



Wissahickon School District

True Blue with a Heart of Gold

September 12, 2024

Dear Wissahickon Families:

The Wissahickon Schools and the Police Departments of Ambler Borough, Lower Gwynedd Township and Whitpain Township are committed to a partnership that is designed to always keep the children of the Wissahickon School District safe and secure. We regularly review and then publicize our “Stranger Alert Procedures” (see below) to further strengthen that commitment and solidify the process by which we can empower the community with information that will enable all of us to help protect our children from potential danger.

Towards the goal of preparation and prevention, school personnel regularly remind students about basic safety procedures. Teachers and other staff members at every school educate and remind students about such fundamental safety practices as what to do if you encounter a stranger, where to go for help, etc. Parents are encouraged to have similar discussions with their children. If you are looking for information to use in that regard, the enclosed info sheet, “Student Safety Alert Information—Some Tips from Safety Experts,” is a good place to start.

Should an incident occur, the following “Stranger Alert Procedures” have been formulated to provide for a quick and comprehensive response. We review them annually and update/revise on an as-needed basis thereafter. Our goal is to make the community aware of potentially dangerous situations in a way that does not cause undue anxiety or fear for our students and their families, while at the same time doing everything we can to ensure the safety of all Wissahickon community residents.

This document contains important information. If you need language translation assistance to understand this document, you may review this information on our district website and use the translation tool, or you may contact your student’s school to request a translated document. Click here: <https://www.wsdweb.org/about-wsd/school-safety>

Este documento contiene información importante. Si necesita asistencia en traducción de idiomas para entender este documento, puede revisar esta información en nuestro sitio web del distrito y usar la herramienta de traducción, o puede comunicarse con la escuela de su estudiante para solicitar un documento traducido. Haga clic aquí: <https://www.wsdweb.org/about-wsd/school-safety>

이 문서에는 중요한 정보가 들어 있습니다. 이 문서를 이해하기 위해 언어 번역 지원이 필요한 경우, 해당 지역 웹 사이트에서 이 정보를 검토하고 번역 도구를 사용하거나, 학생의 학교에 연락하여 번역 문서를 요청할 수 있습니다. 여기를 클릭: <https://www.wsdweb.org/about-wsd/school-safety>



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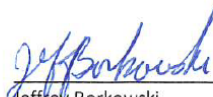
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STRANGER ALERT PROCEDURES

1. The Police Departments of Ambler, Lower Gwynedd and Whitpain can be notified of potentially dangerous stranger situations by several sources. These sources include (but are not limited to) parents, community members, school officials, and law enforcement officials from neighboring communities. In all cases, it is important to share all information you might have, be it factual, hearsay or speculation, when reporting anything to the police. In conversations with friends or family after an alert is sent home (see below), please just share facts that the police provide.
2. When notified, the Police will take the report, investigate promptly and thoroughly, and then consult with the Chief of Police to determine if the Wissahickon school community should be notified.
3. Should notification be called for, the Chief of Police then contacts the Superintendent of Schools and shares information with him concerning the description of the potentially dangerous stranger (and any other pertinent information about the incident).
4. The Superintendent of Schools then shares the information with other district personnel and sends home to all parents/guardians a “Stranger Alert Letter” via the district’s electronic communication (email) system. The district’s emergency notification alert system (phone calls/text messages) may be used as well.

Last but certainly not least, the power and positive influence of a parent/guardian in these situations (reassuring your child and reminding him or her about safe behaviors) cannot be overstated. In fact, a trusting relationship between the schools, police, and community, all working together as one positive voice, is the best precaution we can take, and we very much appreciate the support that you give to us to make that partnership a reality.


James Crisfield
Superintendent of Schools


Jeffrey Borkowski
Chief, Ambler PD


Paul Kenny
Chief, Lower Gwynedd PD


Kenneth Lawson
Chief, Whitpain PD

Enclosed: “Student Safety Alert Information – Some Tips from Safety Experts” info sheet



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Student Safety Alert Information

Some Tips from Safety Experts

Younger Students

- Never accept rides from or talk to strangers.
- If a driver pulls to the curb to ask directions, avoid getting too close.
- Know how to use the telephone and how to call the police using 911.
- If a strange vehicle is stopping near you, turn and walk in the opposite direction. The driver will have to turn around or back up to follow.
- Do not take candy from a stranger and never approach a stranger to see his nice puppy dog in the car.
- If you think you have been followed home, avoid going to your house. Instead, go to a neighbor's house that is near home or to the nearest business.
- PARENTS: Set up a code word with your children in the event of an emergency, during which a friend or neighbor may have to pick up your child/children somewhere other than at school. Also, know which neighbors are home during the day and notify them of this contingency plan. Your child should know the code word and understand its importance, and he/she should be prepared to respond to anyone who knows the code word. Make the word meaningful to your family so a real stranger will not be able to figure it out.

Older Students

- If a stranger does approach in a car and then leaves, try to remember the license plate number of the motor vehicle, and report this information to a parent or to the police immediately.
- Do not assume it was nothing. Report any suspicious activity. If you think ANYTHING is out of the ordinary, report it to the police by calling 911 immediately.
- Be aware of your surroundings and do not be consumed by your cell phone, tablet or any other electronic device.

Information Needed by Police

- Vehicle license number and Make/Model/Color
- Gender and race of stranger
- Approximate age, weight, and height of stranger
- Clothing worn by stranger
- Length and color of stranger's hair
- Any unusual marks, scars, tattoos, jewelry, hat worn, glasses, etc.
- Last direction of travel of stranger (either on foot or by motor vehicle).

NOTE: ALL children need to know that police officers are their friends, but unfortunately, strangers sometimes purport to be the police and may have with them identification that could fool even an adult. If a police officer needs to speak with your child, in most of these cases, the police officer will be in a fully marked squad car with the name of your local community displayed and the officer will be in uniform. The police will understand the child may not want to speak with the officer, for whatever reason, especially if the officer is in an unmarked squad car and is in civilian dress. In these cases, the plain-clothes officer will always try to get a uniformed officer to interact with the child once contact is established.