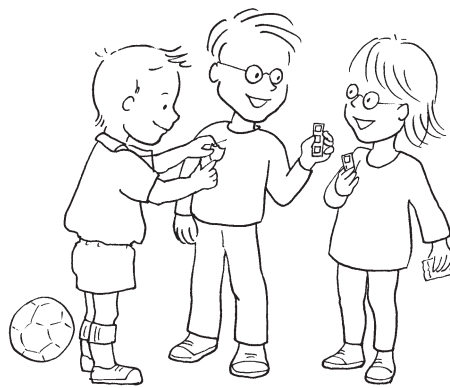


PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH
HEARING IMPAIRMENT



PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

The support of parents and all staff is essential to the successful implementation of the programme. Copies of lessons should be made available to the sign language interpreter prior to meeting with parents and care staff. It is recommended that preparatory work on the concept of feelings and emotions and names of body parts should be completed before commencing the programme. Teachers may need to change some of the language in the stories to vocabulary with which the children are already familiar.


Children complete the worksheet no. 4 before Topic 1 is introduced.


TOPIC 1: FEELING SAFE AND UNSAFE

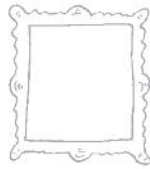
<p>Objectives</p> <p>To give children the opportunity to discuss times when they felt safe and unsafe.</p> <p>To help children to anticipate potentially dangerous situations.</p> <p>To enable children to devise practical ways of dealing with unsafe situations.</p>


Teacher introduces the topic of feelings. Our feelings tell us how we are inside. Elicit examples of various feelings from the children. Children discuss in groups times when they felt happy (talk or sign).


NAME: _____ AGE: _____

EYE COLOUR: 

HAIR COLOUR: 



LIKES:  _____

DISLIKES:  _____

MY SIGNATURE: _____

Feeling Safe

Teacher explains that she's going to be talking about safe and unsafe feelings. Teacher and children discuss examples from everyday home and school situations of times when they feel safe. Pictures, photographs or drawings of children being safe in the swimming pool, crossing the road, on the bus, and playing games may be useful for reinforcing the concept.

Teacher uses a variety of illustrations to reinforce the concept of being safe.

- Children reading in bed (Keep Deaf Children Safe Project, page 11, See resource list).
- Children swimming in the pool, instructor present (K.D.C.S. project, page 9).
- Girl playing on swing (K.D.C.S. project, page 9).
- Children with their friends (K.D.C.S. project, page 7).
- Red Squirrel going home to his dray (Stay Safe Senior Infants, Lesson 1).
- Sarah cycling her bicycle, Patch in his kennel. (Stay Safe Senior Infants, Lesson 2).

Story (use worksheets no. 6)

Eamon is deaf. He went to his local school for five years. When Eamon was he changed schools. He went to a school for deaf boys and girls. Eamon was sad leaving his old school. He had many friends there. His parents brought him to the new school. When the teacher met Eamon she shook hands with him and smiled kindly, and brought him to his new classroom. The pupils welcomed Eamon. At playtime a girl called Amy gave him some sweets. At lunch time Liam showed Eamon his soccer stickers. Eamon felt safe in his new class with his new friends.

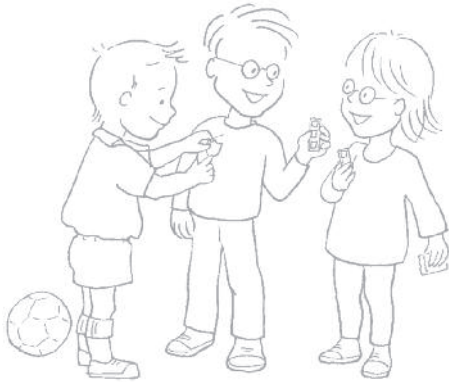
Did Eamon like his new class? Why?

Why did Eamon feel safe?

When do you feel safe?

How did you feel on your first day in this school?

Teacher might like to tell the children about her first day as a teacher in the school.



Follow-up activities

- Draw or paint a picture of when you feel safe. Think about the colours you would use for your 'Safe' picture.
- Drama/Mime: Imagine you are Eamon in the story. You're in your new class. Amy is sitting on your left and Liam on your right. You feel safe and happy. Imagine Liam and Amy helping you with your work.
- Use photographs, preferably of the children themselves participating in various activities. Discuss with the children how they felt at those times.
- Write your own story about being safe and act it out.

Feeling Unsafe

Firstly, revise feeling safe. Remember the story about Eamon. Did Eamon feel safe in his new class? Tell me about when you felt safe or draw a picture.

Teacher shows children Poster 1. How do you think the children in the poster feel? If necessary clarify for the children that one child feels safe while the other feels unsafe.

Ask the children for examples of times when they felt unsafe. Everyday events from the children's own experience like missing the bus, playing around a building site (K.D.C.S., page 9), being afraid in the dark, being frightened by a dog, child running out in front of a car (K.D.C.S., page 9) could be used to illustrate this feeling.

Teacher then introduces the topic of getting lost. Use worksheet from Stay Safe 1st and 2nd class, lesson 2

as a visual aid or K.D.C.S. page 9. Would you feel safe or unsafe if you got lost at the zoo, park, seaside, supermarket or train station?

Rules If You Get Lost

Children learn safety rules that they could use if they got lost. Rules could include the following, depending on the communication skills of the individual child.

- Use your identity card. Teacher shows the children how to use the card correctly. Discuss with the children who they should show the card to. It's important that they realise that they only show the card to whoever is in charge in the place where they're lost. Contact telephone numbers for home and school should be included on the card.
- The children may also need to talk about the rules they have been given by their parents about getting lost. Teacher should ensure that there is consistency between the rules given at home and at school.

Before moving on to follow-up activities give the children an opportunity to recap on the concept of feeling safe and unsafe. Ask them to give their meaning of safe and unsafe. In the ensuing discussion make sure they understand the terms in relation to being physically safe and unsafe and feeling safe and unsafe. Emphasise the benefits of telling in private.

Follow-up activities

- Draw or paint a picture of when you felt unsafe. Think about the colours you will choose.
- Safe/unsafe collage, using photos, pictures and colours.
- Make 'Safe & Unsafe' face masks or do 'Safe & Unsafe' face-paintings.
- Revise with the children the signs they would encounter while out and about, e.g. exit signs, toilets, telephone, wet surface, cycle lane, pedestrian crossing, danger, keep out, railway station, bus stop.
- Use Poster 1 and relevant worksheets for this section.

PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH
HEARING IMPAIRMENT

TOPIC 2: BULLYING

Objectives
To teach children to value friendship
To give children safety strategies for dealing with bullying.
To teach children that it is not acceptable to bully others.

Recap briefly on what was covered in Topic 1.
Children work in twos or threes and act out feeling safe and unsafe.

Friendship

Story: A Friend Across The Sea

Jack is years old. He lives in Miami, Florida in the USA. Last summer Jack made a trip to Ireland with his Mum, Sylvia. While on holidays Jack made friends with Niall who lives on a farm in Roscommon. The boys really enjoyed playing on the farm. They helped with the hay making too. Both of them had a wonderful time playing warrior games in the ruins of the old castle.

Now Jack is back in Miami and Niall is saving to go and visit his friend next summer. In the meantime the boys write to each other and send each other photographs.

How do you think Jack and Niall felt when they were playing together?

How do you think they feel when they get letters from each other?

Why are friends important?

How can you make friends?

How can you keep friends?

Who are your friends?

Why are they your friends?

I am a good friend when...

(Name) is my friend because...

Describe how you feel when you are with your friends - happy, excited, good, confident, secure, loved, safe. Teacher emphasises that we usually feel safe when we are with our friends. Friends stick together and watch out for one another.

Bullying

Poem

My name is Paul,
I'm not so tall,
In fact I'm quite small.

Bullies took away my ball,
Caused me to fall,
Laughed at it all.

At first I felt mad,
I was hurting real bad,
I was a lonely lad.

Then I went to my dad,
I told him I was sad,
And now I feel so glad.

My name is Paul,
I look quite small,
But inside I feel tall.

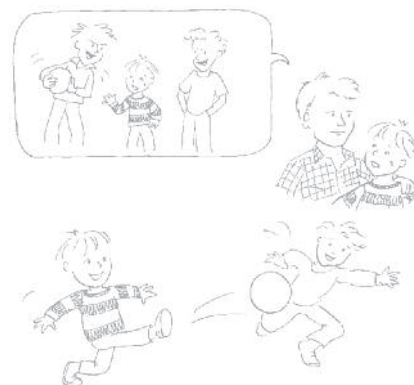
What happened to Paul?

How did Paul feel at first?

What made Paul feel glad?

What made Paul feel 'tall' inside?

Paul told his Dad about the bullying. Encourage the children to think about what they would do if they were bullied. Remind them that we all have the right to be safe.



PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Teacher uses the poem to promote discussion. Some children may want to talk about times when they were bullied. This could be an opportunity to remind them that it's not their fault if they are bullied, and that they have the right to be safe. However, some children behave in ways that make them more vulnerable to being bullied. Ask them why this might happen. Follow on by discussing the ways in which our voices, posture and our responses to questions can sometimes provoke bullying.

Deaf children or children with a hearing loss can be victimised because of their disability and some of the children may want to talk about this. They may be physically or verbally bullied, or excluded and isolated because of their hearing impairment.

The teacher may wish to do the Circle game. This game reinforces for the children that each child is special. The children sit in a circle. Each child takes a turn to move into the middle. The child in the middle signs his or her full name and makes a movement or gesture of his or her choice. Then each child in the circle copies what the child in the middle did. The other children watch. The game finishes when every child has had a turn to be in the middle of the circle.

Alternatively read this piece from "Talking with your Hands" to reinforce that we are all special.

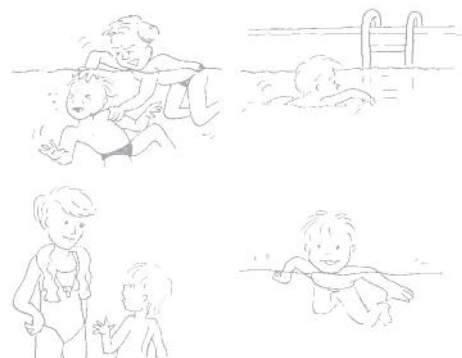
Story

One afternoon, near the ticket gate at Heuston Station, two boys and a girl were standing together, looking as if they were playing Stone, Paper, Scissors. But Maura noticed they were making a lot more signs with their fingers than usual. What fun it looked! She went closer so she could get a better view. They seemed to be holding a conversation without making a sound. One would make a lot of signs with his hands, then another who was watching would immediately make a lot more different signs. Then the third would do a few, and they would all burst out laughing, without making much sound. They seemed to be enjoying themselves. After watching them for some time, Maura came to the conclusion that they were talking with their hands.

"I wish I could talk with my hands, too", she thought enviously. She considered going over and joining them, but she didn't know how to ask them with her hands. And besides, they weren't from Maura's school, so it might be rude. Maura just went on watching them until they left for the Athlone train platform.

"Someday I'm going to learn how to talk to people with my hands", she decided. But Maura didn't know about deaf people yet. Maura just thought there was something beautiful about the way those children watched each other's fingers with shining eyes, and she wanted to make friends with them someday.

This piece lends itself to dramatisation - railway station, children singing, people saying good-bye, or passengers rushing to catch the train, or waiting for friends to arrive. The children can devise various scenes.



What is Bullying?

Use various illustrations and posters to help clarify what bullying is.

- I am afraid when I am bullied in the swimming pool (see worksheet no. 15).
- I don't like it when the other boys and girls leave me out of their games (see worksheet no. 13).
- I don't feel safe when I'm pinched or kicked or punched (see worksheet no. 13).
- I feel sad when I'm called names (see worksheet no. 13).

We have the right to be safe. So what can we do if we are bullied? We can follow some rules which will help

PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH

HEARING IMPAIRMENT

to make us feel safe again. The rules are: Say 'No', Get Away and Tell.

Safety Rules

Children with a hearing loss are sometimes more predisposed to physical rather than verbal response to bullying so it may be necessary to reinforce the safety rules, Say 'No', Get Away and Tell, by using balloon speech and picture sequences before doing the role-play. Illustrations from the following worksheets may be useful: Stay Safe 1st and 2nd Class, Lesson 5 and Stay Safe 3rd and 4th Class, Lesson 5.

1. Say 'No'

Saying 'No' can obviously create extra difficulties for children with a hearing impairment. Discuss how they can use their bodies to help them say 'No'. This can increase their confidence and their ability to assert their right to be safe from bullies. Children practice appropriate body language for saying 'No'.

2. Get Away

Teacher demonstrates how to get away from a bully and lets the children practice. Other options may be to shrug at the bully or to deliberately choose to ignore the bully and to become engaged in some other activity. Each child role-plays shrugging and ignoring a bully. Get them to practice shrugging in the following way:

- Shrug your shoulders.
- Twist your hands around so that your palms are facing upwards.
- Tilt your head to one side.
- Lower the corners of your mouth.
- Raise your eyebrows.

3. Tell

Tell even if you have been warned to keep the bullying a secret. Children will need to explore various methods of telling including oral or sign language, body language, mime, gesture and drawing, taking into account the communicative capacity of each child. When it has been clarified

how each child will tell, the children decide who they would tell. For the profoundly deaf it may be necessary to identify individuals who have contact with the child and have a sign that the child could use to identify them. It takes a lot of effort for a child with hearing loss to tell and it is important that the children get plenty of opportunities to role-play telling. It is also a good idea for each child to have identified a number of adults they could tell at home and in school. Teacher clarifies with each child how they would tell each adult. For example, if you were telling Mum would you talk or sign? How would you tell Dad or teacher?

Children write down the names or draw pictures of the adults they would tell if they were bullied. Beside each name or picture they write in 'talk' or 'sign', e.g. Mum - Talk, Dad - Sign

Teacher reinforces that bullying makes us feel unsafe. If we use our safety rules we can feel safe again. Let us go over the rules again.

- What if you were eating an ice-cream when an older boy came along and pushed you knocking the ice-cream out of your hand?
- What if you brought one of your birthday presents to school and two girls took it from you and broke it?
- What if you were only learning how to swim when a boy came along and pushed you under the water?

Children role-play using their safety rules in each of the above situations.

Note

In order to avoid confusion between role-play and reality, children wear a scarf, an arm band or a wrist band as a sign that they are pretending. When the role-play is over they take off the particular object and then they are back to themselves again.

Acknowledge that we can all be tempted to bully others and that bullies are ordinary people. In the last lesson we learned that we have the right to be safe. Others have the same right. Reinforce that bullying is wrong. The rule is - Never make anyone

else feel unsafe by bullying them. If someone makes you feel unsafe ask an adult to help you.

Children devise short dramas about bullying using their safety strategies. Give each child an opportunity to act out the part of the bully and the victim. Discussion follows on how well the safety rules worked. Victim and bully talk about how they felt. The other children say how they felt. Were their sympathies with the bully or the victim?

Follow-up activities

- Draw or paint a picture of one of your friends or design a backing and frame for a photograph of your friend.
- Using modelling material, make a model of yourself saying 'No' to a bully.
- Children use drama and mime to act out their safety rules for coping with bullying.
- Use Poster 2 and relevant worksheets for this section.

Homework: Talk to Mum, Dad or a special adult about your friends, and explain to them your rules for keeping safe if bullied.

TOPIC 3: TOUCHES

Objectives

To encourage children to value and enjoy normal affection.

To teach children how to deal with an inappropriate touch.

To teach the rule never to keep secrets about touching.

'Our Five Senses'

Teacher revises 'Our Five Senses' with the children.

Seeing

Give each child a turn at playing 'I spy' and Blind Man's Buff. Encourage the children to be more observant by getting them to notice their

surroundings. What colour is the school door? What colour track suit was teacher wearing at PE yesterday? What kind of tree is growing in the far corner of the school yard? Describe what you see on your journey into school. Are there any flowers blooming in the school garden yet? Slides from the Irish Times Art in the Classroom series can bring the beauty of art into the classroom and can further help children to appreciate their sense of sight.

Hearing

The vibrations created by sound and music can be exciting for those with Hearing impairment (see audio tape).

Smelling

Cookery class can give children direct experience of this sense. Growing flowers in Nature class, which have a strong scent like Hyacinths and Freesias can also help children to appreciate this sense. Children will give you lots of examples of nasty smells. Such examples can give the teacher an opportunity to remind the children about personal hygiene.

Tasting

Lunch time, parties and cookery class can be a useful way of illustrating how we experience this sense.

Touching

Game: Each child is blind-folded in turn and has to guess what various objects are by touching them. Discussion follows on things each child likes and dislikes to touch. Include various textures here if



PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

possible, such as sandpaper, fur, woven wool, silk, wood, tin, and so forth. Children can then think about animals they would like to touch.

Touches We Like/Dislike

Use Poster 3 as a visual aid to help the children describe touches they like. Ask them about touches they don't like and how they could say 'No' to these touches.

Distinguish between a touch they do not like and being examined by the nurse, doctor or helper. Explain that sometimes these adults have to touch us in a way we do not like to keep us healthy.

Children use puppets to practice saying 'No' to a touch they don't like. Include a wide variety of situations, e.g.

- Some of the other children are pushing John in the line.
- Ann's uncle tickles her too hard.
- Jason's mother is holding his hand while he's shopping with her and it makes him feel like a baby.
- Ciara's friend holds her hand too tightly when they're in the line at school.
- The boy who sits behind Maura in school is always stroking her hair and she doesn't like it.

Incorporate examples from the children's own experiences also. The concept of body space can be reinforced by doing various games in PE class. Remind the children that everyone has the right to body space and that they should not touch anyone else in a way they don't like. The rule is - Never make another person feel unsafe by touching him in a way he does not like.

Unsafe Touches

Ask the children for examples of touches that might make them feel unsafe. Use illustrations from Stay Safe worksheets on bullying as a visual aid if necessary.

- What if someone deliberately kicked you while you were playing in the school yard?

- What if Paul's older brother hits him when Mum and Dad are not there?
- What if the boy beside you in class keeps pinching you on the arm when the teacher is not looking, what could you do?

Inappropriate Touching

Before moving on to the topic of inappropriate touching it is important to establish that all children are clear as to the definition of the private parts of their bodies. How the teacher approaches this will depend not only on the children's ability but also on the school's policy and ethos in relation to Relationships and Sexuality education.

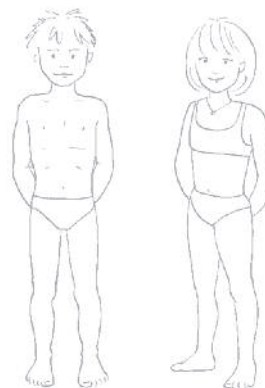
Suggested approach for revising body parts, including private parts, with the children.

- Who am I?
- My home.
- My family, friends.
- I am special - shoe size, height, age, finger print.
- I am a girl/boy.
- Using photographs of women and men from magazines, get the children to identify the sex of each person.
- Proceed to teach the children about body parts

Clothed first arms, legs, ankles etc.

In the bath skin, hair, nails.

Private parts Girl, teenage girl, woman
Boy, teenage boy, man



PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

'The Body Book' by Claire Rayner is easily understood by children and has very clear illustrations in it.

Remind the children that some parts of our bodies get touched a lot. People may shake your hands or pat your head. Other parts of our bodies are private and do not get touched so much.

It is important that children are very clear about the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touching. The use of pictures and puppets can help to explain clearly what you mean.

Are there times when an adult might have to touch your private parts? Yes, if you were sick, hurt, or needed help bathing. But you won't be asked to keep these touches a secret.

What if your private parts are sore and the doctor needs to examine you, will he ask you to keep the examination a secret? Of course not.

What if you need help from Dad, Mum or your helper with bathing, will they ask you to keep it a secret? Of course not.

No one should ever ask you to keep a touch a secret. The rule is - We never keep secrets about touching, and this rule applies everywhere, at home, in school, in the swimming pool, on the bus and so forth.

If anyone ever touches your private parts and asks you to keep it a secret, what can you do? Firstly, remember it's not your fault. No one should ever ask you to keep a touch a secret. Remember your Stay Safe rules - Say No, Get Away and Tell. You can use these rules to keep safe.

- What if someone touches your private parts and you feel unsafe, what can you do?
- What if an older boy wants to touch your private parts and warns you not to tell anyone?
- What if a stranger offers you sweets if you touch his private parts?
- What if a woman you know and like wants to touch your private parts but warns you to keep it a secret?

Children role-play their response to the above situations.

Note

Use the same approach to the safety rules concerning inappropriate touching as that outlined in Topic 2, Bullying.

How many of you think that you might get into trouble for saying 'No' to an adult? There are times when it is right to say 'No' to an adult. Ask the children to give you a list of situations where it is appropriate to say 'No' to an adult. Include circumstances where an adult asks a child to do something which is dangerous, wrong or which Mum and Dad have forbidden.

Differentiate between saying 'No' to something that is dangerous, wrong or inappropriate, and saying 'No' to going to bed, doing homework or household chores. Emphasise the importance of saying 'No' to keep safe.

Follow-up activities

- Artwork based on sensory awareness.
- Draw: 'The touches I like'.
- Draw: 'The touches I don't like'.
- Cardboard cut-out of body: cut out swimsuit, cover private parts with swimsuit.
- Children use puppets to practice saying 'No' to a touch they don't like and to a touch which makes them feel unsafe.
- Children role-play telling about an inappropriate touch.
- Use Poster 3 and relevant worksheets for this section.

Homework: Talk to Mum, Dad, or a special adult about what you could do if someone touched you in a way that made you feel unsafe.



PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

TOPIC 4: TELLING AND SECRETS

Objectives

To help children to recognise the difference between a good secret and a bad secret.

To help children to identify the adults they could tell if they had a bad secret.

To give children the opportunity to practice telling an adult about a bad secret.

Good Secrets

Teacher brings a parcel into the class and asks the children to guess what's in it. Let the children decide if this is a good or bad secret. Ask them for other examples of good secrets, e.g. Mum is having a baby; I am saving to buy Dad a birthday present, it's a surprise; we are having a surprise party for Grandad; I have made a get well card for my friend.

Bad Secrets

Story

Liam is years old. He has just changed schools and is now going to a special school. At first he liked his new school a lot. But now some of the boys on his street are calling him thick and stupid. Liam has started to hate himself. He feels sad. Sometimes the boys hit him as well as calling him names. This makes him feel very unsafe. A few weeks ago the teacher started to do the Stay Safe Programme with the children. Now Liam has learned that he can say 'No' to the bullies. Liam shouted 'No' at the bullies and ran away. Next day he told his Mammy and his teacher in private. His Mammy and the teacher helped him. Now Liam is happy again. He feels safe and there is no more name calling or hitting.

What kind of secret did Liam have? Safe or unsafe?

Who were the trusted adults he told?

What happened after he told?

What if another girl or boy in school keeps hitting you and calling you names, and warns you not to tell?

Is this a good or a bad secret?

Is this a safe or an unsafe secret?

What could you do?

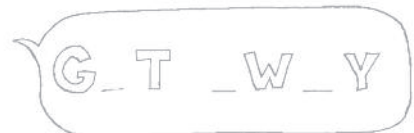
We've learned what to do about bad secrets. Who remembers the rules?

- Say No
- Get Away
- Tell.
- Keep Telling until Someone Listens and Helps.

Why should you tell a trusted adult about a bad secret? Teacher emphasises:

- It is not your fault if you have a bad secret.
- You have the right to feel safe.
- There is no need to keep unsafe, scared or upset feelings to yourself. An adult can help.

I CAN SAY...



TELL...



Revise touches the children like and dislike. Remind the children that touches they like make them feel loved and happy. Are touches ever kept secret? No

If anyone ever asks you to keep a touch a secret, what can you do? Tell even if you've promised not to. Tell even if you have been warned not to. If a touch makes you feel unsafe, what can you do? Tell. It might be hard to tell if it was someone you were very close to, but you should still tell.

PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Children decide if they need to tell a trusted adult about the following secrets

- Amy is saving for an Easter egg for her Mum.
- Donal is being bullied by Helen.
- Jason is stealing sweets from the local shop.
- Maura is worried. An adult she knows and likes asked her to keep a touch a secret.
- Ciara's mother is having a baby.

Children role-play telling an adult.

Telling

In order to ensure that children with Hearing impairment can tell about anything that makes them feel unsafe, preparatory work on re-telling various events should be covered with the children first.

To teach 'who', use pictures and photographs of various people.

To teach 'where', show pictures and photographs of various places.

To teach 'what happened', show pictures and photographs of various events, e.g. scored a goal, crashed your bicycle, fell off a chair.

Explore all methods of communication including oral and sign language, body language, mime, gesture and drawing.

Who to tell

Get the children to draw up a list of who they would tell if they had a bad secret. It is important that the adult they choose will understand them. Some children with hearing loss are only clearly understood by a limited circle of adults. Some children may need help to choose the adults they would tell. They should include people outside the family as well as parents. Explain that it is important to tell an adult rather than another child.

When to tell

Clarifying with the children when they would tell is also important. What if I am just about to teach a new maths lesson to the class, would that be a good time to tell? What if Mum is trying to get the grass

cut before it starts raining, would that be a good time to tell? What if Dad is just about to go off to a football match with his friend, would that be a good time to tell? The teacher highlights for the children the benefits of telling in private.

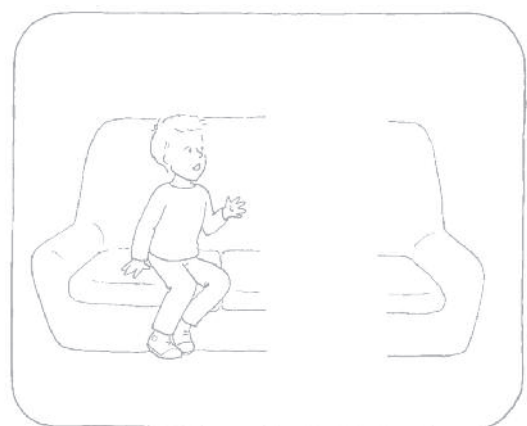
What if an adult doesn't listen

Encourage the children to brainstorm what they would do if the adult they chose just would not listen.

What if you tried to tell your Mum about bullying on the street? She was not busy at the times you tried to tell her, but she still did not listen. What could you do then? Encourage the children to look at the possibility of telling another adult if the first one does not listen. The rule is - Keep telling until someone listens and helps.

The table below could be used to help children identify who, when and how to tell.

	Who	When	How
In school			
At home			
After school if boarding			
Outside home and school			



PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Get the children practice telling about various situations that made them feel unsafe.

- The other boys are always hitting Sean and pushing him around (tells Mum, talk or sign).
- A woman in the changing rooms in the swimming pool tried to touch Sorcha on her private parts (tells teacher, talk or sign).

Role-play: Children role-play telling an adult they trust about an inappropriate touch. As it is very difficult for a deaf child to tell, teachers, parents and carers will need to give each child extra help with this role-play.

Follow-up activities

- Draw or write about a good secret.
- Draw Liam's face before and after he told.
- Use Poster 4 to reinforce the importance of telling.
- Children draw or make a list of their trusted adults in school, at home, outside school and home.
- Get the children to think about a good and a bad secret. Then have a 'listening time'. The children choose the topic, the teacher is doing the listening.
- Use relevant worksheets for this section.

Homework: Talk to Mum, Dad, or a special adult, about what you could do if you had an unsafe secret. Get their help to draw up a list of adults you could tell.



TOPIC 5: STRANGERS

Objectives

To clarify for the children who strangers are.

To give children safety strategies for dealing appropriately with strangers.

To help children to feel less fear and anxiety about strangers.

Note

Before introducing this topic the school should review its practice concerning visitors to the school.

So far we have learned about keeping ourselves safe. We have learned about safe and unsafe feelings, and we have learned the safety rules, Say 'No', Get Away and Tell someone. Today we are going to talk about using these rules if a stranger ever makes you feel unsafe.

Definition

As children may have some difficulty understanding who strangers are, the teacher may wish to do some preparatory work.

Asking children who strangers are can produce some remarkable answers, e.g. strangers wear dark glasses, strangers are always men, strangers have big cars, strangers have beards. If a teacher receives such answers she may like to ask the children's parents to point out who strangers are, when they are out shopping or travelling with their children.

Visitors to the school can be a useful way for teachers to explain who strangers are.

In class, teacher can give out a selection of pictures from magazines, depicting a variety of people - faces or full-length figures, well dressed or shabbily dressed, young or old, pleasant or unpleasant looking, with or without beards, glasses, or sunglasses.

Ask the children whether these people are strangers or not. Of course they are all strangers, but some

PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

children may say that they are not strangers because they are smartly dressed or friendly-looking or young.

The teacher can clarify any misconceptions the children may have about who strangers are. A stranger is anyone you do not know. Most strangers are nice people. Can you tell by looking at someone if they are a nice person or not? Of course you cannot. Do you think it does any good to be afraid of strangers? No, but there are rules that can help you be safe.

- Never go anywhere with a stranger.
- Never take anything from a stranger.

Story

Deirdre lives in Mullingar but she goes to school in Dublin. This is because the school is a special school which helps her learn everything she needs even though she can't hear very well. She learns Irish, English, Maths, Art & Crafts, and lots of other things. She also learns how to sign and how to lip-read. She likes the school very much. But she doesn't like having to get the train home every Friday, and back to school every Sunday evening because she has to travel by herself and it can be quite scary.

One Friday when she arrived in Mullingar station it was already dark. She was tired and hungry but looking forward to seeing Mummy and Daddy and her sister. And especially looking forward to her dinner! But there was nobody there to meet her. Everyone else got off the train and went off, and after a few minutes there was nobody left on the platform except Deirdre.

The Station Master, whom she knew well from travelling on the train so often, was at the other side of the station in his office. Deirdre decided to wait where she was for her parents. Next thing she sensed someone behind her. She turned around and there was a man there. He smiled and said something, but of course she didn't know what he was saying. She smiled back and shrugged to show she couldn't understand. He spoke again, pointing to the dark night, and wrapping his arms around himself to show that the night was cold, then gestured towards

the exit. Deirdre realised that he was offering her a lift home. She shook her head. He spoke again, and he must have been shouting loudly because she could sense the vibrations. He beckoned to her to come. She shook her head again. Just then she saw the station master coming over the footbridge towards her. He handed her a note which she could read by the platform light. It said, 'Your Mummy and Daddy will be here soon. The car got a puncture. Come and wait in the office with me.' So they both went into the bright warm office, and immediately Deirdre felt better. When she looked at the other platform, the man was gone.

A few minutes later Mummy and Daddy arrived, all apologies for being late. Deirdre told them about the man who had scared her, and they promised to sort it out and make sure he never bothered her again.

Did Deirdre make a safe choice when she said 'No' to the stranger?

Did Deirdre make a safe choice when she went with the station master instead of the stranger?

What would you have done?

Draw or collect pictures of 'Safe' strangers who could help when you are out and about.

Use puppets to act out a situation where a stranger wants a child to go somewhere with him/her. Help the children to arrive at a safe choice.



PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Then write up the rule - Never go anywhere with a stranger.

Use puppets to act out a situation where a stranger offers a child a gift of sweets, money or a video game. Get the children to think about the safe choice to make. Write up the rule - Never take anything from a stranger.

Get the children to role-play their safety rules if

- They are asked to go somewhere with a stranger.
- They are offered a gift by a stranger.

The rules are: Say No, Get Away, Tell and Keep Telling until Someone Listens and Helps.

Note

As with safety rules for bullying and inappropriate touching, some children may need to modify the rules depending on their communicative capacity.

Revise with the children who they'd show their identity card to, and ensure that they know their addresses and phone numbers.

Children role-play the safety rules about strangers, separately first and then combined.

Use a variety of examples of strangers in the role-play sessions. Examples might include a couple in a car, a man offering sweets or money, a woman looking for help, an older boy asking the child to go off to play football.

Use as many locations as possible also, e.g. park, bus station, train station, beach, playground. Also include a child being threatened by a stranger. Ask the children what they would do if a stranger called

them by name and offered them a lift home. See what solutions the children will have.

Explain that just because someone uses your name it does not mean the person knows you. How else could they know your name? Encourage the children to see that the safe choice is to use the safety rules. This is not rude - it is simply keeping yourself safe.

Ask the children to give you examples of when they made safe choices. Now decide what would be the safe choice if:

- You are offered a lift from someone you do not know.
- You were on the wrong train or bus.
- A friend takes you shopping and you get lost in the crowd.
- An older boy you do not know, says he will give you a video game if you will go home with him.

Reinforce

- Never go anywhere with a stranger.
- Never take anything from a stranger.

So does this mean that strangers are bad? No, it just means you do not know them. You do not go with or take anything from someone you do not know. This rule applies when you are on your own or with your friends.

Finally discuss what choice you should make if someone you know offers you something or asks you to go somewhere with them.

Get the children to name some adults they know.

- What if your next door neighbour asked you to come in for a drink of coke?
- What if an older girl asked if you would like to see her new puppy?
- What if your friend's father asked if you would like to go swimming with them?
- What if a woman from the stables down the road asked if you would like to see the ponies?



In all these situations explain to the children that the safe choice is to check with Dad, Mum or the adults in charge first. Children role-play their response.

Follow-up activities

- Children (with help if necessary) make a class poster of Strangers/People we know, using photographs and pictures.
- Write out the rules. Never take anything from a stranger. Never go anywhere with a stranger.
- Children use puppets or dolls to practice saying 'No' to a stranger, who offers them something.
- Children role-play saying 'No' to a stranger who wants them to go somewhere with him/her. The teacher devises various situations.
 - A stranger offered Paul a lift. She was very persuasive. "You will be soaked, and I am going your way." Paul said 'No' firmly.
 - Debbie was travelling on the train alone. She was going to her granny's in Cork. A strange man sitting opposite her started chatting. The stranger insisted that he knew Debbie's granny well and that he could drop her off at her house. Debbie said, "No thank you", and she turned on her Walkman.
- What if you get lost in a shopping centre, who would be a 'safe' stranger to ask for help. When the children have identified who they could ask for help they can role-play what they would say.
- Show Garda video section which deals with strangers.
- Use Poster 5 and relevant worksheets for this section.

Homework: Role-play your safety rules about strangers with Mum, Dad or a special adult