

## School Bus Safety

By Attorney Timothy Lenahan



Now that school is back in session, there are thousands of school buses on the roads across the United States. Northeastern and Central Pennsylvania has our share of school buses, notably due to the fact many of our school districts are spread out over a wide geographic area. Many schools spend time helping students and parents with school bus safety, while others do not address the issue at all. SafeKids.org is an organization committed to school bus safety. Here's their suggestions on keeping your child safe while they ride the bus to or from school.

From SafeKids.org

School buses are the safest mode of motorized transportation for getting children to and from school, but injuries can occur if kids are not careful and aware when getting on and off the bus.

Taking the bus for the first time is a big step for your child. Help your kids get a gold star in bus safety by following these tips on the next page.

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## The Hard Facts Top Tips

- Walk with your kids to the bus stop and wait with them until it arrives. Tell kids to stand at least three giant steps back from the curb as the bus approaches and board the bus one at a time.
- Teach kids to wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before getting off and never to walk behind the bus.
- If your child needs to cross the street after exiting the bus, he or she should take five giant steps in front of the bus, make eye contact with the bus driver and cross when the driver indicates it's safe. Teach kids to look left, right and left again before crossing the street.
- Instruct younger kids to use handrails when boarding or exiting the bus. Be careful of straps or drawstrings that could get caught in the door. If your children drop something, they should tell the bus driver and make sure the bus driver is able to see them before they pick it up.
- Drivers should always follow the speed limit and slow down in school zones and near bus stops. Remember to stay alert and look for kids who may be trying to get to or from the school bus.
- Slow down and stop if you're driving near a school bus that is flashing yellow or red lights. This means the bus is either preparing to stop (yellow) or already stopped (red), and children are getting on or off.

There are more school bus safety tips available at [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)

## About Attorney Timothy G. Lenahan



ATTORNEY TIMOTHY G. LENAHAN

Attorney Timothy G. Lenahan is managing partner of Lenahan & Dempsey, P.C. Among his many practice honors, Timothy Lenahan has been listed in "Best Lawyers In America<sup>®</sup>" since 2008. He carries dual certification in Best Lawyers In America in the areas of Personal Injury Law as well as Insurance Law.

Attorney Lenahan devotes his practice exclusively to the representation of injured parties, including insurance coverage, first and third party bad faith, auto, medical malpractice and product liability and more. He has served as a co-chairman of the lawyers division of the Lackawanna/Wayne County United Way for over a decade.

## BACK TO SCHOOL: Is Your Child Being Bullied?

By: Attorney Michael A. Dempsey



Attorney Michael A. Dempsey

Currently, the most controversial issue facing parents and students heading back to school is bullying and the legal ramifications of a School District's failure to address it. Unfortunately, most parents are unaware of the School District's legal responsibility to the student and the proper way to communicate with it about a bullying situation. Should your child be facing this problem, there are certain guidelines that are extremely important to follow.

### **The Law**

In 2008, Pennsylvania enacted a law requiring School Districts to adopt or amend an existing policy in the school code of conduct regarding bullying. This policy must be available on its publicly accessible website and in every classroom. It should contain specific information such as prevention and disciplinary procedures that you, as parents, should read carefully.

Generally, a School District does not have an affirmative duty to protect students from other students. However, a School District has a responsibility to prevent bullying about which it knows or reasonably should have known. Once the School District is put on notice regarding a bullying incident, it must take immediate action to investigate the claim and take appropriate measures to ensure that it does not happen in the future. Appropriate measures could include discipline, counseling, separation, employee training, etc. Should the School District fail to take any remedial action and/or disciplinary action, they may be in violation of federally protected rights.

### **Communicating With the School District**

If you find yourself in a situation where your child is being bullied, there is a proper way to communicate with the School District, which should be addressed in its bullying policy. It is extremely important to communicate with the School District verbally as well as following up the conversation by writing a letter or e-mail. The reason for this type of communication is that it creates a written record of exactly what occurred and when. Should the need arise to make a phone call or an in-person visit to the School District due to the urgency of the matter, always follow-up with a letter/e-mail summarizing the conversation.

In the event the school official is not responsive, contact the Superintendent and ultimately the School Board until your concerns are addressed. When contacting the school district about your child being bullied, emotions can run high, understandably. However, most school districts will be more than willing to work with parents to ensure the safety of their students. Always communicate with the School District in a positive and polite manner so that you and the school district can work together to correct the problem.

If your child has been injured in a school related incident, call us at 1-888-536-2426.

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\$ 15,000,000.00	Verdict	Medical Negligence
\$ 13,600,000.00	Settlement	Insurance Bad Faith
\$ 7,000,000.00	Settlement	Car/Truck Accident
\$ 6,775,000.00	Verdict	Motor Vehicle Collision
\$ 5,000,000.00	Settlement	Mistreatment of Disabled Children
\$ 4,601,387.00	Settlement	Insurance Bad Faith
\$ 4,500,000.00	Settlement	Work Place Injury
\$ 4,350,000.00	Settlement	Motor Vehicle Collision
\$ 3,078,825.00	Verdict	Insurance Bad Faith
\$ 2,700,000.00	Verdict	Motor Vehicle Collision
\$ 2,600,000.00	Settlement	Motor Vehicle Collision
\$ 2,520,809.00	Settlement	Motor Vehicle Collision
\$ 2,500,000.00	Verdict	Motor Vehicle Collision
\$ 1,700,000.00	Settlement	Motor Vehicle Collision
\$ 1,625,000.00	Settlement	Motor Vehicle Collision
\$ 1,600,000.00	Verdict	Medical Negligence
\$ 1,460,000.00	Settlement	Pedestrian Injury
\$ 1,350,000.00	Settlement	Pedestrian Injury
\$ 1,200,000.00	Verdict	Medical Negligence
\$ 1,130,000.00	Settlement	Work Place Injury
\$ 1,000,000.00	Settlement	Motor Vehicle Collision
\$ 1,000,000.00	Verdict	Personal Property
\$ 1,000,000.00	Settlement	Motor Vehicle Collision

\* The facts of each case are different. No specific results are implied. Descriptions of awards in previous cases are no guarantee of future results and should not create any expectations that our firm, or any firm, can achieve similar results in another case.

At Lenahan & Dempsey, we are proud to celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary on WNEP-TV's Ask The Legal Professional. Visit us at [www.LenahanDempsey.com](http://www.LenahanDempsey.com) or at [wnep.com](http://wnep.com) and click on "Ask The Professional."



**1-888-LENAHAN**

To visit Lenahan & Dempsey, [CLICK HERE.](#)

## Lenahan & Dempsey Offices

We maintain offices throughout Northeast, Central Pennsylvania and The Poconos to serve our clients. We also offer home, hospital and nursing home consultations.

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### Wilkes-Barre Office:

The Courthouse Square Towers Building  
Suite 410  
216 North River Street  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

Phone: (570) 822-1000

### Berwick Office:

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