

## TIPS FOR PARENTS/SCHOOLS TO PROTECT CHILDREN AT HOME AND SCHOOL

Written by JIS

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**Teach your children to run away from danger**, never toward it. Danger is anyone or anything invading their personal space. If anyone should try to grab them, tell them to make a scene; loudly yell this person is not my father/mother/guardian; and make every effort to get away by kicking, screaming, and resisting. Their safety is more important than being polite. Teach your children if they are ever followed in a vehicle to turn around and run in the other direction to you or another trusted adult.

**Never let your children go places alone**, and always supervise your young children or make sure there is another trusted adult present to supervise them if you cannot. Make sure your older children always take a friend when they go anywhere.

**Know where your children are and whom they are with at all times.** Remind children to never take **anything** or respond in **any way** if approached by anyone they don't know, and also remind them to never approach a vehicle without your permission. Teach them to run away as quickly as possible to you or another trusted adult.

**Talk openly to your children about safety** and encourage them to tell you or a trusted adult if anyone or anything makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused. Discuss safety issues with your children so they will understand the need for precautions. Advise your older children about steps they may take to help safeguard themselves. Know your children's friends and their families. Pay attention to your children and listen to them. If you don't, someone else may. And others may have ulterior motives for befriending your children.

**Practice what you teach** by creating "what if" scenarios with your children to make sure they understand the safety message and are able to use it in a real situation.

**Have a list of family members who could be contacted in case of an emergency.** Designate a family member or close associate who would be able to fill the role of advisor in case of an emergency.

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**Be alert to and aware of your surroundings.** Know the “escape routes” and plan what you would do in different emergencies. Know the location of local hospitals and best routes to take to reach them. Know how to reach the nearest local Police station.

**Know your employees and co-workers.** Do thorough background screening and reference checks on everyone who works at your home or business, particularly those individuals who care for your children. Their knowledge of your family is extensive so make sure you have an equivalent understanding of them.

**Install Close Circuit Cameras.** All schools and other such institutions must install closed circuit cameras as a necessary security requirement. These cameras should be installed at strategic points on the school compound for greater efficiency. Consult with a private security expert or the Police.

**Pay attention to drop-off and pick-up times at schools.** These are vulnerable periods for your children which may provide opportunities for abduction or kidnapping. Teach your children not to leave the compound of the school with strangers. Children who use public transportation should walk to bus stops in groups and take only well recognised buses. In the morning, children especially young children going to school should be accompanied by an adult to bus stops until they board public passenger vehicles.

**Consider varying your daily routines and habits.** Do not take the same routes or go at the same time on your regular errands. If you take your children to school, change that route as well.

**Take steps to secure personal information about yourself.** Be discreet about your possessions and family's personal habits and information. Take steps to protect your identity by not revealing too much information and notifying authorities of any irregularities. Persons operating a business, schools and other such institutions should ensure that all car licence numbers are recorded as well as the names of all visitors.

**Report any suspicious persons or activities to the Police.** If you feel anyone in your family has been targeted or is being stalked, immediately report this information to the Police.