

St. Mary School
106 Jackson Street, P.O Box 780
Fishkill, New York 12524
845-896-9561

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Personal Safety Program will be visiting your child's school. This presentation will address an important safety concern: the prevention of childhood sexual abuse. The objective of this program is to alert students to the realities of abuse and to empower them with strategies for keeping themselves safe. The safety lessons will be presented to the children in their classrooms using interactive discussions and age appropriate materials such as puppets or educational videos to facilitate their learning. All students will learn that they are in charge of their bodies, and that they have the right to decline any touch if it makes them feel uncomfortable. Children will be taught that body parts covered by a bathing suit are called private because they are not meant to be seen or touched by others unless there is a good reason such as health or hygiene. The program assists children in distinguishing between affectionate and inappropriate touches and instructs them on how and what to do if someone breaks the "private part rules".

During the presentation the children brainstorm to identify the many trusting adults they can confide in during times of trouble or confusion. Students will examine potentially dangerous situations and demonstrate appropriate responses. They are reminded to trust their feelings to help keep them safe and to only keep happy secrets rather than ones that make them feel nervous or afraid. The Personal Safety Program makes it a point to emphasize that abuse is **never** the child's fault. The only way to stop child sexual abuse is to tell an adult they trust.

Additionally, children in grade six will receive a lesson concerning Internet, social media safety, and the dangers of sexting. The objective of this program is to alert students to the realities of the Internet and to empower them with strategies for keeping themselves safe.

Please take this opportunity to discuss this very important topic with your child at home. Periodically create openings for dialogue about the subject by asking your child what they would do in different situations. "What would you do if your club leader, neighbor, friend, etc. started touching you in ways you did **not** like? What if you were told to keep a bad secret? What would you do if someone on the internet wrote something that made you feel uncomfortable?" Ask your child to point out adults they would feel comfortable talking to if they had a problem. If your child discloses information to you regarding something that may have happened to him/her, remain calm, believe what they tell you, support your child's feelings, assure them they did the right thing by telling you, and report concerns to proper authorities (NYS Child Abuse Registry Hotline 1-800-342-3720).

Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns by calling the Child Abuse Prevention Center at (845)-454-0595. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Mary Jane Daley

If you do not want your child/children to participate in this program please sign below:

Parent Signature _____