BACK TO SCHOOL
SAFETY AWARENESS TIPS

As summer nears the end and children are getting ready to head back to school it is important to have ongoing conversations that will help keep them safe and healthy throughout the school year.

DID YOU KNOW?

1 in 5 young people reported having
SKIPPED SCHOOL
as a result of cyberbullying.
(UNICEF)

MORE THAN 15,000
children under the age of 19 were **struck and injured** by a vehicle as pedestrians in 2018.
(Safe Kids Worldwide)

MORE THAN 2.1 MILLION
youths currently use e-cigaretts.
(CDC)

MENTAL HEALTH

"School refusal" is a sign of broader anxiety, separation anxiety, social anxiety, or general anxiety. "School Refusal" is more of a common behavior than we realize. It is estimated that 8 to 10 percent of all school children exhibit school refusal behavior — and miss school as a result — at some point during their school career (cabinetreport.com).

Consider the following:

- Change can be triggering for kids of all ages. Do you know the signs of mental health struggles? Does your child have coping mechanisms for anxiety inducing situations and/or communicate their feelings to you?
- How does your child respond to the consequences of common mistakes? Helping your child understand that mistakes are natural can help create safe space for them and can decrease chances of anxiety or depression.
- According to Mental Health First Aid USA, five things you can do to help students take care of their mental health:
  - Ask how they are doing, give reassurance, provide practical help, develop a routine and be a role model.

CYBER SAFETY

After a year of virtual learning, schools have found that issuing students devices allows more students to access needed educational material and in turn, increase productivity. As we enter a new school year, consider the following topics of discussion about both personal and school issued devices:

- Are there guidelines for school issued devices that are different from personal devices? What guidelines remain the same for personal and school issued devices in your home?
- The internet is permanent. Does your student understand the potential ramifications of their online behaviors?
- Do you know what privacy and/or safety settings are available on devices and apps? If so, do you know how to best utilize them? If not, check out our Cyber Safety Conversations for more information here: **bit.ly/ CyberSafetyConversations**
- Predators populate on well-known games and social media apps. Are you and your student familiar with the grooming process? What should your child do if they suspect they are being groomed online?

BACK TO SCHOOL
SAFETY AWARENESS TIPS

CRIME STOPPERS
CALL 713.222.TIPS

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Situational Awareness teaches kids to be assertive in their environments allowing them to be aware of the norms and how to navigate an environment in a normal way. It also teaches them how to be confident in public and in uncomfortable situations.

Consider the following:

- You do not want strangers to be able to call out their name or identify them in any way. Avoid labeling your child's clothing, backpack, or jackets where it is visible.
- Familiarize your child with the neighborhood. Show them the safe places they can go if they need help such as the fire station, police station, trusted stores, or business offices.
- Discuss with your child what he or she should do if anyone begins to follow or approach them, including instructions to get away quickly and report it.
  - Scream, run away in the opposite direction, run to a previously identified safe place and call **911.**
  - Have your child check with a school official if someone other than you, known or unknown, attempts to pick them up from school.

WHERE TO REPORT

- **Mental Health America**: 24 hour Crisis Center, call **1-800-273-8255** or text **MHA** to **741741**
- **NCMEC Cyber Tipline**: Available 24/7, call **1-800-843-5678** or **report.cybertip.org**
- **Crime Stoppers of Houston Anonymous Tip Line**: Available 24/7, call **713-222-TIPS (8477)** or **crime-stoppers.org**

RESOURCES

- **Bark.us**: Bark helps keep more than 5.6 million children across the U.S. safe online and in real life. Bark monitors online activities for potential issues like cyberbullying, sexual predators, adult content, depression, acts of violence, suicidal ideation, and more.
- **benice.org:** be nice. is a program with a four-step action plan that's proven to save lives. The program quips individuals in schools, businesses, faith institutions, and communities with the knowledge and confidence to take action when it comes to mental health and suicide prevention.
- **Commonsensemedia.org**: For 15 years, Common Sense Media has been able to provide trustworthy information to parents and educators on the pros and cons of virtually every type of content to help kids thrive and stay safe.
- **DavidsLegacy.org:** David's Legacy Foundation (DLF) aims to provide training opportunities and presentation materials that equip school counselors to present to their students and help them understand what bullying is, know how to refrain from bullying, understand when and how to take action to stop it, and learn how to advocate for themselves and others.
- **Mhanational.org**: Mental Health America work is driven by its commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including prevention services for all; with recovery as the goal.
- **Missingkids.org**: NCMEC is a non-profit organization who's mission is to provide services to combat child sexual exploitation while helping to find missing children, and prevent child victimization.