



Northfield Schools Intervention and Prevention

West Midlands Police
Bournville Lane
Bournville
B30 1QX

Date: Thursday 5th September 2024

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I hope you have all had an amazing summer holidays and hope the children haven't kept you too busy.

I would like to start firstly by introducing myself as the Northfield Schools Intervention and Prevention officer. My role means I am designated to working with children/ schools in the following areas: Kings Norton, Longbridge, Northfield and Weoley. I will be working closely with your child's school with the aim to build relationships with both children and staff. This will be to encourage faith back in the police. The way in which I am to do this with the children will be doing early intervention and prevention workshops. These workshops are designed to encourage and help our children by raising aspiration, increasing confidence, strengthening resilience and building trust.

Over the summer holidays I have had a number of meetings with schools which have brought to my attention that young children are travelling to and from school alone, being left home alone or out with friends outside school hours in the local area. Therefore, I am writing to parents to outline this topic.

A families' guide to the law states: *"There is no law prohibiting children from being out on their own at any age. It is a matter of judgement for parents to decide when children can play out on their own, walk to shop or school."*

When letting the child out on their own or even leaving them alone at home it is important to consider a number of factors. Every child is different, therefore it's up to you to consider if the child is going to be at risk if they are left at home alone. If you believe they are then it is against the law for them to stay alone. It's important to remember that even if you leave the child for small amount of time it can feel like a long time for them. It's important to also consider how the child feels about the situation as children will respond differently. Some children may take the opportunity to show they are grown up and can be responsible. However other children will feel nervous about the responsibility.

Things to consider prior to leaving the child alone at home... A young child should never be left alone, not even for a few minutes. It's important that you look at the safety of the home prior to leaving them, this includes checking the fire alarms, windows and locks are working. It's important to put anything away that could cause risk such as sharp objects, alcohol and medicines. Most importantly ensure they have access to a phone so they can call for help in an emergency, but also you should ensure they have a list of important numbers.

Although the above talks about leaving the child alone at home. Some of the rules apply for when the child goes out on their own. It's important that the child knows their full name and address before being allowed to leave. The child should have a clear understanding of road safety and what to do when approached by a stranger. This is key as strangers will attempt to befriend the child, build relationships, trust and emotional connections. You should ensure that the child has two trusted adults' details ideally parents on them at all times. This includes mobile number, work or house number.

If you are allowing the child out it is important to put boundaries in place. By setting boundaries it allows the child to understand how they should be behaving when they are out the house. It's important that they are based on the child maturity. You should consider the following: how far can they child go? Curfew? Who are they meeting? What are they going to do? But also, where are they going?

It's important that you understand that there is no set age for allowing your child out. However, the decision is down to you. You should not feel pressured into it by your child until you know the decision is correct for yourself. You should feel confident that the child will be safe if you do leave them alone.

If your child is in year 5/6 and considering walking home it's important to contact school to understand what their policy is and also to complete any relevant forms for the child to walk home.

With that all said, I look forward to working with your children.

If you have any questions about the above, please contact school who will be able to give you some further information.



PC Rhiannon Tatchell

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