



"Together We Learn"

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Memorandum

Date: March 3, 2015
From: Dr. Rick Oliver, Director of Instruction K - 12

To All Westside Elementary and Middle School Communities

A couple of weeks ago a black car slowed and asked a Rose Valley Elementary student who was walking to school, if he wanted a ride to school. The student did not accept the ride and did not let the school know about the incident. The student told his parents later that night and reported the incident to the RCMP the next day, February 14th. The RCMP were not able to issue a media release or involve the school based on the information that they collected.

Several days later, the school principal was informed of the incident by the parents. In response, the principal requested Rose Valley Elementary staff to reinforce the stranger danger protocols in each class.

More recently there was an incident in the Springvalley area which prompted an RCMP media release on March 2nd. Based on discussions with the parent community, the principal at Rose Valley Elementary sent out an information message to all parents on Monday night, March 2nd reminding them of the RCMP Street Proofing tips. This message prompted the Castanet article which appeared on March 3rd.

We encourage you to take the time to speak with your children to reinforce the RCMP safety tips – see below. We also request that students and parents inform their school and the RCMP when they encounter situations that raise safety concerns.

"Street Proofing" Safety Tips from the BC RCMP

1. Incidents of child abduction are rare; however, it is important to reinforce basic safety principles with your children in order to educate and prepare them should they be approached.
2. Here are some safety tips to discuss with your children and for older children to keep in mind when they are alone (i.e. not in the care of their parents or trusted adults/guardians).
3. Know your home address and home phone number and how to contact your parents on their cell phones or at work.
4. Know how and when to call 9-1-1 in an emergency situation: at home, from a cell, and from a public telephone.
5. Travel and play in groups, regardless of your age. The popular 'buddy system' works best.

6. 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.
7. Be polite, but avoid long conversation 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.
8. 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.
9. 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 arm lengths) from strangers and cars that approach you.
10. 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.
11. 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!
12. Do not wear headphones or use portable electronic devices that can distract you from your surroundings when you are walking in the neighbourhood.
13. If you are taking a public bus home, sit near the front of the bus, near the driver.
14. Play 'what if' games with younger children to reinforce these safety messages.