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News Release

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SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY INFORMATION

With the start of school approaching on August 10th, Sheriff Champagne would like to remind everyone of some school zone driving safety tips. As schools open their doors, it's time for everyone – motorists, parents, educators, and students – to improve their traffic safety practices. The following tips can help make this a safe and happy school year for the whole community.

Be on the lookout for school zone signals and ALWAYS obey the speed limits.

- When entering a school zone, be sure to slow down and obey all traffic laws.
- Always stop for school busses that are loading or unloading children.
- Watch out for Police Officers who are working a school zone and obey their traffic signals.
- Be aware of and watch out for children near schools, bus stops, sidewalks, in the streets, in school parking lots, etc.
- Never pass other vehicles while driving in a school zone.
- Never change lanes while driving in a school zone.
- Never make U-Turns while driving in a school zone.
- Never text while driving in a school zone.
- Avoid using a cell phone, unless it is completely hands-free, while driving in a school zone.
- Unless licensed to do so, never use handicap or emergency vehicle lanes or spaces to drop off or pick up children at school.

Sheriff Champagne also wants to remind everyone of the law that passed last year prohibiting the use of cell phones while in a school zone.

Louisiana Revised Statute Title 32:300.8:

If you're driving through a school zone during posted hours, it is against the law to use your cell phone or other mobile device for **any reason**, including:

Making a phone call.
Texting.

Social networking.

The only exceptions to this rule are if:

You need to report an emergency (including traffic hazards or accidents).

Your personal safety is at risk.

You need to report or avert a criminal act against someone (including yourself).

You are legally parked.

You operate an emergency vehicle and must use your cell phone as part of your job.

If you are caught illegally using your cell phone in a school zone, you will be charged with a moving violation. The fine for a first offense is \$175 and any second or subsequent offenses carry a fine of up to \$500.