

Tips for Safeguarding Your Child

Dear Parent,

Our school is participating in the *Think First & Stay Safe* personal safety program. Since home reinforcement can help ensure your child's long-term safety, please familiarize yourself with the following tips and refer to them often.

- ☑ Make time to discuss personal safety with your child.
- ☑ Make sure even very young children know their full name, whole address and phone number (including area code.) Teach them how to dial 911.
- ☑ Reassure your child that most adults are committed to the safety and happiness of children and can be called upon for help if the need arises.
- ☑ Instill youngsters with a sense of self-worth at every opportunity.
- ☑ Teach children basic sex education: the areas of the body covered by a bathing suit are private. Using anatomically correct terms for private body parts can help protect your child from abuse.
- ☑ Establish that inappropriate touches are against the law. This gives children confidence to assert themselves with those who might try to abuse them.
- ☑ Let children express affection on their own terms. Do not instruct them to "Give Uncle Jimmy a kiss" or "Give Aunt Susan a hug."
- ☑ Stress that all secrets can be told, especially secrets that make children feel scared, sad, unsafe or anxious.
- ☑ Help your child identify two trusted adults in their life; preferably one at home and one at school.
- ☑ Explain the importance of reporting bullying, abuse or attempted abuse to a Trusted Adult.
- ☑ Do not rely entirely on the "buddy system" for safety. In many documented cases, sisters, brothers and playmates have been victimized together.
- ☑ Make it a priority to get to know your children's friends and their families.
- ☑ Be vigilant supervising children, especially during multi-family gatherings.
- ☑ Many children are exploited during sleepovers, by peers or adults. If you choose to allow sleep overs, inquire about supervision and ensure your child can reach you at all times.
- ☑ Teach youngsters to respect, admire and celebrate the differences in people. Live by the family motto, "Zero Tolerance for Intolerance!"
- ☑ Stress the importance of e-safety and being a Responsible Digital Citizen.
- ☑ Encourage children to recognize, trust and follow their instincts about people and situations.

Excerpted from the *Think First & Stay Safe* PARENT GUIDE by Kenneth Wooden
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