

Parents often ask our advice about how they can ensure their child is kept safe at home and in the community.

All children can be vulnerable sometimes, and as a parent it is only natural to worry about their safety.

We have consulted with our local Community Police Officer, PC Tracy Sadler, and looked online for the best advice. These tips have been published by the Northern Ireland Govt (NIDirect) and we feel they provide a great start for parents.

If you are worried, you can help to protect your young children and teens with these common-sense tips.

If you need any further advice, you can always speak to the Headteacher or contact the school. Details are below.

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KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE

in the
Community

Protecting young children

Statistics show that crime against young children by strangers is rare. Even so, these seven tips can help protect your child:

- tell your child to avoid talking to people they don't know when you're not around
- make sure your child knows never to walk away with strangers
- make sure your child understands that they should always tell you if a stranger approaches, and never to keep this secret
- if your child is travelling alone, tell them to sit near other families on the train or bus
- if your child has to use a lift – tell them only to use lifts with friends, and not to feel worried about getting out if they are uncomfortable about someone else being in there
- if your child gets lost, they should ask for help from a police officer, another grown-up with children or someone working at a nearby shop
- have your children learn their address and telephone number by heart

While you are out with your children

Sometimes, young children can still be vulnerable even if you are with them. Following these simple precautions should give you peace of mind:

- try to keep your children within your sight or another adult's whom you trust
- use reins for your toddler - these will keep your child nearby even if you get distracted
- when out and about visiting places, always arrange a meeting point for you and your child, in case either of you get lost
- make sure you all travel together in the same train carriage, or have seats close together on a bus or coach
- always go with your child into public toilets
- remind your child never to talk to strangers, even if you are nearby

Keeping teenagers safe

More crimes are committed against teenagers than any other age group, but here are some things they can do to keep safe on the streets:

- stay alert, and keep personal stereos/MP3 players turned off, so they can hear what's going on around them
- stick to busy, well-lit roads, and avoid short cuts through alleyways
- if your child thinks someone is following them, they should cross the road or go to a place with lots of people around, like a bus stop or shop
- your child could carry a whistle or shrill alarm around their neck or on a key chain to warn off suspicious strangers
- when travelling by bus, your child should try to use bus stops on busy roads
- if someone tries to take something from your child, tell them never to fight
- tell them to keep mobile phones and other valuables out of sight, and to turn off their mobile phone ringer to avoid attracting attention
- don't let your child carry weapons because they are more likely to be used against them, and it's illegal
- encourage your child to speak up if they are being bullied or feel they might be in danger