# Schoolbus Safety – Speeding Meeting Kit




## WHAT'S AT STAKE

Speeding is a major factor in traffic accidents, and when it involves a school bus, the potential consequences are even more devastating. We're not just talking about property damage; we're talking about the safety and well-being of the children we transport. A speeding bus has a reduced reaction time, increased stopping distance, and a higher risk of rollovers or other serious accidents. These incidents can result in severe injuries, or even fatalities, for students, drivers, and others on the road. Maintaining safe speeds is not just a suggestion; it's a non-negotiable responsibility.

## WHAT'S THE DANGER

Speeding creates a chain reaction of dangerous effects that significantly increase the likelihood and severity of accidents.

**Reduced Reaction Time:** At higher speeds, a driver's ability to react to unexpected events is drastically reduced. In the time it takes to process a situation and react, a speeding bus covers much more ground than a bus traveling at a safe speed. This severely limits the driver's ability to avoid hazards.

**Increased Stopping Distance:** The faster a bus travels, the longer it takes to bring it to a complete stop. This increased stopping distance is especially critical in situations where quick braking is required, such as in school zones, near bus stops, or in heavy traffic.

**Increased Severity of Crashes:** The force of impact in a collision increases exponentially with speed. A crash at a higher speed is much more likely to result in serious injuries or fatalities compared to a crash at a lower speed.

**Loss of Control:** Speeding can make it much harder to maintain control of the bus, particularly on curves, in adverse weather conditions like rain, snow, or ice, or during sudden maneuvers to avoid obstacles. This can lead to skidding, rollovers, or other loss-of-control accidents.

**Increased Risk in High-Risk Areas:** Speeding is particularly dangerous in school zones, near bus stops, and in residential areas where children are present. Children are often less predictable in their movements, and speeding

significantly reduces a driver’s ability to react safely.

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

We all know speeding is dangerous, especially in a school bus. As drivers, we’re the ones in control, so it’s up to us to make sure we’re driving safely. That means being committed to following speed limits, adjusting for conditions, and eliminating distractions. So, let’s talk about some key things you can do to prevent speeding.

**Prioritizing Speed Limit Adherence:**

This is the cornerstone of safe driving. Know and obey all posted speed limits without exception. Pay particular attention to reduced speed limits in school zones and near bus stops. These limits are not suggestions; they are in place to protect children and other pedestrians.

**Adapting to Changing Conditions:**

Adjusting your speed based on road and weather conditions is crucial for maintaining control and preventing accidents.

- **Adverse Weather:** Significantly reduce your speed in rain, snow, ice, or fog. Roads are slickest at the beginning of a rain shower, and black ice can be extremely dangerous.
- **Traffic Conditions:** Reduce speed and increase following distance in heavy traffic.
- **Other Conditions:** Obey reduced speed limits in construction zones and reduce speed at night when visibility is reduced.

**Eliminating Distractions – Maintaining Focus:**

Distracted driving is a major cause of accidents. Eliminate all distractions while operating the bus:

- **Mobile Devices:** Put away your cellphone entirely. Even hands-free devices can divert your attention.
- **Other Distractions:** Refrain from eating, drinking, adjusting the radio, or climate controls while driving. Keep conversations with students to a minimum and only have them when absolutely necessary.

**Maintaining Safe Following Distance and Utilizing Speed Monitoring:**

Maintaining a safe following distance provides crucial reaction time. Use the “3-second rule” to apply it, pick a fixed object on the road, start counting when the car in front passes it, and ensure you reach the object no sooner than three seconds. If you do, slow down to increase the gap. In poor conditions like rain or fog, extend this to 4 or more seconds for added safety. Utilize all available speed monitoring devices, such as speedometers, GPS tracking, and speed governors, to ensure you are maintaining safe speeds.

**Pre-Trip Inspections, Route Planning, and Defensive Driving:**

Thorough pre-trip and post-trip inspections are essential for identifying and addressing potential mechanical issues. Plan your route and schedule effectively

to avoid the need to rush. Practice defensive driving techniques, including scanning the road, anticipating hazards, and maintaining situational awareness. Understanding the physics of speed—how it affects stopping distance, reaction time, and impact force—is crucial for making informed driving decisions.

## FINAL WORD

So, at the end of the day, it’s about more than just getting from point A to point B. We’re responsible for precious cargo – our students. Every time we get behind the wheel, we’re making a choice to prioritize their safety above all else. Let’s make sure that choice is always to drive safely and prevent speeding.