



SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23

(CENTRAL OKANAGAN)

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"Together We Learn"

November 8, 2016

Dear Parents and Guardians:

On Tuesday, November 8th the District was notified by the RCMP of a report of a possible attempted luring of a 14 year old girl into a cream coloured SUV or cross-over style vehicle in the area of Gordon Drive and Raymer Road. The youth reported that a man approached her and spoke to her through the passenger side window of his vehicle and offered her a ride. The man told the girl he had balloons and when she did not reply or respond to him, he drove away. The RCMP investigation into this incident is continuing. Incidents of child luring and abduction are rare; however, it is important to reinforce basic safety principles with your children and teens in order to educate and prepare them should they be approached.

The suggested RCMP "Street Proofing" Safety Tips are as follows:

- Never accept a ride or gifts from strangers, or even someone you may know, without checking with your parents first. Keep a safe distance (two arms lengths) from strangers and cars that approach you.
- Know your home address and home phone number and how to contact your parents on their cell phones or at work.
- Know how and when to call 9-1-1 in an emergency situation: at home, from a cell, and from a public telephone.
- Travel and play in groups, regardless of your age. The popular 'buddy system' works best. If you become separated or lost, tell someone with a nametag (e.g. a cashier or security guard) right away; if there is no one with a nametag, preferably tell a female.
- Be polite, but avoid long conversations with strangers. If someone you don't know asks you a lot of personal questions, like where you live, *Do Not Answer*, just run away.
- Don't be afraid to say NO to adults who ask you to do something for them, like find a lost pet, join them in an activity, or give them directions.
- Establish a secret word or phrase for your family. This should be used in emergencies to identify a 'safe person' other than their parent or child giver.
- If a person tries to grab you, scream loudly, make a lot of noise, and create a disturbance (e.g. knock things over, scatter belongings, kick wildly). Shout **Help, this person is not my parent!**
- Whenever possible take notes of any physical vehicle descriptors and license plates. Call 911.
- Do not wear headphones or use portable electronic devices that can distract you from your surroundings when you are walking in the neighbourhood.
- If you are taking a public bus home, sit near the front of the bus, near the driver.
- Play 'what if' games with younger children to reinforce these safety messages.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child or teen's school if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kaardal
Superintendent of Schools/CEO