

# John Caldwell School

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Dear families,

You may have heard recently that in a neighboring community, a child on the way to school was approached by an unknown man and offered a drive. Thankfully, the child is safe but it is a reminder for all of us to be very vigilant in preparing our children for such a possibility.

There are several good resources for helping parents have personal safety conversations with their children. We have provided two below and ask that your family take some time to review these important safety messages.

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/public\\_safety/safety\\_protection/content/crime\\_prevention/crime\\_prevention\\_tips/personal\\_safety\\_tips\\_for\\_children.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/public_safety/safety_protection/content/crime_prevention/crime_prevention_tips/personal_safety_tips_for_children.html)

## **PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS FOR CHILDREN:**

### **What Parents Can Do**

- Remember what clothes your children are wearing each day in case they get lost. The more information the police have, the quicker they can locate your children.
- Write your children's names and addresses on their clothing out of view, as children are less likely to fear strangers who know their names.
- Teach your children to know their full name, age, telephone number, area code, city, province and how to make both a local and long-distance phone call so that they can identify themselves and contact you if they run into trouble.
- Being around other children or adults is a great way to reduce the risk of assault.
- The more children know about their bodies and acceptable, safe behaviours, the safer they will be. Teach them the proper names of their private body parts and that nobody has the right to touch them without your permission.
- Discuss sexual abuse in an open and sincere manner, in the same way you would discuss other safety guidelines.
- Children need to be told that their safety is important and that they can play a big part in staying safe. Encourage your children to always report back to you about strange or frightening things that happen.
- To encourage an open dialogue with your children, tell them that you will not be angry with them about things that may scare or concern them. A good start is to talk to them in words you are comfortable with, such as,
  1. "Your body is your own and no one should touch you or hurt you. If someone does touch you, say "No!" and then tell me."
  2. "Sometimes friendly people, people you know, may do things or ask you to do things that are not nice. If they touch you or ask you to touch them, tell me."
  3. "Always tell me if these things happen to you because I love you and I want you to be safe."

### **For safe computing, teach your children to:**

- Never give out any personal information such as their name, address, telephone number or the name and location of their school without a parent's permission.
- Tell you right away if they come across any information that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Never agree to meet face to face with someone they have "met" online. If a parent agrees that such a meeting is possible, be sure it is in a public place and in the company of a parent.
- Never send their picture to anyone online without first checking with a parent.
- Not to respond to e-mail messages that are rude, mean or that make them feel uncomfortable. They should tell a parent right away so that they can contact the system operator.
- Never give their Internet password to anyone other than a parent

## **A PARENT'S GUIDE TO YOUR CHILD'S PERSONAL SAFETY:**

### **Always Teach Your Children:**

- To know their full name, age, telephone number, area code, city and province
- How to phone long distance in an emergency, by dialing direct or with the operators assistance
- How to contact you, or another close relative in an emergency. How to contact a trusted neighbor, police, fire or ambulance services and when to make these calls.
- When children are home alone they should tell phone callers that you are there, but you are busy and cannot come to the phone. The phoning party can call back later. Teach your child to cut short any phone calls with strangers and hang up the telephone if a stranger continues to talk
- When children are home alone, find out the identity of the person who comes to the door, without opening the door. If a stranger is at the door, teach your children to tell the stranger that you are busy, and he/she should go away and come back later. Teach your child not to engage in conversation with the visitor. If the child feels threatened, teach them to phone an emergency number. Emergency numbers could be your telephone number at work, that of the police or a trusted neighbor who will be home
- Where possible, your children should play and walk with other children
- Your children should always ask your permission before accepting gifts from strangers
- To avoid situations where strangers may approach your child alone, such as an unsupervised play area, empty lots, abandoned buildings, bushy area of parks, creeks and riverbeds; to run home or to the nearest public place, or a Block Parent home, if someone is following or frightening your child
- If someone follows your child in a car, they should turn around and get away. Run home or to a Block Parent home or the nearest public place such as a school, store, or office. Your child should also try to remember what the driver and car looked like or its license number
- That adults, especially strangers, rarely ask children for help in finding things, or for direction. Explain to your child that both men and women are strangers
- If your child becomes separated from you in a store or shopping mall, to go directly to a store employee or cashier for help
- That police officers who wear uniforms are their friends and that they can be trusted if your child is in trouble. It is for this reason that you should never use the police as a threat to your child. This will confuse their image of the police.

### **Teach Yourself:**

- To provide the school or daycare centre with the names of persons to whom your child may be released. Inform the school or daycare centre of whom to notify if your child does not arrive at school including an emergency number if you cannot be reached
- To make a quick mental note of your child's clothing each day to aid in the search if your child becomes lost
- To maintain up-to-date records which include a recent photograph of your child, their height and weight, medical and dental histories, and if you wish a video tape and fingerprint records. These records are valuable tools if your child becomes lost
- To avoid clothing and toys which prominently display your child's name. Children are less likely to fear a stranger who knows their name.
- To interview and check with other parents to ensure all potential baby sitters are trustworthy
- To know all of your children's friends, their families and their phone numbers. Insist that your child ask for permission to visit with friends
- If your child must use the washroom in a public place, always accompany them, or ask another adult whom you trust to take them. Your child should never play or loiter near public washrooms or public changing rooms.
- Pre-school children should never be left alone or be unsupervised in or out of the home
- Your children should always ask permission of you, a guardian or a teacher before they accept rides with strangers. Use a pre-selected secret code word with your child, and those whom you may ask to give your child a ride. Where necessary, change the code word with your child after it has been used for a period of time, or in those situations where it may become known by person who do not have a need to know.

Yours in education,

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