Dear Families of Trinity Gardens School,

Due to the recent concerns with regards to children’s safety across Adelaide, the Governing Council has requested to reprint the following safety message from last year’s newsletter. Also included in this newsletter is a recent release from SAPOL. Please take a moment to read this with your children.

Keeping children safe is something important to every parent. Wrapping children in cotton wool and keeping them close does not help them in the long term but letting go even gradually is pretty scary.

Every so often we hear about abductions or threatened abductions and this has recently been the case in Adelaide. In fact there has been concern that an unknown adult/s in a white van followed a student from our school as he walked home. Fortunately the child is safe but it is worthwhile revisiting what we as adults can do to teach children about safety.

At school, teachers implement the Child Protection curriculum and this addresses many aspects of personal safety. Unfortunately most child abuse comes from an adult well known to a child, sadly even a trusted adult. In this newsletter though, I am just addressing the concern of strangers as this has recently been an issue. I hope the information is of assistance and if your child makes their own way to and from school I respectfully ask you to find time to teach your child about safe interaction with strangers. Anyone intending to abduct a child is unlikely to do this on the school boundary but may choose nearby streets.

What to teach children about strangers

Children see strangers every day in shops, in the park, and in their neighborhoods. Most of these strangers are nice, normal people, but a few may not be. You can protect your children from dangerous strangers by teaching them about strangers and suspicious behavior, and by them also taking a few precautions of their own.

Who is a stranger?

A stranger is anyone that your family doesn’t know well. It’s common for children to think that “bad strangers” look scary, like the villains in cartoons. This is not only not true, but it’s dangerous for children to think this way. Pretty strangers can be just as dangerous as the not-so-pretty ones. When you talk to your children about strangers, explain that no one can tell if strangers are nice or not nice just by looking at them and that they should be careful around all strangers.

But don’t make it seem like all strangers are bad. If children need help, whether they’re lost, being threatened by a bully, or being followed by a stranger, the safest thing for them to do in many cases is to ask a stranger for help. You can make this easier for them by showing them which strangers are okay to trust.

Who are safe strangers?

Safe strangers are people children can ask for help when they need it. Police officers, firefighters and doctors are examples of very recognisable safe strangers. Teachers, principals, and librarians are adults children can trust too, and they are easy to recognize when they’re at work. Mothers with small children could also be another option. Make sure that you emphasize that whenever possible, children should go to a public place to ask for help.

You can help your children recognize safe strangers by pointing them out when you’re out and about. Also show your children places they can go if they need help, such as local shops and restaurants and the homes of family friends in your neighborhood.

Recognizing and Handling Dangerous Situations

Term 2 Week 9
27 June 2013

Diary Dates
28 June Friday
Casual Clothes Day

3 July Wednesday
Music Evening 6pm-8pm

5 July Friday
End of Term early dismissal 2.05pm

22 July Monday
Term 3 starts, 8.45am

29 July Monday
Rm 15J & 16J zoo excursion
Built Environments Meeting

31 July Wednesday
ICAS English

2 August Friday
Pupil Free Day
Perhaps the most important way parents can protect their children is to teach them to be wary of potentially dangerous situations - this will help them when dealing with strangers as well as with known adults who may not have good intentions. Help children recognise the warning signs of suspicious behavior, such as when an adult asks them to disobey their parents or do something without permission, asks them to keep a secret, asks children for help, or makes them feel uncomfortable in any way. Also tell your children that an adult should never ask a child for help, and if one does ask for their help, teach them to find a trusted adult right away to tell what happened.

You should also talk to your children about how they should handle dangerous situations. One way is to teach them “No, Go, Yell, Tell.” If in a dangerous situation, kids should say no, run away, yell as loudly as they can, and tell a trusted adult what happened right away. Make sure that your children know that it is okay to say no to an adult in a dangerous situation and to yell to keep themselves safe, even if they are indoors. It’s good to practice this in different situations so that your children will feel confident in knowing what to do.

Here are a few possible scenarios:

A nice-looking stranger approaches your child in the park and asks for help finding the stranger’s lost dog or puppy.
A woman who lives in your neighborhood but that the child has never spoken to invites your child into her house for a snack.
A stranger asks if your child wants a ride home from school.
Your child thinks he or she is being followed.
An adult your child knows says or does something that makes him or her feel bad or uncomfortable.
While your child is walking home from a friend’s house, a car pulls over and a stranger asks for directions, perhaps offering them lollies.

What else Parents Can Do

In addition to teaching children how to recognise and handle dangerous situations and strangers, there are a few more things parents can do to help their children stay safe and avoid dangerous situations.

Know where your children are at all times. Make it a rule that your children must ask permission or check in with you before going anywhere. Give your children your work and mobile phone numbers so they can reach you at all times.

Point out safe places. Show your children safe places to play, safe roads and paths to take, and safe places to go if there’s trouble.

Teach children to trust their instincts. Explain that if they ever feel scared or uncomfortable, they should get away as fast as they can and tell an adult. Tell them that sometimes adults they know may make them feel uncomfortable, and they should still get away as fast as possible and tell another adult what happened. Reassure children that you will help them when they need it.

Teach your children to be assertive. Make sure they know that it’s okay to say no to an adult and to run away from adults in dangerous situations.

Encourage your children to play with others. There’s safety in numbers!

Please remember:

'Stranger Danger' is only a very small part of protective behaviour, as 85 per cent of danger or abuse to children occurs with someone known to the child or trusted by the child. The aim is to teach children to be safe, to be aware of predatory strangers, and to be self protective. It is equally important to emphasise that the majority of adults are caring, loving and responsible-not 'bad people', to globally fear. Teaching protective behaviours or ‘stranger danger’ is a delicate balance of raising awareness, without unnecessarily alarming children, or paralysing them with fear. Finally, keep ‘danger’ in balance. While being alert and pro-active with protective behaviours, remember that a child’s world is full of safe, wonderful and positive events.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Vicki Stokes
Principal

STEINER WINTER FESTIVAL

My Candlelight Poem
By Darshan, Rm 25A Steiner Year 6

The candle casts a halo of darkness, but also of light,
At the centre of its flame the light intensifies,

The candle talks to you. It says “I am peace” and “gather around for I shall tell you a story.”

Its light is a multitude of colours. The gentle being that is called Flame is like the god of heat and light.

The candle is a representative of life and death. In its life it may make many miracles, it belongs to no beings yet it is mine,

You are the only being that may lose us at will into the realm of our imagination.

On your fiery golden shoulders, or flame, rests the burden of wisdom, shine my beautiful flame, grow my magnificent star, stay with ‘til the end.
Dear Trinity Gardens School SAPSASA soccer players,

Thanks for being a member of the Trinity Gardens School SAPSASA soccer team in 2013. You were fantastic to coach and with your team mates became a wonderful team. You gave me and the spectators much enjoyment watching you play some brilliant team soccer. We prepared as best as we could and gave everything for the team to achieve success. As coach I could not have asked for more from you. You were respectful of your team mates, the opposition and the referee and you represented the school magnificently. You made new friendships through this journey involving trial games, many recess and lunchtime practices and drills and the exciting matches against Walkerville and Burnside Primary Schools. We did not lose a game, but unfortunately lost the nerve wracking penalty shoot-out against Burnside.

You should be proud of what you achieved and hope you remember this special experience later in life. I definitely will. We had much fun together. It was my honour and privilege to have been your coach. Thank you.

Cosmo Antenucci (coach)

CASUAL CLOTHES DAY

Pyjama Day! - Friday 28 June
Get Excited!

On pyjama day we will be raising money for the Salvation Army where we all can wear pyjamas to school.

On this day we will be thinking about how some people don’t have a warm place to sleep or comfy pyjamas to wear to bed.

We are focusing on pyjamas but casual clothes are okay. Please make sure you wear clothes that are appropriate for school.

Don’t forget to bring a gold coin donation.

Thank you,
The Ambassadors

SCIENCE NEWS

AuSSI Update
(Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative)

Trinity Gardens Schools has begun a journey to improve our thinking about sustainable futures. Part of this journey is to devise an achievable plan of what we hope to improve.

Staff have been surveyed and together with children who were surveyed we have a sound base to build behaviour change on.

It would be good to have some indication of parent/carer attitudes as we will be asking for support to achieve our goals, once they are determined.

Areas that AuSSI can focus on include a healthy community, environmental and social achievements, resources - including human resources and learning why we act with sustainable futures in mind. Areas of focus can include local biodiversity, engagement with nature, energy use, zero waste targets, healthy eating and actions. Trinity Gardens Schools is already well advanced in many of these areas but now aims for better thinking from all towards what type of future we can shape for our children.

Do you value the learning associated with sustainable futures? Send your thoughts to - anna.kakoschke840@schools.sa.edu.au so they can be added to those of staff and students when we begin to plan this journey.

Share your science during Science Week

The last newsletter brought some great responses and we are closer to finding a visitor in Science Week for all classes but aren't there yet. Interested but nervous - don't be. People who work with Science do some interesting things and children love to hear their stories, especially the younger children. Contact anna.kakoschke840@schools.sa.edu.au

Remember last day of term, Friday 5 July is early dismissal, 2.05pm
SAFETY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The South Australia Police Community Relations Section develops strategies to prevent crime and the fear of crime within the community. We work in partnership with the community to ensure that South Australia is a safe place to live, visit and conduct business.

All students have the right to be and feel safe and it is important, no matter what your age or circumstances, that you discuss with your parents strategies on staying safe. Consider these safety tips when you are out and about:

- Check timetables of public transport so you can limit long waiting periods at stops.
- If possible, meet up with other students either at your stop or while travelling.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Where possible, sit close to the driver.
- Select to sit with another passenger as opposed to having someone choosing to sit next to you.
- If the behaviour of someone is offensive or illegal, move away and tell the driver immediately and contact police.
- When out walking always be alert, walk with confidence and stay in populated areas.
- Walk against the flow of traffic if possible and walk with other students.
- Don’t take short cuts through dark streets, laneways or isolated parks.
- If someone in a car stops and asks for directions, do not stop and continue walking.
- Never get into a vehicle with someone you don’t know or don’t feel comfortable with.
- When using headphones, only have one earpiece in so you can still hear everything around you.
- If you take a regular route to school, identify safe places you could go for help. This may be a friend’s house, local shop, hospital, or Safety Assist house.
- If you are going somewhere before or after school, tell an adult where you are going.
- Consider carrying a personal alarm in your bag.

If you are concerned about the behaviour of others while travelling on public transport, it is important to let your school administration staff or an adult know immediately. Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) is installed on all trains, trams and buses which may assist police in an investigation.

If you find yourself in a dangerous situation:

- Trust your instincts and leave the area immediately.
- Yell for help and make a lot of noise to draw attention to you.
- Make a note of the person or vehicle registration number, e.g. on your mobile phone.
- Seek refuge somewhere safe, and immediately call Police.

Remember if you see anything suspicious or see inappropriate behaviour, immediately advise an adult or the police. In emergency ring Triple Zero (000) or 131 444 for police assistance.

If you have any questions concerning this fact sheet, please contact the Crime Prevention Section at your nearest police station or visit www.police.sa.gov.au

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