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**OUR MISSION:**  
Gwinnett Online Campus is to enhance the learning of students in a world-class virtual environment as we empower them with twenty-first century knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the local, national, and global community.

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February 15, 2017

Dear Parents of GOC 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Students,

We all share a common goal for our children to be safe and protected from all things harmful. Related to that goal, school counselors are required to present annual personal safety lessons designed to prevent sexual abuse. The *Think First & Stay Safe*<sup>TM</sup> program (“Child Lures”) is a research-based program that teaches specific personal safety education. *Think First & Stay Safe*<sup>TM</sup> enables students to take an active and necessary role in protecting themselves from abuse and exploitation. A committee of professional school counselors reviewed the program and selected components that were developmentally appropriate for elementary students and developed lessons around those concepts.

Due to the importance of this topic, I want you to know that I will present this information to your child's class on Wednesday, March 1 and 8. On the back of this letter I've listed the key concepts that will be taught in the first lesson.

For the second lesson, I will show a video that GCPS requires for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. If you'd like to view the video, you may do so on Wednesday, March 1 from 9:00-10:00. Please let me know if you want to come to view it so I can have it ready for you.

**If you prefer that your child not participate in the sexual abuse and safety prevention lessons, please write and sign a note indicating this preference and send it to me.**

As always, I am available to discuss any concerns you might have. **Unless written documentation is received, I will assume that you want your child to participate in the sexual abuse prevention and safety lessons.**

Sincerely,

Dana Edwards, Ph.D.  
School Counselor

## Primary Concepts:

- You are smart and know how to stay safe. Your brain helps you recognize danger.
- Most people are safe, but some can change and become scary or dangerous.
- Some people use lures or tricks to get kids to trust them. Learning about the tricks help keep you safe.
- It is against the law for anyone to touch you in the “bathing suit zone” or to make you touch theirs.
- Your instincts are like your own warning siren. They tell us something is wrong and help keep us safe.
- A stranger is someone you don’t know. You can’t tell by looking if a stranger is safe or dangerous. Trust your instincts.
- Some dangerous people use threats and weapons to intimidate children into doing as they say. The threats are rarely real and all threats are against the law.
- You are special and unique and should always be treated with respect.

## Lures/Tricks Presented:

- The **Job Lure**: Children should always check with parents before agreeing to do any chore, job or errand – no matter how small. Parents should know everything about a child’s job: who, what, where, when.
- The **Ego/Fame Lure**: Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian on all talent pursuits and parents must verify the credentials of talent agents. Suspicious “talent scouts” should be reported to the police.
- The **Online Lure**: Children should not keep online activities secret from parents and inappropriate or violent online messages should be reported to parents immediately. Children should never give out personal information online; should not send photos or videos of themselves to people they don’t know; and should never go alone to meet an online acquaintance.

## Additional tips for safeguarding children:

- Instill your child with a sense of self-worth.
- Make sure even very young children know their full name, whole address and phone number. Teach them how to dial 911.
- Reassure your child that most adults are committed to the safety and happiness of children and can be trusted for help if the need arises.
- Practice choosing someone safe with your child. (*Who would you go to for help if...*)
- Teach children that the areas of the body covered by a bathing suit are private.
- Emphasize that inappropriate touches are against the law. This gives children confidence to assert themselves with those who might try to abuse them.
- Let children express affection on their own terms. Do not instruct them to “Give Uncle Jimmy a kiss” or “Give Aunt Sally a hug.”
- Stress that there should be no secrets from you – especially secrets that make your child scared, sad, or anxious.
- Explain the importance of reporting abuse or attempted abuse to you and another trusted adult.
- Do not rely entirely on the “buddy system” for safety. In many documented cases, sisters, brothers, and playmates have been victims of crimes when together.
- Encourage involvement in extracurricular activities. Children with many interests are less likely to experiment with drugs or other negative influences.
- Make it a priority to get to know your children’s friends and their families.
- Stress the importance of following “netiquette” and online safety rules.
- Above all, encourage children to recognize, trust, and follow their instincts about people and situations. Parents should do the same.