

As promoted by Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board's Taking Care Scheme please do not teach blanket 'stranger danger' messages to children. The reason for this is that sometimes a stranger is the only person who can help us and is a far safer option than not talking to anyone. E.g. a child lost in a shop is far safer to tell a stranger they are lost than to wander off looking for the person they have separated from. We may choose to discuss the likely 'safest' strangers in such scenarios such as a mother with a pram or small children or someone who works in the shop.

However, we do need to clarify the stranger issue as plainly there are situations we may want to warn children about for their own safety e.g.

- not to get in a car with anyone (NOT just someone they don't know) unless their parent/guardian knows who/ where/ when etc and has given permission.
- not leaving school with someone other than who they were expecting unless their parent/guardian knows who/ where/ when etc and has given permission and they have checked with a school staff member. Sometimes a password system is used so that children are only released into the care of an adult who can give the correct password – this is usually changed as soon as it has been used once.
- not to walk off with anyone (NOT just someone they don't know) unless their parent/guardian knows who/ where/ when etc and has given permission.
- If someone tries to grab them it is ok to break all the rules of politeness to others e.g. scream, kick, punch, bite...etc. Whatever they need to do to draw attention to themselves and alert others to the fact they are in danger.

Please reinforce these safety messages to the children regularly without giving them the idea that ALL strangers are 'bad'.