

# As New School Year Gets Underway, Experts Warn Drivers to Be Cautious Even in Districts Where Learning is Virtual

Wednesday, August 12, 2020 by Danielle Prieur (WMFE)



Photo: Eliobed Suarez

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*Orange County Schools started the fall semester on Monday. All students will be learning online through August 21, when some will return to brick-and-mortar classrooms.*

With businesses and schools reopening across Central Florida experts are warning drivers to use extra caution.

AAA spokesperson Mark Jenkins says in school zones where some children are going to school virtually, and others in-person, motorists should still go slow and follow the law.

“We’ve gone through several months of summer, now it’s time to be extra cautious when you’re behind the wheel because there will be students who are out on foot, on bicycles, you’ve got buses stopping at different areas that you might not expect them to stop at. So just all the more reason to be cautious.”

Jenkins says people should be prepared to stop for school buses when their red lights are flashing and to pay special attention to new pedestrian-activated beacons especially in school zones.

“I think that oftentimes when you’re driving through a school zone you’ll watch for those yellow blinking lights. And that’s oftentimes when that school zone’s considered active. And while the law might not necessarily require you to slow down when a school zone’s not active, it’s still important to just be alert.”

Best Foot Forward Central Florida found there were 85 fewer pedestrian deaths and injuries between March and June this year compared to the same time period in 2019.

But the nonprofit warns that these numbers have started to increase again in July.