

AAA School Safety

Lesson Plan for Schools





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Dear Schools and Teachers,

Since 1920, AAA School Safety Patrollers have been keeping their classmates safe as they travel to and from school. The AAA School Safety Patrol program is the largest safety program in the world. It's praised by safety and education groups for reducing injuries and even fatalities among school children. Many AAA School Safety Patrollers have gone on to become U.S. presidents, governors, members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, astronauts, Olympic medalists, educators, and community leaders.

Approaching the centennial anniversary of AAA School Safety Patrol, the organization wants to extend the same safety awareness and leadership skills that have been a hallmark of the program to all schools and students. The AAA School Safety Lesson Plan has been designed for teachers to use in the classroom with students in 4th-6th grades and includes all of the resources, activities, and information that you will need.

In this lesson, students will learn about a variety of safety issues that arise as they travel to and from school, but also while they're at school and at home. Many of the same pedestrian safety tenets that have been taught to AAA School Safety Patrollers for decades are incorporated into this lesson. We have also updated the curriculum to include relevant safety scenarios for schools today.

As important as the safety information contained in this lesson plan are the values and principles that students will gain. Just as AAA School Safety Patrol has instilled these qualities in participating Patrollers, the activities in this lesson plan are based on the following student outcomes:

- **Awareness** of safety issues and how to respond
- **Teamwork** and working with peers to solve problems
- **Responsibility** and confidence in uncertain situations
- **Respect** for self, each other, and authority figures
- **Leadership** in the classroom, among friends, and all areas of life

Patroller Involvement

If you have AAA School Safety Patroller(s) in your classroom, we have included special sections throughout the lesson plan where you may consider having them help lead the activities.

You are welcome to adapt any of the information or activities in this lesson plan to meet the needs of your classroom and school. We encourage you to share this resource with schools and other teachers who may find it valuable.



AAA School Safety Lesson Plan

Grade Levels

4th-6th

Time Required

 70-90 minutes

The activities in this lesson plan are designed to be modular, so teachers can adapt the lesson to meet the needs of their classroom and time constraints. The lesson plan is intended for an individual class setting, but the activities can be expanded to take place over the course of several days or even extracurricular activities. **To ensure that student outcomes are achieved, AAA has provided recommendations throughout this guide for how teachers might adapt the lesson plan where appropriate.**

Patroller Involvement

For schools with active AAA School Safety Patrol programs and Patrollers in the classroom, included throughout the lesson plan are ways to provide extra leadership opportunities for these students. To find out more about the AAA School Safety Patrol program, please visit aaa.com/schoolsafety.

Student Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify various safety issues that they encounter daily
- Assess safe and unsafe situations and how to respond
- Explain how to stay safe while going to and from school and while at school
- Think creatively about how to avoid and resolve safety issues
- Work together to create a safe environment in their schools



Engage: The Setup

Get students interested in the topic by drawing connections to what they already know while assessing prior understanding.


Student Outcomes

Awareness

Resources

N/A

Time Required

 5-10 minutes

Introduce safety as today's lesson

Distribute double-sided papers with “Safe” and “Unsafe” on each side. The teacher may also use the PowerPoint slides to present the safety scenarios. Students will raise their cards or select if each situation is safe or unsafe. When students give an incorrect answer, they should pair up with another student who has answered correctly.

Ask students about what they do to get to school and back home everyday, and what safety issues exist at each step.

Think about everything you did from the moment you woke up this morning to arriving at school. What are some safety issues that you needed to be aware of at each of these steps?

- *Walking from your house to the car or school bus?*
- *Driving to school with an adult?*
- *Riding the bus?*
- *Walking to school?*
- *Riding your bike to school?*

Expand to include other issues that exist within the school day, such as playground safety or bullying, as well more specific cases like fire or earthquake drills.

Even once you arrive at school, there are still safety issues that we all need to be aware of. What are some ways we stay safe throughout the school day?

(Allow open responses. If students have trouble thinking of answers, use the following prompts.)

- *On the playground?*



Engage: The Setup (cont.)

- *In the hallways?*
- *What about in the case of a natural disaster, like an earthquake or fire?*





Engage: Pre-Lesson Assessment

Get students interested in the topic lesson by drawing connections to what they already know while assessing prior understanding.

Student Outcomes


Awareness

Resources

Safe/Unsafe Cards (see p. 23)

Safe/Unsafe Powerpoint

Time Required

 10-15 minutes

Safe / Unsafe

Distribute double-sided papers with “Safe” and “Unsafe” on each side. The teacher may also use the PowerPoint slides to present the safety scenarios. Students will raise their cards or select if each situation is safe or unsafe. When students give an incorrect answer, they should pair up with another student who has answered correctly.

Patroller Involvement

If you have AAA School Safety Patroller(s) in your classroom, allow them to lead this activity and provide explanations for the correct answer.

1. Before crossing a street, look left, right, and left again.
SAFE – It’s important to look left again because the first danger to you is the traffic coming from your left.
2. Always assume that as a pedestrian you have the right-of-way, and that cars will stop for you.
UNSAFE – Drivers may not see you and may have less time to react.
3. If you’re in the middle of a crosswalk with a pedestrian signal, start running if you see the sign to stop.
UNSAFE – Never run while crossing the street. It’s safer to finish walking through the crosswalk.
4. A crossing guard, police officer, or Patrol Advisor gives you the signal to cross the street.
SAFE – When traffic authorities are present, always follow their instructions.
5. If you have to cross the street in front of a school bus, walk 10 feet ahead of it before crossing.
SAFE – Make sure the bus driver can see you, and try to make eye contact before crossing.



Engage: Pre-Lesson Assessment (cont.)

6. To avoid crossing the street in front of a school bus, walk behind the bus.
UNSAFE – Walking behind a bus puts you in a danger zone: the bus driver's blindspot.
7. When driving to school, the driver waits to stop at a stop sign before responding to a text message.
UNSAFE – Distracted driving is unsafe at any time, even at a complete stop.
8. Ride your bike on the left side of the road facing traffic, so you can make eye contact with drivers.
UNSAFE – Always ride with the flow of traffic. Riding on the left side of the road could also cause collisions with other bicycles.
9. If a fire starts in the science lab, run out of the building.
UNSAFE – In any emergency, it's important to stay calm and remember what you practiced in a drill. Running can be dangerous for other students and yourself.
10. If you feel an earthquake while you're in the classroom, get under your desk, cover your head, and hold on.
SAFE – The safest thing you can do during an earthquake is Drop, Cover, and Hold On.





Explore: Classroom Participation

Provide opportunity for students to become actively involved with the topic and build on their understanding.

Student Outcomes

Teamwork


Leadership

Responsibility

Resources

Safety Scenario Flash Cards (see p. 24-26)

Time Required

 15-20 minutes *

* This is a modular activity and can be excluded or modified if time is limited.

Role-Playing and Team-Building Activity

Distribute double-sided papers with “Safe” and “Unsafe” on each side. The teacher may also use the PowerPoint slides to present the safety scenarios. Students will raise their cards or select if each situation is safe or unsafe. When students give an incorrect answer, they should pair up with another student who has answered correctly.

Now we’re going to apply some of these safety situations through a role-playing activity. We’ll break off into groups, and each of you will be assigned a different role in your group.

Then I’ll give you a safety scenario. In your groups, you’ll recreate the scenario, and then act out how to respond to it and what you think is the safest thing to do.

As you’re working through the scenario, keep in mind all of the safety issues that might arise, how you should respond, and what you can do to be prepared.

During this activity, it’s important that you’re respectful of your classmates and other classes going on. You may not touch anyone in your group; use inside voices; and no running or roughhousing. This is especially important because some of your classmates will have certain roles that will require them to rely on you to stay safe, and some of these scenarios will be very serious in nature. (Include any other rules for your classroom.)

Divide the class into groups of 4. Assign each student one of the following roles. Then assign each group a different safety scenario using the printed safety scenario flash cards. You may choose to skip certain scenarios based on what is most appropriate for your classroom. As time allows, rotate through the different safety scenarios and student roles as groups complete their activity. If possible, take students outside of the classroom or allow them to rearrange items in the classroom, such as desks and chairs.



Explore: Classroom Participation (cont.)

Student Roles

(If there aren't enough students to form a group of four, make sure one student is the leader.)

Patroller Involvement

If you have AAA School Safety Patroller(s) in your classroom, assign them to play the role of leader in this activity.

1. Student #1: The leader, who can give instructions to all other students in the group at all times
2. Student #2: Can only follow instructions from the leader exactly as they are told
3. Student #3: Must keep their eyes closed throughout the entire activity
4. Student #4: Can't talk to other students in the group

Scenarios

1. You are being dropped off in the drop-off zone by an adult. You need to walk from the parking lot to your classroom in the safest way possible.
2. You are walking home from school and you need to cross the street with a busy intersection.
3. After school, you are getting on the bus, riding the bus to school, and getting off the bus.
4. You are sitting at your desk in class when you hear the windows start to rattle and feel shaking. It's an earthquake.
5. You are in the classroom when an announcement is made that there is a dangerous person on campus with a weapon.

Debrief and Classroom Processing

Before moving on to the instructional section of the lesson, have students return to their seats and allow them to process what they learned from the activity by guiding the class through the following questions. Make sure that each scenario is represented when you call on students.

- *What was the most challenging part of this exercise?*
- *What was something unexpected that you learned in this activity?*
- *What were some ways that you needed to rely on your classmates to complete your scenario?*
- *How can you apply what you learned in this exercise to a real-life scenario?*





Explain: Classroom Instruction

Build on the students' prior knowledge, ensuring that they have accurate information to apply in a variety of safety situations.

Student Outcomes

Respect

Responsibility

Resources

School Safety PowerPoint

Bicycle Safety PowerPoint: What's Wrong with This Picture?

Time Required

 15 minutes *

* In advance of the lesson, select the topics to be included, based on time and relevance for your classroom.

Transitioning from the activity, guide the class in the following discussion about a variety of safety issues.

Now that you've all had a chance to act out and role-play what you might do in certain scenarios, we're going to talk about a variety of safety issues and a few things you should remember for each one. First we'll talk about safety issues that exist from the time you leave your home to the time you arrive at school. Then we'll talk about safety issues that we should all be aware of while we're at school.



Explain: Classroom Instruction (cont.)

Section 1: Getting to School Safely

AAA encourages schools to teach these lessons in conjunction with the national School's Open – Drive Carefully awareness campaign. While it is important for students to learn the importance of getting to school safely, it is just as important for drivers to be reminded to be especially vigilant for pedestrians before and after school hours.

First, there are all kinds of safety issues when we go to and from school. How many of you walk to school? How many of you are dropped off at school? Ride your bike to school? Ride the bus to school? While we all know how to move around and do it every day, let's go over a few important lessons and reminders to make sure we stay safe.

Patroller Involvement

If you have AAA School Safety Patroller(s) in your classroom, ask them in advance to help lead these pedestrian, bicycle, and bus safety topics. They may use their knowledge and experience from the School Safety program to explain these concepts to their peers.

1.1 – Safe Gaps

(For this part of the lesson, you may prepare in advance an aerial image or photo of an intersection near your school, so students have a visual reference.)

Before crossing a street, it's important to make sure that you have enough time to make it all the way across safely. One way to do this is by measuring what's called a "safe gap." A safe gap is when there is a long enough break in traffic to cross the street without having to run.

Safe gaps are determined by three things:

- *How many cars are coming*
- *How fast the cars are traveling*
- *How far away the cars are*

It's also important to note:

- *How wide the road is*
- *Road and weather conditions*

The best way to determine a safe gap:

- **Step 1:** *Choose a visual reference point. (This could be a tree, a sign, or a driveway – something that doesn't move)*
- **Step 2:** *Count how many seconds it takes for a car to reach you from the visual reference point.*
- **Step 3:** *Wait until there is enough time to safely cross.*



Explain: Classroom Instruction (cont.)

1.2 – Search Patterns

Each and every time you go to cross a street, you should always look remember this search pattern when checking for traffic:

Left, Right, Left Again

Additionally, you should look behind you for approaching or turning vehicles.

1.3 – Bicycle Safety

AAA encourages schools to remind students of these lessons during National Bicycle Safety Month in May.

How many of you ride a bike to school? Just like there are important things to remember as a pedestrian, there are some important tips to keep in mind when riding a bike.

What to Wear

- *ALWAYS wear a helmet, and make sure it fits properly. Remember 2x2x2:*
 - *Wear the helmet level on your head, 2 finger widths above your eyebrow*
 - *Straps should form a “V” under each ear – check by making a “V” with 2 fingers*
 - *Buckle the helmet straps and adjust until you can fit no more than 2 fingers between the strap and your chin*
- *Wear bright colors and use lights, especially if you’re riding at night or in the morning.*
- *Reflectors on your clothes and your bike will help drivers see you.*

How Your Ride

- *Always ride in the same direction as traffic – never facing oncoming traffic.*
- *Use hand signals to motion when you turn left, right, and stop*
(include visuals in PowerPoint)
- *Follow the same rules as cars: observing stop signs, signals, and right-of-way rules.*

Knowing Your Bike

- *Make sure your bike fits you. Like wearing shoes, a bike that is too big or too small is not only uncomfortable but can be dangerous.*
- *Keep your tires properly inflated, and remember that tires will lose air over time.*
- *Check your brakes. They should be tight enough so that when you apply the brakes the wheels don’t turn.*



Explain: Classroom Instruction (cont.)

As time allows, a fun and memorable way to reinforce the importance of wearing a helmet when riding a bike is through the **Melon Drop Demonstration**.

For this demonstration, you will need:

- One bicycle helmet
- One melon
- A tarp / trash bags / paper towels
- A ladder / chair / stool

Step 1: Introduce the demonstration to students by explaining that the melon in this activity represents your head, and how a helmet can protect your brain from injury and even save your life in the event of an accident.

Step 2: Prepare the melon by drawing a face on it and having your class come up with a name for it. Properly fit the helmet on the melon, making sure the chin straps are tightly secured.

Step 3: Call on a student volunteer.

Patroller Involvement

If you have AAA School Safety Patroller(s) in your classroom, call on one to lead the demonstration. Have the student safely stand on top of the ladder / chair / stool.

Step 4: Drop the melon **with the helmet** on so it lands on the tarp / trash bags / paper towels. Make sure the student drops the melon with the helmet facing down. Explain how this demonstrates that helmets play an important role in keeping us safe. Even if there is some damage to the melon, you can explain that the amount of damage is less than it would have been without a helmet.

Step 5: Take the helmet off the melon and drop it **without the helmet**, making sure it lands on the tarp / trash bags / paper towels. Explain how this demonstrates how delicate our skulls are, and how a helmet helps protect us from brain damage. You can also look for bruises on the melon, explaining that swelling can happen inside that can cause permanent brain damage from an accident.

Bicycle Safety Activity: What's Wrong With This Picture?

As time allows, you can assess student's learning from this section with the "What's Wrong With This Picture" interactive PowerPoint.

Patroller Involvement

If you have AAA School Safety Patroller(s) in your classroom, allow them to lead the activity and call on students to answer the questions.

Bicycle safety interactive activity adapted from AAA Northeast.



Explain: Classroom Instruction (cont.)

1.4 – School Bus Safety

(If you have students who take the bus to school, you may also include these safety lessons.)

AAA encourages schools to remind students of these lessons during National School Bus Safety Week at the end of October. For more information and dates, you can visit the National Association of Pupil Transportation's website at www.napt.org.

It's not only walking or riding to and from school or in the parking lot where we need to keep safety in mind. What about when you're on the bus?

Boarding the Bus

- *Always make sure you get to the bus stop on time, so you can avoid running to get on the bus.*
- *Line up away from the street as the bus approaches.*
- *Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before boarding.*
- *Use the handrail while getting on the bus.*

Riding the Bus

- *Walk – don't run – to your seat, and stay seated the entire time.*
- *If the bus has seat belts, always buckle up.*
- *Never put your arms, head, or any belongings outside the windows of the bus.*
- *Keep the aisles clear of any objects, such as your legs or backpacks.*
- *Use inside voices, so you don't distract the driver.*

Exiting the Bus

- *Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before exiting.*
- *Make sure you have your backpack and all personal belongings.*
- *Use the handrail while getting off the bus.*
- *If you're crossing in front of the bus, stay at least ten steps in front of the bus and always make sure you can see the bus driver and they can see you.*
- *Never walk behind a bus – stay away from the rear wheels at all times.*

Bus Danger Zones

Refer to diagram in School Safety PowerPoint. Remember to always be aware of your surroundings when getting on and off a bus. The safest area is on the side of the bus, away from traffic.

School bus safety information adapted from the National Safety Council.



Explain: Classroom Instruction (cont.)

Section 2: Staying Safe at School

Now that we've gone over many of the safety issues that exist when getting to school, let's talk about three important safety topics that we should all keep in mind during the school day.

2.1 – Bullying

First, we all want to feel safe while we're at school, and it's up to each of you to make sure our school is a safe place for everyone.

*Who knows what the term "inclusion" means?
(Call on students to offer ideas.)*

Inclusion means actively encouraging and ensuring that everyone is able to participate, no matter their abilities or past experiences. A safe place is a place where everyone feels included.

*Who knows what the opposite of inclusion is?
(Call on students to offer ideas.)*

The opposite of inclusion is exclusion. "Exclusion" means "to leave out." We can all think of times when we felt left out, whether that was on the playground, on a sports team, or even in the classroom or at home.

*One of the worst forms of exclusion is bullying. What do you think bullying means? What does bullying look like, feel like, and sound like?
(Call on students to offer ideas.)*

Bullying happens whenever there is unwanted and aggressive behavior from one person or group towards another. Often, this behavior doesn't happen just one time, but is repeated over time.

When we think of bullying, we often think of physical bullying. But what are some other ways that bullying happens?

(After students have some time to give answers, go over the following slide.)

Types of Bullying

- **Physical:** aggressive contact relating to the body
- **Verbal:** negative language or words used toward someone
- **Emotional:** hurting someone's feelings
- **Gossiping:** talking about others using false information, or talking about someone else's personal and intimate information with others
- **Hazing:** pressuring someone to do something shameful, dangerous, or unsafe
- **Cyber:** harmful or abusive communication that happens online, through social media, or cell phones



Explain: Classroom Instruction (cont.)

Slides will include a visual along with each term. After going through the slides, go through a second time in random order with only the visual to quiz students on what they remember.

Now that you know more about some of the signs for bullying, never hesitate to tell a teacher if you think that you or someone else is being bullied.

Bullying information adapted from Playworks.





Extend: Classroom Engagement

Allow students to apply what that they have learned and explore the implications in new situations.

Student Outcomes

Teamwork

Resources

School Safety Worksheet (see p. 27)

Time Required

 15 minutes

Transitioning from the instructional time of the lesson, return students to their groups from the previous activity so they can work on the following break-out activity with their peers. Distribute the School Safety Worksheet to each student.

Now that we've covered many of the most important lessons and reminders for both getting to school and staying safe at school, we're going to return to our groups from earlier.

Have students return to their groups from the previous activity, sitting at desks together. Distribute the worksheets.

With your groups, go around and share a story from an unsafe situation. The situation could be one of the areas we just talked about, or something else. It could be something that happened to you, or something that you heard about happening to someone else.

After students have time to discuss with their groups:

Safety Situation

Now on your worksheets, write a short description of what you just described to your group. Write down what the situation was, who was involved, and how you responded.

Safety Lessons

In the next section, write down three lessons that you could learn from that situation. They may be lessons that we went over today, or lessons that you learned as a result of that situation.

Safety Solutions

Finally, in the last section, draw a picture that represents a solution for that safety situation. You might draw a picture of how to properly respond in that situation, what you could have done



Extend: Classroom Engagement (cont.)

differently, or how the situation could be prevented or improved in the future.

In your groups, take turns sharing what you drew and how that solution applies to the safety lessons that you learned.

After students finish sharing, call on one student from each group (or more, as time allows) to share with the entire class.

Patroller Involvement

At this time, the teacher may assign roles to specific students, or decide on the best way to integrate these roles within their classroom. If you have AAA School Safety Patrollers in your classroom, you may have them help lead other students in taking the pledge.





Evaluate: Learning Assessment

Determine how much learning and understanding has taken place while showing evidence of accomplishment.

Student Outcomes

Leadership

Responsibility

Resources

School Safety Pledge Certificate

Time Required

 10 minutes *

* To save time, decide on School Safety Roles in advance of the lesson.

After students return to their seats from the group activity, conclude the lesson by having students provide ideas for safety roles in the classroom and taking the School Safety Pledge. In case students have trouble thinking of roles, have some ideas prepared in advance.

School Safety Roles

Today we've covered a variety of safety issues. Some of the things we talked about might have been new information for you; others were probably reminders.

Based on everything we learned today, what are some ways that we can continue to put safety into practice?

(Call on students, and write their answers on the board.)

In our own class, what are some safety responsibilities that we should all commit to?

(Call on students, and write their answers on the board.)

Based on these responsibilities, what are some safety roles that we could come up with for our classroom?

(Call on students, and write their answers on the board.)

Patroller Involvement

If you have AAA School Safety Patroller(s) in your classroom, allow time for them to explain their responsibilities in the School Safety Patrol program and what they have learned by being involved in it.



Evaluate: Learning Assessment (cont.)

At this time, the teacher may assign roles to specific students, or decide on the best way to integrate these roles within their classroom.

School Safety Pledge

To help us all remember what we talked about today, and the importance of safety in all areas of our life, there's a School Safety Pledge that we can all take. After taking the pledge, you'll receive a certificate that shows your commitment to school safety.

Patroller Involvement

If you have AAA School Safety Patroller(s) in your classroom, have them lead other students in taking the pledge.

I, {Student's Name}, will be a safety leader by:

- Obeying all rules as I go to and from school
- Looking out for others in unsafe situations
- Making sure my school is a safe place for everyone
- Being prepared to stay safe in all areas of my life





Resources



Safe / Unsafe Cards

Cut and fold the paper down the middle to create double-sided cards.

Safe

Unsafe

Safe

Unsafe



Safe / Unsafe Cards (1/3)

Cut and fold the paper to create placecards.

Back



**Walking from the parking lot or
drop off zone to the classroom**

Bottom



Safe / Unsafe Cards (2/3)

Cut and fold the paper to create placecards.

Back



**Walking from home to school
and crossing the street**

Bottom



Safe / Unsafe Cards (3/3)

Cut and fold the paper to create placecards.

Back



**Getting on the bus, riding the bus
to school, and getting off the bus**

Bottom



School Safety Worksheet

Safety Situation

Write a short description of what you just described to your group. Write down what the situation was, who was involved, and how you responded.

Safety Lessons

Write down three lessons that you could learn from that situation. They may be lessons that we went over today, or lessons that you learned as a result of that situation.

1.

2.

3.

Safety Solutions

Draw a picture that represents a solution for that safety situation. You might draw a picture of how to properly respond in that situation, what you could have done differently, or how the situation could be prevented or improved in the future.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a solution to the safety situation.