



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

August 18, 2010

### **Sheriff Timothy K. Cameron Offers Back to School Safety Tips**

The summer is winding down and students are gearing up for the return to the classroom. The excitement builds with anticipation of seeing old friends and embracing new experiences. Sheriff Cameron and the members of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office would like to wish students a safe and prosperous school year.

To help ensure the safety of students, faculty and staff the Sheriff's Office will be out in force and are implementing safety initiatives for the school year beginning with the first day of classes. Some safety plans include the posting of sign boards on county roadways to remind motorists to slow down and be mindful of students traveling to and from bus stops and schools. Deputies will be assigned to various schools throughout the county to help welcome students back to class. Traffic patrols and school bus patrols will also be implemented to assure safe student travel.

In addition, Sheriff Cameron would like to offer these additional back-to-school safety tips:

For students walking to the bus stop - plan a walking route which is the most direct path with the fewest street or intersection crossings. Parents should teach students to recognize and obey traffic signals and pavement markings.

Remind students to look both ways before crossing the street, and never enter streets from between parked cars or from behind objects which can obstruct the student's and motorist's view.

Students should stay in well-populated areas avoiding parks, vacant lots, fields, etc., and walk with a sibling, friend, or neighbor whenever possible.

Never talk to or accept rides from strangers. A stranger is defined as anyone the child does not, or parents do not, know.

Arrive at the bus stop early and do not stand in the street. Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching the roadway, and watch for cars before attempting to board the bus.

Students are to stay seated at all times and keep their heads and arms inside while riding the bus to and from school. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to exit.

Motorists BE ALERT when approaching school bus stops. Watch for the school buses yellow (caution) and red flashing lights especially on non-divided highways. If the school buses red lights are flashing motorists are required to stop at least 20 feet from the rear or the front of the bus and may not proceed until the school bus deactivates it's flashing red lights and resumes motion.

Students should know his or her home phone number and address, parent work numbers or the number of another trusted adult, and how to call 9-1-1 in case of an emergency.

Parents who are driving students to school or students who are driving themselves to school should arrive early, particularly during the first few weeks, and use the school's designated student drop-off and pick-up zones. Following these designed zones will help maintain a timely flow of traffic. Students should enter and exit all vehicles on the curb-side only.

Do not make u-turns; attempt to double-park in front of the school, or park in places which may obstruct the flow of traffic, as doing so can create hazardous conditions for students and other pedestrians.

Most importantly, please remember to exercise patience. Cooperation enhances safety for all.