

Dear Fifth Grade Parent/Guardian,

Our class will soon begin a personal safety program called **KIDS AND COMPANY: Together for Safety®**. Through specially designed activities, games, songs, and skill rehearsals, your child will be learning how to protect himself/herself from abduction and sexual exploitation. This program was selected by our school because it empowers children with the information, skills, and support they need to keep safe, without frightening them. The curriculum has received the support of leading national educational organizations.

This letter provides information and concepts to use at home with your child to reinforce the safety messages learned at school. Below is a list of the safety concepts taught in Grade 5:

CHECK FIRST - children are taught to always let someone know where they are, who they are with, and when they change plans. Check first before leaving or changing plans.

BUDDY SYSTEM - children traveling in groups of two or more in and around the neighborhood or out and about in malls, stores etc., are less likely targets for victimization. A child traveling alone is more easily accessed.

NO-GO-TELL - the rule is to say "NO" using an assertive voice, facial expression, and stance, GO from the situation/place to a safe place, and then TELL a trusted adult. This rule is used whenever children are in a situation where they are uncomfortable, unsure, or afraid.

SECRETS - A secret involving touch or touching games should be told to a trusted adult. Encourage your child to tell until they receive the help they need.

HOME ALONE - reinforce with your child to keep doors and windows closed and locked, emergency numbers by the phone, answer the phone as though an adult is home, phone a trusted neighbor for help or advice if needed or if they are unsure about anything, keep TV or music turned low enough so that they can hear and be alert to unusual noises, avoid watching or reading scary stories that might trigger their imagination and make them feel frightened, and not to "advertise" that they will be home alone by talking about it with friends or by displaying or talking about their house (apartment) key in public.

NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY - be sure your children know their surrounding area, stay alert and observant, and can seek help from a "low risk" adult if they have a concern.

EMERGENCIES - children are more prepared in an emergency when they know how to call 911 from home and pay phones.

TRUSTED ADULTS - knowing and being able to access several adults who can help your child if they have a problem and can't reach you is a safe procedure for your child to follow. Select these adults with your child and put the names and numbers on an emergency ID card, and place it in your child's backpack.

ONLINE - reinforce with your child to:

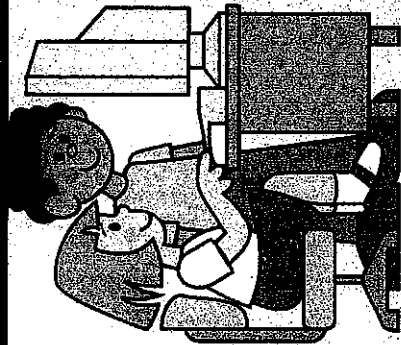
- not give out personal information such as address, telephone number, your work address/telephone number, or the name or location of their school without your permission
- tell you right away if any online information seen or received makes them feel uncomfortable
- never send their picture or anything else without checking with you
- never respond to any messages that are mean or make them feel uncomfortable

PERSONAL INFORMATION - names on the outside of clothing or jewelry allow easy access to your child, be sure your child does not wear these items. Keep emergency information on an ID card with your child.

ASSERTIVENESS - children who can speak up for themselves may be less likely to be targeted for victimization. They should use strong, clear voice tones, look at people when speaking to them, and walk with a sense of direction and purpose.

BABYSITTING - know for whom your child is babysitting, including their address and phone number. Have your child take a list of helpers and phone numbers with them in case they need to call someone while babysitting.

SURFING THE NET SAFELY



RULE 1

Keep an Adult Nearby

Cyberspace can be fun, but it is also a place where kids can get into serious trouble.

It is important to learn about the dangers, and how to protect yourself in dangerous situations.

The best protection is to make sure that an adult is nearby to answer questions, and to help keep both you and your computer safe.

RULE 2

Protect Your Computer

Make sure your computer contains up-to-date virus-protection software.

Never eat or drink near your computer.

Never place a magnet near your computer.

Make sure your computer is plugged into a surge protector.

Shut down your computer during a lightning storm.

Cover your computer when it's shut down.

RULE 3

Protect Your Privacy

The folks you meet in chat rooms are strangers. Never tell anyone private information about yourself.

Never use your real name. Invent a special nickname, or use your initials.

Never give anyone your address or phone number.

Never tell your age or where you go to school.

Never tell when or where you're going on vacation.

Never send your picture.

RULE 4

Protect Your Password

A password is private. Never tell your password to anyone, not even to your best friend.

Don't use something obvious, like your name, address, phone number or date of birth. Make up something unique that only you would know.

Write your password down and keep it in a safe place in case you forget it.

Change your password from time to time.

RULE 5

Protect the Privacy of Others

Never give out private information about your family or friends.

Never tell anyone where your parents work.

Never give anyone private numbers such as credit card numbers.

Never tell anyone the real names of your friends or where they live.

Never enter the email or text files of anyone else without permission.

RULE 6

Beware of Contests, Clubs, Prizes and Gifts

Always ask permission from a trusted adult before you...

...enter a contest;

...join a club;

...accept a prize or gift;

...buy a toy, game, book or anything else.

You could be giving someone private information about yourself or your family without being aware of doing so.

RULE 7

Beware of Strangers

NEVER! agree to meet a stranger in person.

NEVER! agree to speak on the phone.

NEVER! send your picture.

NEVER! let anyone send a picture to you.

If a stranger asks

to meet or phone you, asks for your picture or wants to send a picture,

DON'T WAIT!

Tell a parent or teacher right away.

RULE 8

Don't Break the Law

Illegal activities can get you into serious trouble.

NEVER! let anyone talk you into breaking the law.

NEVER! send hateful or threatening email.

NEVER! use other people's passwords.

NEVER! try to access other computers.

NEVER! copy and use commercial software or music files.

NEVER! make a bomb.

RULE 9

Practice "Netiquette"

Treat others with courtesy and respect.

Don't use nasty language. Don't be cruel.

Don't spread rumors or lies. Don't SHOUT.

Don't hold down the ENTER key when you're not sending a message.

Never answer a message that makes you feel bad or uncomfortable.

Show all weird messages to a parent or teacher right away.