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CHILD PROTECTION CURRICULUM – INFORMATION for PARENTS

The Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) 'Keeping Safe—Child Protection Curriculum' focuses on the following areas:

- The right to be safe
- Relationships
- Recognising and reporting abuse
- Protective strategies

The following is some background information to remind or inform you about the content of this DECD mandated curriculum. Australia supports the United Nations agreement that children are to be protected from all forms of abuse, exploitation and violence. Abuse may be physical, emotional and sexual. Australia has laws to prevent and respond to the abuse of children. In South Australia this law is called the Children's Protection Act. DECD has a policy that makes clear what schools and children's centres need to do to keep children safe. This is called the Child Protection Policy. By law this policy requires educators and volunteers to report any suspected abuse of children.

One way that schools exercise their responsibility to protect children and keep them safe is to teach the Child Protection Curriculum. The Child Protection Curriculum teaches all children from a young age to:

- recognise abuse and tell a trusted adult about it
- understand what is appropriate and inappropriate touching
- understand ways of keeping themselves safe.

A range of books, videos and classroom strategies is used in the curriculum.

Some strategies used with students are:

- networks: a list of 4 or 5 trusted adults that the student can seek help from if the parent/caregivers are not available. This could include relatives, neighbours, friends, teachers;
- one-step removed: students are given "What if....?" scenarios e.g. "What if someone went home after school and found that he/she had lost their key and nobody was home?" These situations are discussed and a number of strategies that might help to keep the children safe are developed;
- persistence expectation: students are taught to keep on telling someone or work on solving a problem until they are safe;
- protective interrupting: teachers interrupt a student to prevent disclosure in a group that may lead to further hurt feelings of being unsafe – discussion time with these students is arranged in privacy after the lesson.

Parents/caregivers are informed by the school/teachers when the Child Protection Curriculum is to be taught and what will be taught. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to talk to their children and the teachers about the Child Protection program.

Teachers have all been trained to teach the Child Protection Curriculum. In addition to this programme, in Term 1 2018 Mrs Adler and Mrs Gonzalez-Brown attended professional development related to the Lions Quest Social and Emotional Learning programme, which links directly to the Australian Curriculum. This also compliments the Child Protection Curriculum.

Parents/caregivers also have the responsibility to protect children and ensure their safety and are supported by society to do this. Parents do this through:

- Providing adequate supervision at all times to minimise the risk of physical, sexual and emotional harm.
- Young children should not be left alone at home or in a public place at night.
- Understanding the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touching of children, protecting them from being touched inappropriately and ensuring that children report inappropriate touching.
- Disciplining their children in a responsible and lawful way. Some forms of punishment may be illegal in Australia.

Other responsibilities for parents/caregivers include:

- providing healthy food for breakfast, lunch and dinner;
- providing appropriate clothing for different seasons;
- ensuring children have enough sleep at night;
- giving appropriate care when children are sick;
- encouraging children to participate cooperatively in school subjects and activities.

The work being done by schools with this curriculum does not replace the parent/caregiver's responsibility to protect children and ensure their safety. It complements parents/caregivers' roles and provides support for the learning of children.

If you have any questions/concerns about the Child Protection Curriculum and would like clarification please make a time to chat with your child's teacher or me.

Kind regards,

Cathy

