

Tips for Safeguarding Your Child

Dear Family,

Our school is using the *Think First & Stay Safe™* child personal safety program. Home reinforcement can help ensure your child's long-term safety, so please familiarize yourself with these tips:

- ☑ Make time to discuss personal safety with your child on a regular basis.
- ☑ Instill youngsters with a sense of self-worth at every opportunity.
- ☑ Remind your child to be kind to others in words and action, and expect the same in return.

- ☑ Be kind and respectful when using technology, and keep personal information private.
- ☑ Share inappropriate and threatening messages or images with a Trusted Adult

- ☑ Establish an understanding of private body parts using anatomically-correct names.
- ☑ The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends parents use anatomically-correct names for private parts, starting at birth.
- ☑ Establish that unwanted 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 Aunt Vera a hug." or "Kiss Uncle Stu goodbye."
- ☑ Don't rely entirely on the "buddy system" for safety. In many cases, sisters, brothers and playmates have been victimized together.

- ☑ Stress that all secrets can be told, especially secrets that make children feel scared, sad, anxious or unsafe.

- ☑ Have your child identify 2 Trusted Adults in their life; preferably one at home and one at school.
- ☑ Explain the importance of telling a Trusted Adult about any bullying, abuse or attempted abuse.

- ☑ Trust your instincts about people and situations.
- ☑ Teach your child to tell you right away about any weird or gut feelings they get about a person or situation. Instincts are rarely wrong.

- ☑ Make it a priority to get to know your children's friends and their families.
- ☑ Be vigilant supervising children, especially during multi-family and/or multi-age 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.

- ☑ Reassure your child that most people are kind and caring, and can help children stay safe.