



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### ***2018 SCHOOLS OPEN CAMPAIGN BEGINS AUGUST 9<sup>TH</sup>***

The Louisa County Sheriff's Office announces the **2018 SCHOOLS OPEN CAMPAIGN** in conjunction with the opening of Louisa County Public Schools on Thursday, August 9<sup>th</sup>.

The **SCHOOLS OPEN CAMPAIGN** encourages parents and drivers to take an active role in keeping children safe. While school buses are a very safe mode of transportation, a small number of school-age children die nationwide in traffic-related mishaps each year. Of these mishaps, nearly two-thirds are killed outside the bus. Sheriff Fortune asks parents to teach their children some simple safety practices to reduce the risk of a mishap. Some of these practices include:

- Arrive at the bus stop a few minutes early.
- Wait a safe distance from the side of the road (at least 10 feet).
- Do not run or play at the bus stop.
- When the school bus arrives, wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, the red flashers illuminate, the door opens, and the driver says it's okay to approach. If crossing the street, make eye contact with the bus driver and cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus. Never walk behind a bus.

When children are present, Sheriff Fortune reminds drivers to be alert, slow down, and obey the "flashing signal light system" that school bus drivers use to alert motorists of pending actions:

- Yellow flashing lights indicate the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.
- Red flashing lights and extended stop arms indicate the bus has stopped and children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their vehicles and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop-arm is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.

In addition, the Sheriff's Office will have an active presence at each of our six public schools to heighten awareness of reduced speed limits in school zones. During designated periods, normally 30 minutes before the start of the school day and 30 minutes after the end the school day, the speed limit in school zones is reduced to 25 miles per hour. Watch for the yellow school zone flashing lights indicating the reduced speed limit is in effect.

During the **SCHOOLS OPEN CAMPAIGN**, deputies will also take aggressive action to reduce the incidence of child safety seat misuse by parents/caregivers and seat belt nonuse by all drivers and passengers in their privately owned vehicles. In the United States, vehicle mishaps are a major killer of teens and younger children. According to Virginia law, child safety seats are mandatory for all children through 7 years of age. Children, 8 through 17 years of age, must be properly restrained

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using an appropriate child safety seat or vehicle seat belt. Child safety seat and seat belt laws for minors are primary enforcement – no other violation need be committed prior to summoning. The Sheriff's Office would also like to remind parents/caregivers that children 12 years of age and younger should always ride in the back seat. Additional information on Virginia child safety seat and seat belt law is available on the Sheriff's Office web page or by contacting any Louisa County School Resource Officer.

Keeping our youth safe is an important priority for Louisa County's Sheriff's Office and the citizens of Louisa County. Working together, we can make the **2018 SCHOOLS OPEN CAMPAIGN** the most effective ever!

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