

STAYING SAFE – A PARENT’S GUIDE

There comes a time when parents have to let their child go out into the streets alone. Whether it is the walk to school, going around the corner to a friend’s house, the local shop, to football or tennis, or wherever, you have to trust your child to keep him or herself safe. You have prepared them with road safety lessons, not speaking to strangers, keep in touch with home, stay with their friends. Then they get older and want to go out alone more often and further afield.

The attached advice to young people examines the world they live in, and how to stay safe in it. But what if something does happen, and they call (or someone else calls) and they have been mugged or threatened or chased or just frightened out of their wits? What do you do?

In the worst-case scenario, serious injuries will see your child taken to hospital, usually from the place where the incident occurred. The Ambulance Service or A&E will notify the police, and various established procedures will be put in place. This type of incident is very rare.

More typically, your child will come home and tell you that he / she has been mugged / threatened / had their phone taken / been physically manhandled.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

INJURIES

Are there any injuries? Serious enough for A&E? If so, take your child, but report it to the police en route / ASAP (see below). Photograph the injuries.

If the injuries are less serious, bruising etc – stay at home. Again, photograph the injuries (however slight).

REPORTING

Dial 999 in an emergency, if the incident is recent, there are injuries, the perpetrator is known and your child can describe them, or if your child still feels threatened. The operator will advise you which police unit is available. On a busy night, an appointment will be arranged for the next day.

If the incident is not an emergency, no serious injury has been received, and there is no immediate danger, (or you aren’t told until the next morning) dial 101 or go to www.met.police.uk/report to report the incident online.

POLICE CONTACT

The police will take a statement, for a full account, including a victim impact aspect. They do not always use a video recorded statement, but this depends on the seriousness of the offence. Statements about very serious offences are conducted and recorded on video by special trained officers. Similarly, the investigation may be dealt with by specialist CID officers, again depending on the seriousness of the offence. Less serious offences will be dealt with by the response team officers who were first on the scene, or by your Safer Neighbourhood Team if the crime is clearly an ongoing neighbourhood issue.

All CCTV evidence will be checked, and witnesses sought, and your child may be asked if they know of any witnesses.

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Crimes involving minors are considered a Safeguarding issue, and other agencies may be informed of the incident.

AFTERMATH

The police will advise you of the outcome of their investigations, but Victim Support has an excellent website (victimsupport.org.uk) or you can call them on 0808 1689 111. In West London they have specialists to support young victims through all aspects of this horrible experience, up to and including going to court. They are the experts - use them.

Your child may be very nervous, afraid to go out or even aggressive after the incident. In any event, their confidence will need re-building, and their attitudes changed. The accompanying leaflet “Staying Safe - A Guide for Young People” is designed to provide simple advice for young people when they are out and about; go through this advice with them and discuss it. But if your child is afraid to go out, gently persuade them to take a very short walk near home, with you or their siblings or a friend, following behind, or with their own or a borrowed dog. Increase the range as their confidence grows. It is like riding a bike, the sooner you get on again after a fall, the quicker your confidence returns. If they do not wish to go near the location of the incident, that is fine too, if it is somewhere where they do not normally have to venture.

OTHER IDEAS

TRACKING PHONES

iPhone has its own built in FIND MY IPHONE (make sure you know the email address and the Apple ID for that phone, and this can then be tracked from another I phone or I pad).

Android phones you can log into Android.com or google account and put find my phone in the browser.

Police will always ask for the phones IMEI number make sure you know this and keep note of it. It will be on the original packaging when you purchased the phone or key in *#06# this will show on your phone or you can find it in your phone settings.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Dial 999 in an emergency.

If the incident is not an emergency dial 101 or go to www.met.police.uk/report to report the incident online.

Alternatively call Crimestoppers 0800 555 111 for adults or Fearless.org is a charity for younger people to report crime or ask questions.

