

As school resumes pay attention to the road

Parents are well aware of the significance of the first Tuesday after Labour Day.

It's back to school, and with it comes all the anxiety and excitement one would expect.

But if you drive a car, that date will impact you just as much as the parents of a four-year-old tentatively taking her first steps into the new role of student.

The first day of school is unfamiliar to some, hectic for most, and it's a return to traffic volumes on our roadways unlike anything we have seen for the past two months.

It's an adjustment for everyone.

Teachers are back to work, parents are back from vacations, school buses are back on our roads and young pedestrians are crossing streets and walking past countless driveways on their way to schools throughout the region.

All need to be aware of their surroundings, and allow more time than usual to get to where they are going. The danger is real.

We all need to do better.

With school's return, children will be congregating at bus stops, some of them arriving even before daybreak. Remember, students don't just travel on school buses. Some take public transit, too, getting on and off at bus stops on some of our busiest arterial roadways.

They need to keep their wits about them as they navigate the streets, and motorists need to be on high alert, keenly aware of the increase in young and inexperienced pedestrians crossing roads in all locations.

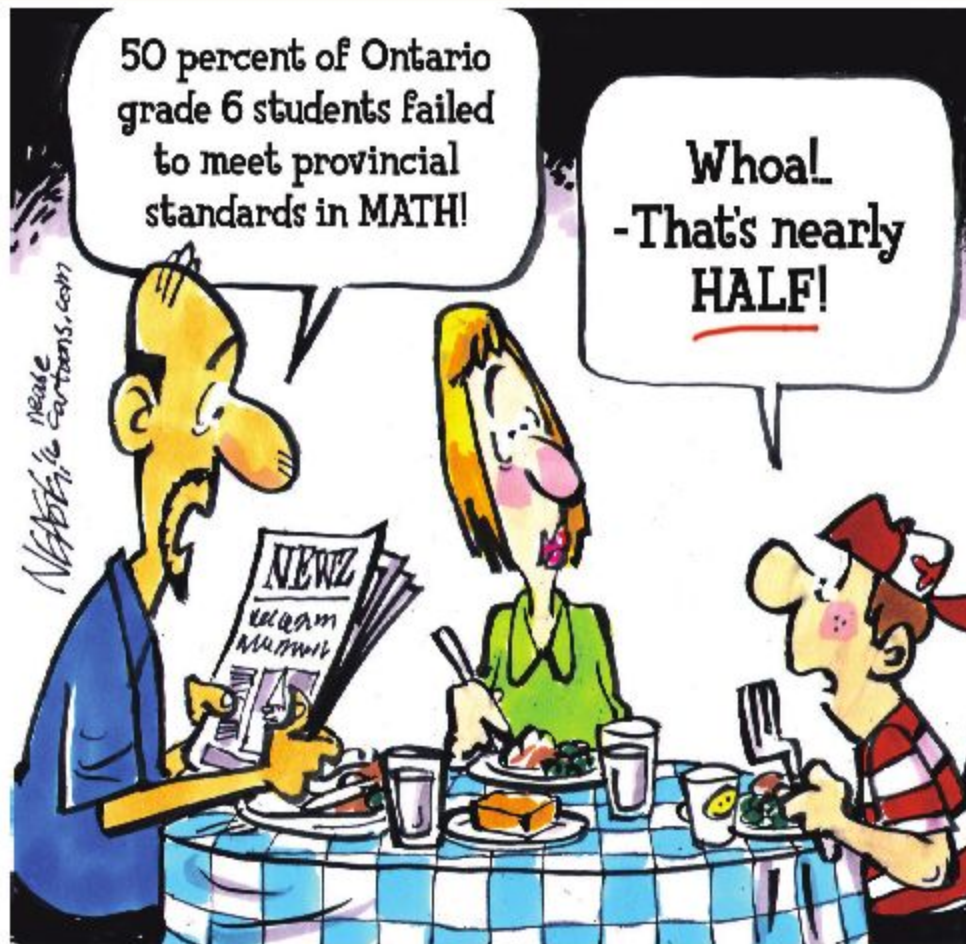
Of course, school buses will be making multiple stops to pick up children, also, and all drivers are required by law to stop behind them and wait until the stop arm is retracted and the flashing lights are turned off. Imagine six demerit points and a minimum \$400 fine as your reward for disobeying. The unimaginable is the ultimate price that could be paid.

Police will patrol school zones and school bus routes in earnest in the coming weeks, enforcing pedestrian and driver safety, and they promise violators can expect zero tolerance.

Parents are also encouraged to review and practice safety rules with their children, and make sure youngsters know their way to and from the bus or school. We all have a role to play in keeping our children safe.

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THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

905-873-0301

Publisher: Neil Oliver

General manager: Steve Foreman
(sforeman@theifp.ca, 905-234-1011)

Retail advertising manager: Cindi Campbell
(ccampbell@theifp.ca, 905-234-1012)

Managing editor: Chris Vernon
(cvernon@metroland.com, 905-234-1020)

Distribution: Shelley Papineau
(spapineau@metroland.com, 1-866-8960)

Classifieds/Real Estate

Kristie Pells
(realstate@theifp.ca, 905-234-1016)

Advertising Sales

Jenny Hawkins
(jhawkins@theifp.ca, 905-234-1014)

Jennifer Spencer
(jspencer@theifp.ca, 905-234-1013)

Rachael Scutt
(rscutt@theifp.ca, 905-234-1015)

Kelli Kosonic
(kkosonic@theifp.ca, 905-234-1018)

Classified Call Centre

1-800-263-6480, Fax 1-866-299-1499

classifieds@metroland.com

Accounting: 1-866-773-6575

Editorial

Emonn Maher: Staff writer/photographer
(emaher@theifp.ca, 905-234-1023)

Kathryn Boyle: Staff writer/photographer
(kboyle@theifp.ca, 905-234-1022)

Production

Shelli Harrison (sharrison@theifp.ca, 905-234-1017)

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Letters to the editor

Mind what you pack in the school lunch

As we head back to school, it is important to keep our students with severe, or anaphylactic, allergies, in mind.

One of the most common severe allergens kids have is to peanuts. In 2006, a law was passed in Ontario to protect these students at school.

This law is called Sabrina's Law, and states that school boards must reduce the risk of exposure to allergens.

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that this happens.

Food companies are making it much easier to pack nut-free lunches by clearly labelling their products, parents of kids without allergies must be diligent in packing nut-free lunches, and parents of kids with allergies must ensure that

school staff are aware of their responsibilities in maintaining a nut-free environment.

Every student should be safe at school and in the schoolyard.

Alex Vonghia,
Georgetown

Avid runner salutes drivers

I am an avid runner and have been living in Georgetown for 12 years.

I run mainly in the early mornings and I must commend Georgetown residents on their courteous driving when I am crossing streets.

I have noticed the same courtesy given to other runners. I know some people have complained about the rudeness of some distracted drivers but I can honestly say, this has not been an issue for me.

Most drivers always make it a point to stop (even when I am not directly at

a street corner) and wait till I cross. I always give a wave of thanks and always receive the same in return. Georgetown continues to impress me with the genuine nature of its people. This is something that can get lost in a growing community.

Moe Lalani,
Georgetown

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Email: cvernon@metroland.com

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