

## Whitman Police Department

Chief Scott D. Benton

20 Essex Street  
Whitman, MA 02382



## Whitman Fire Department

Timothy J. Grenno, Fire  
Chief

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Whitman Police and Fire Departments Offer Back to School Safety Tips

WHITMAN -- As the start of the new school year draws closer, Police Chief Scott D. Benton and Fire Chief Timothy J. Grenno are reminding residents of several safety tips.

All students in the Whitman-Hanson Public Schools will return to class on Aug. 30.

"We are urging residents to follow these tips to ensure that both the start of school and the rest of the year are safe for students, faculty and staff," Chief Benton said. "Both drivers and students need to be aware of their surroundings, especially when traveling

or walking in school zones."

Given how often students are on their phones texting, browsing the internet or playing games, the Whitman Police Department recommends that parents talk to their children about the following safety tips provided by the National Safety Council (NSC) when headed to and from school:

- Never walk while texting. If you need to send a text, move out of the way of others and stop on the sidewalk.
- Never cross the street while using an electronic device.
- Look left, right, then left again before crossing the street.
- Cross only at crosswalks.

"This time of year can be stressful for families with schedule changes as students head back to school," Chief Grenno said. "While things can get hectic, it is vital that everyone follow the tips provided to make the transition into the new school year as safe as possible."

Drivers should be on increased alert when traveling through school zones and should **NEVER** text and drive. The Whitman Police Department reminds drivers that the **speed limit in a school zone is 20 mph**. Additionally, the NSC reminds operators that:

- In a school zone, when flashers are blinking, stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the crosswalk or intersection.
- Always stop for a school patrol officer or crossing guard holding up a stop sign.
- Take extra care to look out for children in school zones, near playgrounds and parks, and in all residential areas.
- Don't honk or rev your engine to scare a pedestrian, even if you have the right of way.
- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians.

To best ensure that children who travel to school by bus get there safely, Whitman Police advise that students follow these tips from the NSC:

*Getting on the bus:*

- When waiting for the bus, stay away from traffic and avoid roughhousing or other behavior that can lead to carelessness.
- Line up away from the street as the bus approaches.

- Wait until the bus has stopped and the doors open before approaching.

*Getting off the bus:*

- If you have to cross in front of the bus, walk at least 10 feet ahead until you can see the driver. Make sure the driver can see you too.
- Wait for a signal from the driver before crossing. When the driver signals, look left, right, then left again. Walk across the road and keep an eye out for sudden traffic changes.
- If your vision is blocked, move to an area where you can see other drivers and they can see you.

Whitman's D.A.R.E. and School Resource Officer Kevin Harrington will be back this year as a liaison between students, school employees and the police department. Residents can contact Officer Harrington at [kharrington@whitman-ma.gov](mailto:kharrington@whitman-ma.gov) or 781-447-1212, or visit him at the police station.

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