

Dear Parents/Guardians:

November 12, 2020

In January 2013, Gov. Quinn signed **Erin's Law**, a law requiring all public schools to provide "age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education in grades pre-kindergarten through 12." Statistics show that **1 in 4 girls** and **1 in 6 boys** are sexually abused before the age of 18, which is why it is so important to talk to students about it. On **December 2nd or 3rd**, your child will hear a presentation on **Body Safety**. This presentation contains information aimed at helping to protect children from child sexual abuse.

The goals of this presentation are:

- To discuss **safe and unsafe touches**, and help students identify examples of each.
- To identify there are **private parts of our bodies that no one should touch** without a good reason (for example, a visit to the doctor or a parent changing a baby's diaper).
- To teach students the difference between **safe and unsafe secrets**.
- To help the students **learn how to say "no,"** and understand that **they have the right to do so**.
- To help the students **identify safe people** in their lives that they can talk to when they have a problem or a secret, no matter what it is.

There are two things that we would like you to be aware of. First, it is best for children to be **knowledgeable about and use the proper names for all of their body parts**, to help ensure that the child is not misunderstood if there is a disclosure of sexual abuse to someone-no matter who that person is. However, we understand that not all parents are comfortable with this. If you do choose not to teach your child the proper names for their body parts, please ensure that you, your child, and the other significant people in your child's life are using the same language. Whether it is a medical problem or a potential case of sexual abuse, we want to be sure that the children are understood.

Second, **many children are taught "Stranger Danger,"** and while this is important, it is **not enough**. **Less than 10-20% of child sexual abuse cases are perpetrated by strangers**. Many children are confused, frightened, and unsure of what to do when they find themselves in uncomfortable situations with people that they know, and usually even trust. For this reason, while we do touch on "stranger danger," we also talk with children about what to do if someone they know makes them feel unsafe. We encourage you to do the same. We will often say "not even mom or dad should touch your private parts without a very good reason". For a child, this often represents the ultimate boundary-if not even mom or dad is exempt from this rule, then that *really* means everyone!

In addition to information on body safety, the **6th, 7th, and 8th graders** will also hear information on **teen dating violence**. **One in three adolescents** will experience abuse from a dating partner and the **violent behavior usually begins between the ages of 12 and 18**. It is important to share information about healthy relationships and signs of abuse early on, in middle school, when adolescents are just starting to explore dating and relationships so that they can begin with and continue healthy relationships throughout their lives.

Presentations will be held over google meets December 2nd for Junior High students and December 3rd for Elementary and LASEC students. Due to school being held remotely, we will be collecting non-consent forms from families who DO NOT want their children to participate in

the *Erin's Law* presentation. If you **do not** wish to have your children participate in the presentations, please fill out the attached form by November 25th.

[Click here if you DO NOT want your child to participate in the December 2 & 3 Erin's Law presentation.](#)
