



FOXBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

60 South Street
Foxborough, Massachusetts 02035
(508) 543-1655
Fax (508) 543-4793

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Current estimates reveal that as many as 40 million Americans may have experienced sexual abuse during childhood. Sexual abuse affects up to one-third of all girls and up to one-sixth of all boys. Most cases of sexual abuse involve a person known to the child. Usually a child sexual abuse pattern entails repeated offenses over a period of time by a heterosexual male, and is characterized by secrecy, intimidation, or bribery, rather than force. Thus, it is apparent that young children need the means by which to recognize sexual abuse before it occurs and learn ways for self-protection from this potentially devastating behavior.

We are beginning a lesson in Safe/Unsafe Touches in Kindergarten. Your child and his or her classmates will learn important information that may greatly help them with this serious societal problem. As with all subjects, children are more likely to learn and practice health and safety behaviours when they receive consistent messages at home and at school. Here are some ideas for how you can empower your son or daughter to avoid the negative consequences of child sexual abuse:

1. Ask your child to tell you about the different kinds of touch: good (hug, back rub, handshake) and bad (hit, kick, touch on their private parts). Sometimes it can be hard for a child to tell the difference between a “good” or “bad” touch. While we know that sexual abuse is a “bad” touch, children may feel like it is a “confusing” touch, especially if they are touched in this way by someone they know and trust. Let your child know that touch should **never** be a secret.
2. Teach your children that their bodies are special and belong only to them. Teach them that they get to decide when and with whom they want to “share” or “not share” their bodies.
3. Teach your child to say “NO!” to uncomfortable or unwanted touching.
4. Help your child to find the skills to run or stay away from pressured situations in which sexual abuse might occur.
5. Locate with your child the names and telephone numbers of people he or she can contact for help.
6. Teach children the proper names for their genitals. Start with the idea of private as something that belongs only to them. Then talk about and name the private parts of their body: breasts, vagina, penis, buttocks and anus. By naming the private parts, we let children know that it is okay to talk about them. If they are sexually abused, they will be able to better talk about what happened.

The curriculum used in class will be available for you to preview at <https://bit.ly/2LyY9AQ>. If you have any questions or you would like more information, please contact your child’s building principal or guidance counselor. If you **DO NOT** want your child to participate please complete the form below and return it to your child’s principal.

We have provided some resources below if you would like to continue the discussion on ‘Safe Touch’ at home. Thank you for helping with this important health lesson.

Sincerely,

Amy Berdos, Ed.D.

Amy Berdos, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Head

Alison Mello, Ed.D.

Alison Mello
Assistant Superintendent

Janelle Erskine

Janelle Erskine
K-12 Wellness Department

Books:

Websites:

My Body is Private By Linda Walvoord Girard
Some Secrets Should Never Be Kept By Jayneen Sanders
<http://life.familyeducation.com/safety/toddler/53831.html>

<http://www.kidpower.org>

My Body Belongs To Me By Jill Starishevsky
I Said No! By Zach and Kimberly King
My Body Is Special and Belongs to Me By Sally Berenzweig

Resources used in class:

I do not want my child, _____, to participate in the Safe/Unsafe Touches Unit. I understand that he/she will not be allowed to remain in the classroom while the curriculum is being taught, and that he/she will receive alternative lessons deemed appropriate by the school.

School: _____
Parent/Guardian Name (please print): _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS

From d2l.org

- Talk with children when they are young and use proper names for body parts.
- Use real-life conversation starters.
- Tell children what sexual abuse is, and when age-appropriate, about sex.
- Tell children it is your job to protect them from sexual abuse.
- Tell children what parts of the body others should not touch. Use examples with situations and people in their lives. Include that touching boundaries are for everyone – even parents, family members, older youth, cousins, babysitters, and friends.
- Demonstrate good touching boundaries yourself.
- Teach children that they have the right to tell anyone “NO” to unwanted or uncomfortable touch. Never force children to give affection.
- Explain what kind of touch is okay by an adult who is helping them – like using the restroom, dressing, or when visiting a doctor.
- Help children determine who their trusted adults are at school and in other settings.
- Tell children it is not okay for others to use sexual words with them, or to act in a sexual way.
- Teach children to keep a distance from people who make them feel uncomfortable.
- Tell children that if they have questions about someone’s behavior, the best thing they can do is ask you about it.
- Explain that secrets can be harmful. If someone asks them to keep a secret, they should tell you about it.
- Teach children not to give out email addresses, home addresses, phone numbers, or other personal information while using the Internet or handheld devices.
- Ask children about their online experiences and learn about the sites and services they use.
- Tell children to trust gut feelings.
- Review safety and touching boundaries anytime a child is in a new situation.
- Speak and listen calmly. It’s important that the child feel safe and loved in all of these discussions.

Teaching Touching Safety Rules: Safe and Unsafe Touching

From SecondStep.org

Teach children the correct names of all their different body parts, including their private body parts. Children often find it hard to tell adults about sexual abuse because they don’t know the words to use. Learning correct (anatomical) words for private body parts gives children the vocabulary they need and helps them know it’s okay to talk about those body parts. When teaching your young child different body parts, consider using the correct words for private body parts along with words such as “tummy” and “ears.” You can give older children more information, because they’re able to understand more. You can also explain that the parts of their bodies covered by a swimsuit are their private body parts.

Teach children “You are the boss of your body.”

Let children know that they are in control of who touches their bodies and how. Model this for children: “I don’t want you to jump up and down on me. Please stop.” Likewise, immediately respect their wishes not

to be touched in certain ways. “Looks like you don’t want me to pick you up right now. Okay.” As you supervise your children’s interactions, make it clear that they need to stop tickling or roughhousing if a sibling says “Stop!”

In addition, do not insist that your children give or receive hugs or kisses from relatives if they don’t wish to. This teaches children that it’s okay to say no to touches from people in their family. Some relatives might expect a hug from your children every time they see them. Tell relatives that you’re teaching your children to be the bosses of their bodies as part of teaching them safety about touching, so they’re not offended by your children’s behavior.

Explain to your child that there are three kinds of touches.

The three kinds of touches are:

- **Safe touches.** These are touches that keep children safe and are good for them, and that make children feel cared for and important. Safe touches can include hugging, pats on the back, and an arm around the shoulder. Safe touches can also include touches that might hurt, such as removing a splinter. Explain to children that when you remove a splinter, you’re doing so to keep them healthy, which makes it a safe touch.
- **Unsafe touches.** These are touches that hurt children’s bodies or feelings (for example, hitting, pushing, pinching, and kicking). Teach children that these kinds of touches are not okay.
- **Unwanted touches.** These are touches that might be safe but that a child doesn’t want from that person or at that moment. It’s okay for a child to say no to an unwanted touch, even if it’s from a familiar person. Help your children practice saying no in a strong, yet polite voice. This will help them learn to set personal boundaries.

Once children can name their private body parts and know about different kinds of touches, you can teach them that there is another kind of unsafe touch that is also not okay. This kind of touch is when someone older or bigger touches their private body parts. How you explain this will depend on your child’s age. For a young child, you might say, “Another kind of unsafe touch is when a bigger person touches you on your private body parts and it’s not to keep you clean or healthy. So we have a family safety rule that it is never okay for a bigger person to touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.”

Parents should understand that the “clean” part of this rule applies to young children at an age when an adult might help them with diaper changing, going to the toilet, or bathing. The “healthy” part of this rule refers to doctor visits; for example, when the doctor gives a child a shot. An adult family member should always be present at doctor appointments. At some point during their teenage years, it will become appropriate for your children to handle their own doctor appointments.

For an older child, you might say, “Another kind of unsafe touch is when someone touches you on your private body parts and it’s not to keep you healthy. So our family safety rule about touching is that no one should touch your private body parts except to keep you healthy.”