

Tips For Safeguarding Your Children

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Our school is participating in the *Think First & Stay Safe™* personal safety program. Home reinforcement of the program is key, so please familiarize yourself with the following tips and review them with your child regularly.

- ☑ Make time to discuss personal safety with your kids, even if you're uncomfortable with the topic.
- ☑ Reassure your child that most people are committed to the safety and happiness of children and can be called upon for help if the need arises.
- ☑ Make sure even very young children know their complete name, address and phone number.
- ☑ Teach your children how to dial 911; let them know law enforcement is there to help.
- ☑ Teach children basic sex education; the areas of the body covered by a bathing suit are private.
- ☑ Establish that inappropriate touches (inside the bathing suit zone) are against the law. This gives children confidence to assert themselves with those who may try to abuse them.
- ☑ Explain to kids that children who experience abuse are usually abused by someone they know, not by a stranger.
- ☑ Let children express affection on their own terms. It's best not to instruct them to "Give Uncle Jimmy a hug" or "Give Aunt Susan a kiss."
- ☑ Be vigilant supervising children, especially during multi-family gatherings with multi-age kids.
- ☑ Many children are sexually abused during sleepovers, by both peers and adults. If you choose to allow sleepovers, make certain all activities are closely monitored.
- ☑ Stress that there should be no secrets from you *ever*, even seemingly innocent ones. Secrets often play a significant role in grooming children for abuse.
- ☑ Warn children they may be threatened to keep quiet about abuse. Such verbal threats are against the law.
- ☑ Explain the importance of reporting abuse or attempted abuse to you or another trusted adult.
- ☑ Teach youngsters to respect, admire and celebrate the differences in people. Live by the family motto, "Zero Tolerance for Intolerance!"
- ☑ Participate or volunteer in your child's school and extracurricular activities whenever possible.
- ☑ Instill youngsters with a sense of self-worth at every opportunity.
- ☑ Make it a priority to get to know your children's friends and their families.
- ☑ Encourage involvement in extracurricular activities. Children with many interests are less likely to experiment with drugs or other negative influences.
- ☑ Online luring does occur. If your child is taking risks online, find out why.
- ☑ Watch for signs of Cyberbullying to or by your child. It affects thousands of kids every day.
- ☑ Above all, encourage youngsters to recognize, trust and follow their instincts about behaviors and situations, especially with people they know. Parents should do the same.

Excerpted from the *Think First & Stay Safe™* PARENT GUIDE by Kenneth Wooden, with Rosemary Webb and Jennifer Mitchell

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