether the vehicle passed the bus from behind or coming toward it in the opposite lane.

Police continue to work closely with school bus operators and their drivers to ensure the safety of the passengers.

For more information, refer to the Ministry of Transportation website at www.mto.gov.on.ca

