



Safety Rocks

★ Working together to keep children safe

★ Anti-Bullying Week: Nov 16th–20th 2015

The theme of anti-bullying week this year is 'Make a NOISE about bullying'.

Brighton & Hove City Council has a useful guide for parents called 'Safe from Bullying' which is on the council website: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk - follow the links to Children & Education/Schools/Bullying in Schools.

So what is bullying? "Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via social media or the internet) and often involves an imbalance of power."

There is a FREE workshop on November 20th for parents of children with disabilities who are concerned about bullying at school. The event will be held at Community Base from 10am – 2pm. For info, please contact Debbie Gordon: debbie.gordon@cafamily.org.uk or call 020 7608 8774.



★ Steps for parents to make a noise about bullying when talking to schools:

If you still feel that the bullying has not been dealt with effectively, write to the school's Chair of Governors. They will aim to help you and the school sort things out out.

Agree with the senior member of staff, on how you, your child and the school can work together to deal with the bullying. Set some action points which should be recorded by you or the school in writing.

If the issue has not been resolved within the agreed time or to your satisfaction, make an appointment with a senior member of staff.

Discuss what is happening with the school staff member. The school should agree a plan with you and your child about how to address any conflict between pupils. You may want to write down what has been agreed and set a date to follow-up on what has been done and the results. Expect the school to let you know what has happened.

Report the bullying to the school in line with the policy or following advice from school reception.

1 Read the school anti-bullying policy, available from the school website or school office. Keep a record of what your child is telling you has happened to them and what action the school has taken so far.

★ Children in Brighton & Hove make a noise about bullying



Local children's charity, Safety Net has been working with children and staff in local primary schools to help them to make their anti-bullying policy even more understandable to children and parents. You can check out the results at the St Nicolas primary school website: <http://www.stnicolas.brighton-hove.sch.uk/> Children involved in the Anti-Bullying Group said: "The Anti Bullying Policy should help parents and carers because if the child they are looking after is being bullied they will know what to do about it. The policy will help parents/carers to be less worried."

★ Parent Page: Your safety questions answered...

A parent emailed to ask: What makes a stranger a "stranger"? When should we talk to a stranger and when not? For example, the bus driver is a stranger but I still talk to him.....



★ **This is a tricky safety topic to get right for a number of reasons;** firstly, children have a difficult time understanding what a "stranger" is. If they've met or seen someone before or seen their parent talk to that person then they are unlikely to think of them as a stranger. It is also very common for children to think of a stranger as the stereotype of a mean or scary looking man wearing

dark clothes. Teaching children that all strangers are bad can lead to them feeling generally fearful of adults and in an emergency situation your child might need to approach a stranger for help.

★ **Strangers are just people we don't know:** A stranger is anyone that we don't know well or know at all, this includes people that we meet online. Most people that we don't know are not bad people and in an emergency situation would probably help us if they could. It can be more useful to use the term 'people we don't know' rather than 'strangers', and give examples of behaviours that are different with those people. So for example we don't just go up and hug people we don't know, we don't go off with people we don't know, we don't take gifts from people we don't know etc.

★ **There are some people that we don't know who can usually be trusted** to help us in a public place when they are at work and doing their job. For example, a fire fighter or police officer or someone who works at customer services in a shop. In an emergency situation, it's best to go first to one of these safer places or people.

★ **There is nothing wrong with talking to people we don't know;** as adults we do it all the time and it has been proven to be good for our mental health. If children are with a trusted adult then talking to someone they don't know at all or well, (like a neighbour, a shopkeeper, or someone we meet at the bus stop or in the park) is fine so long as you and they feel comfortable. If children are out and about alone then you can let them know that most adults would not approach a child on their own for a lengthy chat or to ask for directions. In that situation it's ok to make an excuse and leave. Not all adults are kind to children, and it's important for children to remember their safety rules to stay safe.

★ **Older children need to know** never to go off with ANYONE without asking you first and making sure you know WHERE they are, WHO they are with and WHEN they will be back.

★ **This applies no matter what nice things someone offers** or promises them, e.g. puppies, sweets or video games.

★ **Teach children and young people** to pay attention to their surroundings and listen to their instincts or early warning signs and act on them to stay safe for example, cross the road, go to a crowded place, make an excuse.

★ **Use role-playing and "what if?" scenarios** to practice with your children what to do and how to respond in different situations.

★ **Plan ahead** - discuss with your children the safe people or places they could go to in an emergency, a library, police station or shop and make sure that you agree that their safe people are safe!

★ **Have a code word** that only you and your child know: anyone else picking them up should use the code.

★ **Let your children know** to tell you if anyone makes them feel uncomfortable or scared, even if it's someone they know.

★ **Remember: younger children need some adult supervision** at all times as they don't have the ability to assess risks.



★ Would you like to be a Safety Rocks Parent Champion?

We are looking for parents to help us; find out if we are covering the safety topics that parents are interested in; get some feedback on how we are doing and encourage more parents to read the newsletter. Training will be available. If you are interested in becoming a Safety Rocks Champion, please email us at newsletter@safety-net.org.uk.



★ Safety issues this term



Bonfire night can be a tempting time for young people who are fascinated with fire. But without help fire setting behaviour can get worse and lead to more serious consequences.

Watch out for these tell-tale signs of fire setting behaviour:

- ★ Matches or lighters hidden in bedrooms, school bags or coats
- ★ An unusual fascination with fire
- ★ Small burn holes on carpets, bedding and furniture
- ★ Scorch marks in hidden locations such as in wardrobes or cupboards
- ★ Burnt paper or objects in bins or burnt matches lying around
- ★ Noticing the smell of burning
- ★ Unexplained fires in the home or garden
- ★ Noticing injuries to skin, e.g. burns

We can reduce the chances of young people starting fires by understanding and challenging their behaviour and giving them some basic fire safety advice. It is also worth considering your own actions and how they might influence the behaviour of the children you are responsible for.

- ★ don't leave matches or lighters lying around around the home
- ★ don't assume toddlers are incapable of lighting a match or lighter
- ★ make sure you have a working smoke alarm on each floor and in children's bedrooms
- ★ don't allow rubbish to pile up and if you have an open fire make sure it has a fire guard

The Fire Service runs a scheme called Firewise which aims to reduce the likelihood of young people setting fires by educating them about the dangers and impacts of fire, enabling them to make safer choices. For more information about the Firewise scheme or to make a referral, please contact tel: 0303 9991009 or email firewise@esfrs.org or visit www.esfrs.org/firewise



★ **We would love to hear from you!** Let us know if you are finding this newsletter helpful, suggest a safety topic for us to cover, or make a comment. Please like Safety Net on Facebook, or email us at newsletter@safety-net.org.uk. For an online edition, go to our website: www.safety-net.org.uk

★ Launch of a whole school approach to keeping children safe

This term sees the launch of the Feeling Good, Feeling Safe resource for primary schools which has been developed through a partnership with the Council, Safety Net and some Brighton & Hove primary schools. The aim of the resource is to support all children to learn the skills they need to stay safe and to get help when they need it. The 4 lessons will be delivered to all year groups as part of PSHE education and will cover:

1. Feelings and Feeling Safe
2. Feeling Unsafe and Early warning Signs
3. Body Awareness and Secrets
4. Telling and Networks

Some schools have already introduced the programme, and others will be launching it over the course of the year, so look out for information about it from your school.



Practical Parenting Tips: help your child learn how to tie their shoelaces

Research has shown that children are sometimes missing out on learning how to tie their shoelaces because they are more commonly wearing slip on or velcrose shoes. If your child is struggling, check out Iain Fieggen aka "Professor Shoelace"'s videos on youtube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgSwvDkJVxE - or just type Professor Shoelace into the search bar.



★ How safe are our children?

The first in a series of interviews, this term with Graham Bartlett, the independent chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board*. This edition's focus is on **neglect**.



Graham Bartlett

Q: Why should we be worried about neglect? **A:** Although we hear more in the news about children who are harmed because of physical or sexual abuse, neglect is actually one of the most common reasons for a child to be put on a child protection plan or register in the UK, with 1 in 10 children estimated to have experienced neglect. It is a priority of the LSCB to improve how we tackle this as a city and was a key point in the NSPCC's 2015 report "How Safe are Our Children".

Q: So what is neglect? **A:** It's the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs; this could include physical neglect, where a child is left hungry or dirty, or without adequate clothing, shelter, supervision, or health care. It also includes emotional neglect where a child is regularly ignored or humiliated, isolated or not shown love. A child may be put in danger or not protected from physical or emotional harm.

Q: So what effect does neglect have on a child as they grow up? **A:** The effects of neglect can be really severe, with children not developing emotionally and physically as they should. Neglect during infancy and early childhood has been shown to negatively affect early brain development leading to problems into adolescence and adulthood which can include: poor physical and mental health and often low self-esteem, with children not doing well in school, perhaps getting involved in anti-social behaviour and being less likely to form healthy relationships and lead a fulfilling life. Neglected children can also become more vulnerable to child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and criminal activity.

Q: How would someone know if a child was being neglected? What sort of signs could they look out for?

A: You might notice a child or young person is...

- ★ Frequently absent from school;
- ★ Begging or stealing money or food and they may be constantly underweight;
- ★ Not getting medical or dental care when they need it, or immunisations or glasses;



- ★ Not dressed appropriately e.g. for weather conditions, or is wearing clothes that are consistently dirty or smelly;
- ★ Not well cared for, their teeth and hair are dirty, they may have hair infestations;
- ★ Slow to develop language and motor skills;
- ★ Passive and unable to be spontaneous;
- ★ Over-friendly with strangers;
- ★ Isolated and gets on badly with other children of the same age;
- ★ Rejected by their family, treated differently or not protected from physical harm or danger.

Q: So is neglect just about bad parenting?

A: No, neglect can often become an issue when parents are dealing with complex and difficult problems, sometimes including domestic abuse, substance misuse, mental health issues, or they may have been poorly looked after themselves. These problems can have a direct impact on parents' ability to meet their child's needs and they need help and support themselves.

Q: What can someone do if they are worried that a child is being neglected? **A:** If you are concerned that a child

you know is being neglected talk to a professional who can help them get the support they need, such as a teacher at your child's school. Alternatively you can contact the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) on 01273 292379.

**The Local Safeguarding Children Board has responsibility for making sure that arrangements are in place in Brighton and Hove to make sure that children and young people are protected from harm and abuse.*



Working with communities to keep children safe

Manor Offices, Emmaus, Drove Rd, Portslade, BN41 2PA
www.safety-net.org.uk ★ tel: (01273) 411 613 🐦 @safetynetbt
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