



Safer Together

Protective Behaviours Programme



Information for parents and carers on the Protective Behaviours 'Safer Together' Programme

Keeping our Children Safe:

- For children Protective Behaviours is a safety awareness and resilience building programme which our school is adopting for years 3 and 4.
- We believe that this programme is an essential part of our school curriculum as it helps children to recognise any situation where they feel worried or unsafe, such as feeling stressed, bullied or threatened and explores practical ways to keep safe.
- Protective Behaviours also looks at identifying support networks for times when we need someone to listen and help.

- Protective Behaviours is based on two key messages:

“We all have the right to feel safe, all the time.”

&

“We can talk with someone about anything, even if it’s awful or small.”

Lets have a quick look at the following questions. Do you agree or disagree?

1. Abuse only happens in poor or criminal families.

Strongly agree _____ Strongly disagree

A. Child abuse and neglect occur in all cultures, races, and socio-economic groups. No sector of the community is protected from abuse.

2. Your children will be safe if you tell them never to go anywhere with strangers.

Strongly agree _____ Strongly disagree

Research shows that most children are abused by people they know and trust. These can be family members, close family friends, or members of groups or clubs that children belong to. This can lead to denial on the part of parents and caregivers when a child reports abuse. The old idea of 'stranger danger' is not helpful. Also, children may have to ask someone they don't know for help.

3. It is important to teach children to use the correct terms for genitals.

Strongly agree _____ **Strongly disagree**

It is important to use correct terms for the genitals, such as penis, vagina and vulva, just as correct names are used for other parts of the bodies. Calling these parts by pet names, not referring to them at all, or telling children it is 'dirty' to talk about them, can make children think about genitals in a negative way, and make them reluctant to tell others. If they ever need to report abuse, or tell a doctor where they are sore, it is important that they can use the correct words.

4. Personal safety education can significantly help reduce the incidence of child abuse.

Strongly agree _____ **Strongly disagree**

Programmes like *Safer Together* teach children to tell a parent, carer, or other adult about abuse. Studies show that children who have completed such programmes are much more likely to make suggestions for keeping themselves safe than children not involved in such a programme.

- We thought it would be useful to know in advance the content of sessions as when they would occur.
- This will enable you support your child's learning at home if you wished.
- We also considered it would useful to be prepared in case their child asked them questions about certain areas that are covered.
- The programme builds on our PSHE programme of work. We want to ensure that parents feel as involved as possible.
- There are some 'optional' home learning activities for the end of some sessions.

Feelings and feeling safe and unsafe

- Throughout the programme children are encouraged to recognise their feelings of safety in different situations.
- When we feel unsafe, our bodies tell us through physical sensations that something is wrong.
- Within our work in school these sensations are called **Early Warning Signs**; however you may refer to them as natural instincts, gut feelings or intuition.
- Children are encouraged to identify their **Early Warning Signs**; for example, butterflies in their stomach, sweaty hands, goose bumps, racing heart, and the situations in which they can occur.

Personal Network/Helping Hand

In a personal emergency, children are encouraged to:

- Use safety strategies to regain control of the situation and restore them to a state of physical and emotional safety.
- Talk to someone on their personal network, or Helping Hand when they feel unsafe.
- Dial 999 if in immediate danger or ring Childline Children are encouraged to develop a 'Personal Network' of trusted adults who will listen to them, believe them and help them if they need it.
- Ideally, a child's network should consist of at least four trusted adults chosen by them who are available, supportive, trustworthy and willing to listen, as well as adults at home. These adults should be willing to take action, if needed, in order to help the child feel and be safe again.

Safety Continuum/Safety Scale

- There are generally three types of situations where we experience Early Warning Signs:
- When we feel scared, but are having fun and are **in control** of the situation – i.e. it is **our choice** to be there. For example, watching a scary movie, diving off a high board or riding a roller coaster. We call this **Fun to Feel Scared**.
- When we feel scared, it is not fun, but we are still **in control**. For example, going to the dentist or sitting an exam, or trying something new. We call this **Risking on Purpose**.
- When we feel unsafe, it is not fun and we have **no control** over the situation. These situations are personal emergencies as the child is in danger of losing control over what happens to them. For example, being lost, being bullied, or being abused by a relative.

Our Bodies

- Within this programme we teach children the ‘proper’ names for their private parts.
- Any names that parents have also chosen to use are ok too.
- Naming of body parts is a subject that some people do feel uncomfortable about, but avoiding such conversations can lead to children becoming confused – especially if they are trying to let someone know that they are in discomfort or if something else has happened to them.
- Cases have been documented in which a child was trying to tell an adult something important, but they did not have the appropriate words to use – and so important information was overlooked and missed.
- Using the ‘official’ names for body parts helps us all to have the appropriate dialogue in school, and the words are used with care and respect.
- We make it clear that the children may well also have their own words for private parts of their bodies; the important thing is that they know the real words too.

Supporting your child

- Talk to you children about their feelings, its not wrong to have feelings and we have a choice about how we express them.
- Talk to your child about what they have done in the sessions.
- Remind them they have the right to feel safe and if they don't feel safe they can talk with someone.
- Remember Protective Behaviours helps children with resilience and safety. This includes emotional safety, friendships, bullying and abuse.
- If you have any further questions please speak with the class teacher or the programme facilitator, Mrs Shuttleworth.