



MABELLE M. BURRELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Dear Second-Grade 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.

In January, all second-grade students will participate in a Safe/Unsafe Touches lesson. This lesson will be taught by guidance, wellness and nursing staff. 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 behaviors 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, hand shake) 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 is available for you to preview at www.foxborough.k12.ma.us located in the parent portion under the heading *Grade 2 Wellness Open House*. Below are additional resources if you would like to continue the discussion on ‘Safe Touch’ at home. Thank you for helping with this important health lesson.

If you DO NOT want your child to participate please complete the form below and return to your child’s teacher.

Sincerely,

Michele McCarthy
Burrell Principal

Michael Stanton
Igo Principal

Moira Rodgers
Taylor Principal

Books:

My Body is Private by Linda Walvoord Girard
Some Secrets Should Never Be Kept by Jayneen Sanders
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

Websites:

<http://www.kidpower.org>
<http://life.familyeducation.com/safety/toddler/53831.html>



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

Parent/Guardian Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____