



# BURKE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**Sheriff Banks Hinceman**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY TIPS**

### **BURKE COUNTY SHERIFF BANKS HINCEMAN OFFERS SAFETY TIPS FOR BACK TO SCHOOL**

Burke County Sheriff Banks Hinceman wants this school year to get off to a great start and offers some practical safety tips for parents and kids who are heading back to school.

“Parents have an opportunity as the school year begins to share some important information about personal safety with their children. Teaching kids about potential dangers can help them learn to avoid those dangers,” Sheriff Hinceman said. Sheriff Hinceman encourages parents to take time at the start of the school year to check the location sharing settings on their children’s electronic devices to be sure this information is not easily available via device applications. “The start of the school year is also a really good time to remind your kids just how much information is available about us online. We must teach our children that people who do not have their best interest at heart can use that personal information in a way that might put them in danger,” said Sheriff Hinceman.

“We also have to continue to educate our kids about the danger of drugs and substances that can hurt them,” said Sheriff Hinceman. “We can all learn from the safety tips below and abide by them to make Burke County safer for everyone.”

- While walking, remember to always travel with a friend. Two heads are better than one, especially if there’s an emergency.
- Don’t wear headphones while you are walking alone or with friends so you can hear your surroundings and know if someone is approaching you.
- A stranger is anyone you or your parents don’t know well.
- You or your friend must never take anything like candy or medicine from someone you do not know. It may contain a dangerous substance that can potentially harm you.
- If a stranger in a car stops to ask you questions, keep walking and never approach the vehicle. Even if they call you by name, do not be fooled. They may have seen your name on a backpack, a lunchbox, even in a local newspaper or on social media.
- Strangers can use tricky tactics to persuade you to come with them like:
  - asking you to walk with them to show you something;
  - asking you to help look for a lost pet or person; or
  - telling you that your mom or dad are hurt and offering to take you to them.
  - Unless you know the person, do not go with them!
- If you think you’re in any danger, yell for help and run to the nearest business, school, crossing guard, or law enforcement officer.
  - Always tell an adult you trust like a parent, family member or teacher if a stranger has approached you.
  - Don’t tell anyone you don’t know your personal information like your name and address.
  - Establish a secret family “code word.” If someone claims to know your family but does not know the code word, do not go with them.

“By taking the time to carefully prepare your child on how to handle these situations, you can ensure your child’s safety whether they are on their way to school or an after-school activity, heading home, playing on a playground or riding their bikes,” Sheriff Banks Hinceman concludes.

August 25, 2023