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Dear Parents/Carers,

At St Luke's First School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. As part of our PSHE curriculum, we will be spending some time next week teaching each class the NSPCC 'Underwear Rule' which aims to raise awareness of the importance of talking to children about keeping safe from sexual abuse. As a school we fully support the NSPCC with this campaign and feel it is important to teach our children how to keep safe.

During these lessons and discussions, we will aim to teach our pupils the following important safety skills without giving explicit information or telling scary stories. We will be teaching our pupils the Underwear Rule, using the 'PANTS' acrostic, which is like a green cross code for staying safe. PANTS stands for:

Privates are private

Always remember your body belongs to you

No means no

Talk about secrets that upset you

Speak up, someone can help

We know talking to your child about their body and staying safe can seem difficult, but it doesn't have to be scary. 'Talk PANTS' is a simple way that parents can help keep children safe from abuse. Below you will find some points and tips to help you when talking to your child.

For more information on 'The Underwear Rule' please visit:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/>

There is also a short video on this page of a catchy song featuring Pantosaurus reminding the children of the key messages which all the children will be viewing in the coming days at school. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzbMEVYiyg>

Yours faithfully,

Mrs S Baker

We all want to keep our children safe. You've probably already talked to them about things like crossing the road safely. But have you spoken to them about how to stay safe from sexual abuse? We know it's a conversation no parent wants to have, but we believe it can feel just as natural, and be just as easy, as the road safety chat.



How and when to start conversations with your child about keeping themselves safe

Small, open and honest conversations are the best way to discuss the Underwear Rule to your child and talk about keeping safe. Inevitably your child will have questions, so listen carefully and attentively and be straightforward in your answers. You know your child best of all, so adapt the conversation and talk in a way that feels right for you both.

Adding simple conversations into your day or routine about staying safe will help prevent your child from feeling like it's a big deal, unusual or weird:

In the car

Car journeys are a great time to talk to your child. They're in a comfortable setting, with limited distractions.

Out for a walk

Strolling along a familiar route will help your child feel more at ease as you chat together.

To and from school

On your way to school, you can ask about who they would tell at school if something was upsetting them. If your child has had classes about relationships or personal safety at school, for example, ask what they learned on the way home. It's a good chance to measure your child's understanding and give you a starting point for more detailed conversations about the Underwear Rule and their safety.

The bedtime routine

When you're getting your child ready for bed – running their bath or applying cream. Or maybe when helping them tie their shoelaces - you could talk about times when a trusted adult might need to touch them.

Going swimming

You can easily adapt the Underwear Rule to bathing costumes and talk about the idea of private parts being private, so that's why they are covered.

Listening to radio or watching TV

Your child may have heard a disturbing story on the news or a favourite TV programme might be handling a sensitive storyline. Though we might sometimes wish our children hadn't heard something, it's best to address the point head on rather than dismiss it or pretend it hasn't happened. Reframe the subject in words your child would find less frightening. Also reassure them that if anyone or anything worries or upsets them, they can always talk to a trusted adult.

If you speak honestly and in a way that makes the subject feel less shocking, your child will be more confident and comfortable in talking to you about difficult subjects.

In their own language

Use words and phrases your child will understand - don't be afraid to use the correct name for body parts.

Give straight answers to tricky questions

Don't shy away from awkward questions - answer them as best you can, in a way that's right for your child.

Speak openly and honestly

The more open and relaxed you are, the more your child will feel able to talk about anything that's worrying them.

Ask your child what they think

Conversations about right and wrong aren't easy. Even when we talk to children about not letting people touch their private parts, we have to make exceptions such as visits to the doctor. A great way to help children understand the grey areas is to encourage them to express their opinions and develop their own judgment.

Actively listen

Lean in, nod, smile and ask questions that show you're interested. Showing your child you care about what they think and how they feel means they'll be more likely to come to you if something's really troubling them.

Don't force the issue

If your child isn't interested in talking, don't force the issue. The last thing you want is for your child to feel it's a big deal, so wait for another opportunity at a different time.

Use books and stories

Reading a story can help you talk about difficult subjects in a way that is suitable for your child's age and can help teach them to stay safe in terms they understand. E.g.

For ages 1 to 5 years: **'Some parts are not for sharing'** by Julie Le Frederico

Friendly fish and underwater scenes are used to give a simple message about private body parts and safe touch.

For ages 3 to 8 years: **'Everyone's got a bottom'** by Tessa Rowley

Story about Ben and his brother and sister learning and talking together about bodies. Useful way to introduce the subject of self-protection.

Keep the conversation going as they grow

Remember to keep the lines of communication open with your child and assure them that they can come to you with any question or concern. As they grow up, they will have more questions and more capacity to understand these issues. Having that openness means your child will feel comfortable talking and sharing worries with the family as they get older.