

# Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Child Safety Program

## Community Policing Division

Prepared by Sgt. Patrick Dimick

### **Sheriff's Office Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to ensure public safety in Santa Cruz County. We accomplish this through open communication and collaboration with our community as well as continuous professional development of staff to address crime and promote innovative corrections solutions.

**Program Goal-** To increase children's awareness of their safety and establish a bond of trust between the Sheriff's Office, children, local school, and parents. This will be done by interacting with children, educating them about their safety, teaching them to identify dangerous situations, educating them about the Sheriff's Office role of trust in the community, providing them with tools to avoid dangerous situations and empowering children with the knowledge they can report these situations to an authority figure.

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of the Child Safety Program is to build a relationship of trust between law enforcement and local students in the early elementary school years and educate them in various topics related to their safety and law enforcement. The topics will include an introduction to the Sheriff's Office (SO) and its role in the community, stranger education, home safety, internet safety, after school safety, bullying and other topics to improve the safety of children in our community. This program will be presented by Sheriff's Office uniformed personnel and Sheriff's Office Volunteers in four 60 minute presentations in the individual 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms throughout Santa Cruz County Elementary Schools. The concepts presented are geared to educate children on safety matters, provide them with tools to keep them safe in a variety of situations and give them the confidence to report this information to ensure dangerous situations can be handled appropriately by parents, school officials or law enforcement.

This program is a cooperative effort between the Sheriff's Office, KidPower, and local schools to increase the safety of children in the community and build trust with children early in their formative years. The program is designed to be adaptive and encourage input for improvement from parents, teachers, community members and law enforcement personnel.

This pilot program was launched in the Fall of 2015 in the Aptos Elementary Schools. All of the principals at Rio Del Mar, Valencia, Mar Vista and Twin Lakes Elementary Schools have participated in this program and have found this program instrumental in teaching child safety.

### **II. Course Details**

- A. Child Safety will be taught by SO personnel and volunteers.
- B. Program will be presented at the early elementary school level (2<sup>nd</sup> grade).
- C. The program will consist of 4 presentation blocks of different safety topics.

- D. Program presentations will be given to individual classrooms (approximately 71 classes each school year in the Santa Cruz County service area. This will touch up to approximately 1524 children per year.)
- E. Presentations will be ongoing and spaced by approximately 2 months throughout the calendar school year.
- F. Each presentation will consist of an approximate 60 minute block.
- G. A school teacher will remain present during the entire presentation.
- H. A uniformed Sergeant, Deputy or CSO will be present during each presentation.
- I. The presentations will be a combination of large group presentation, small group activity, skits and video vignettes.
- J. School supplies such as crayons exist at the schools and will be used for the activities.
- K. Educational tools (coloring books) will be supplied by the Sheriff's Office and purchased with funds received from grants and community donations. Existing AV equipment at the SO will be used for presentations when needed.
- L. Participating SO personnel and volunteers will receive training specific to this program.
- M. The educational content will be reviewed to gather input by a combination of school faculty, parent and teacher groups and/or school councils at the suggestion of each schools individual principal.**
- N. The SO will ensure that all personnel and volunteers have completed any necessary background process as directed by the school or school district required for volunteering on the school campuses.
- O. Parents will be notified in advance of the goals, objectives and content of the program via SO letter and/or presentation.

### **III. Topics**

- A. "Your Local Sheriff"-An introduction to a Sheriff's Deputy, the Sheriff's Office role in the community, a show and tell of a Deputy's equipment including a patrol vehicle. "What is an Emergency and 9-1-1" introduction and use of 911 and personal information.
- B. "What is a Stranger" Explanation of what a stranger is, internet safety, providing tools to children when confronted or approached by a stranger, what to do after approached or confronted by a stranger and an introduction of home safety regarding strangers. "What to do if you get Lost" – Explanation of Safety plans and who you can ask for help from if you are lost. "Check First" – Explaining the importance of checking first with your Responsible Adult when you are going somewhere, what you are doing and when your plans change.

- C. "Home Safety / Decision Making"- General safety at home to avoid injuries, decision making when tempted to do something dangerous, peer pressure, recognizing situations with strangers at the door, on the phone and on the internet.
- D. "Bullying/Playing with others" -Explaining our unique differences and similarities, inclusion play. "The Golden Rule" treating other the way you want to be treated, it feels good to give people compliments and be encouraging.
- E. "Tattling and Reporting" – Explaining the difference between the two and reporting until you get help from a responsible adult.
- F. "After School Safety"- General afterschool safety will include topics and safety measures related to playing at school, at home, at friends homes, bike safety, pedestrian safety, internet safety.
- G. "Personal Boundaries" - Have to vs. Don't want to, Be safe with Touch, Teasing , and Play"
- H. "Speaking Up for Safety and Respect" – Speaking up about personal boundaries clearly, respectfully and powerfully and being able to listen to and respect the boundaries of other people.

-Each of these blocks is intended to build upon and reinforce concepts presented during previous blocks.

-Content such as internet safety and bullying is currently presented at the local schools or outside organizations. The content in these subject matters will be consistent with what is currently being taught at the schools.

#### **IV. Logistics**

- A. Time- Each presentation will last approximately 60 minutes
- B. Staffing- Uniformed personnel will lead the presentation and SO volunteers will assist with small group activities. Community Policing will provide the SO personnel during their regularly assigned work hours. Community Policing has actively been recruiting SO volunteers to handle the necessary increase in manpower for this program to succeed and be sustained year to year. Cabrillo College has also been contacted for potential implementation of an internship to assist with this program.
- C. Travel- SO volunteers will either drive themselves or carpool with uniformed personnel.
- D. Insurance/Liability- County Council and Risk Management will be consulted regarding and insurance or liability issues pertaining to content presented in the course and the presence of the Sheriff's Office on school grounds.
- E. Training- SO personnel and volunteers will receive training specific to presenting the content of the program, dealing with statements by children of a sensitive or personal nature and potential Mandated Reporter situations.
- F. Supplies- Supplies for the program (coloring books) will be purchased with monies donated by the public or provided through community grants (ie. Target Corp.)
- G. A general course outline will be followed to ensure consistency, sustainability and transferability of the program. The course outline will be adaptable to ensure course content is relative and effective as society issues change with time.

- H. A training manual will be created for SO personnel to ensure the goals and objectives of the program are met as well as the content of the program is received by the students.
- I. The Child Safety Volunteer Coordinator will assist with scheduling presentations for individual classes, confirm attendance by volunteers and prepare the teaching aids for upcoming presentations.

## **Course Outline**

The Child Safety Program will be presented in 4 sessions to individual classes throughout the school year. The content will include topics from relative coloring books, additional content to expand on individual presentations, small group interaction and discussion with the students, and skits and vignettes relative to the information to reinforce key topics. The content has been gathered from different sources to include professional programs that are already in use at the schools as well as various child safety organizations and governmental resources throughout the country.

- I. "Introduction to the Sheriff's Office"
  - A. Introduction of uniformed personnel
  - B. Explanation of the Sheriff's Office role in the community
  - C. Show and tell of our uniform, equipment and patrol vehicle
  - D. Explanation of 911 and emergencies
  - E. Avoiding dangerous items (ie. Weapons, guns) and reporting these situations to an adult or authority figure
  - F. Introduction to stranger situations
- II. "Be Smart: Say No To Strangers"
  - A. Explanation of what a stranger is
    - 1. Most strangers are good people
    - 2. Some strangers are dangerous
  - B. Dangerous situations involving strangers
    - 1. Being approached by a stranger in public
  - C. Being contacted by a stranger at home
    - 1. Internet safety
    - 2. Stranger at the door
    - 3. Stranger on the phone
  - D. What to do when contacted during these situations
    - 1. How to respond verbally, run, scream or yell if necessary
    - 2. Tell your parent, teacher, authority figure
  - E. How to avoid these situations
    - 1. Be with a friend/group
    - 2. Description of safe places to go
  - F. What to do if lost
    - 1. What strangers to contact (clerk, employee, authority figure)

2. Call 911
3. What to do when you get lost in a forest

III. "Home Safety"

- A. Discussion about doing the right thing even when nobody is watching
  1. Peer pressure discussion
  2. Safe play and decision making (right vs. wrong, dangerous vs. safe situations)
- B. Cleaning up toys
- C. Common dangers in the home
  1. Scissors, knives, plastic bags, etc.
  2. Medication
- D. Bullying / Playing with others
  1. We are all different and unique, but we have many similarities to each other
  2. The Golden Rule- Treat others the way that you want to be treated
  3. It feels good to give people compliments and be encouraging
- E. Tattling vs Reporting
  1. Definition of each – Tattling is getting someone in trouble, Reporting is a safety issue
  2. Responsibility to act safely and respectfully towards others
  3. Reporting to an adult

IV. "After School Safety" "Personal Safety"

- A. Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety -
  1. Pedestrian safety
  2. Bicycle safety
- B. Personal Boundaries
  1. Being Safe with touch, Teasing, and Play
  2. What Is a Choice and What Is Not A Choice
  3. Reporting is something someone does or says in uncomfortable or unsafe – Reporting until someone helps you
  4. Safe and Unsafe Secrets
- C. Personal Responsibility and our Neighbors safety
  1. Golden Rule
  2. Being a Hero
  3. Decision Making