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Dear Parents & Guardians

As Autumn is almost upon us I would like to provide you with some important and relevant information on Halloween and Firework safety. Many children enjoy Halloween responsibly and do so under the guidance of a responsible adult. But sadly Halloween represents a night of disturbance and anxiety for some elderly or more vulnerable people.

If you have young children please:

- **Never let them go trick or treating on their own.**
- **Make sure you accompany them and only visit people you know.**

If you have teenagers:

- **Make sure they don't have access to fireworks, alcohol, eggs or flour.**
- **Explain why they must not play tricks on strangers**
- **Tell them that if nobody answers the door, or a 'No trick or treat' sign is on display; they must not knock and leave immediately.**
- **Remind them to stay with their friends and make sure they know that they should never enter the home of a stranger.**
- **Discourage older children, 'Trick or Treating' is for young children, if your child is old enough to go on their own then they may be too old for trick or treating.**

If you do not want to be disturbed on Halloween, or more likely, you know an elderly or vulnerable person that does not want to be disturbed on Halloween. Would you or they benefit from a door or window sign? If so go to the Thames Valley Police website, www.thamesvalley.police.uk and simply search 'Halloween'. This will take you to a Crime Prevention page with more information and a number of '**No Trick or Treat**' signs that can be down loaded for your use.

There is also an educational video on the above website called '**Click Your Trick**'. Thames Valley Police has produced this video which urges trick or treaters to think carefully about the consequences of their actions

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=LZbrG4cReD4

Fireworks

Be aware it is illegal to:

- **Have or use adult fireworks if you're under the age of 18. Adult fireworks are any firework except for a cap, cracker snap, novelty match, party popper, serpent, sparkler or throw down.**
- **Set off fireworks between 11.00pm and 7.00am. There are different arrangements for special occasions like Guy Fawkes' Night (midnight), Diwali, New Year's Eve and Chinese New Year (1.00am).**
- **Have professional fireworks without a licence.**
- **Sell fireworks without a licence.**

Please also be aware of the following legislation;

The Offence of Throwing fireworks or setting off fireworks in public places: section 80 of the Explosives Act 1875, which prohibits the throwing or setting off of fireworks on any highway, street, thoroughfare or public place. This is an arrestable offence and/or can result in a fine.

Please also be aware that the Police have the power to stop and search for fireworks if they suspect that an individual is in possession of prohibited fireworks or that a vehicle contains prohibited fireworks.

Please make sure that your children do not have access to fireworks, and if you feel comfortable for them to be allowed sparklers, ensure they act responsibly.

Having your own fireworks party or celebrating with family and friends can be great fun, and by far the safest way to enjoy these seasonal activities is to attend a professionally organised event. If, however, you are holding your own fireworks party please don't put your family and friends at risk.

Always remember to follow the fireworks code

- **Only buy fireworks marked BS 7114.**
- **Don't drink alcohol if setting off fireworks.**
- **Keep fireworks in a closed box.**
- **Follow the instructions on each firework.**
- **Light them at arm's length, using a taper.**
- **Stand well back.**
- **Never go near a firework that has been lit.**
- **Even if it hasn't gone off, it could still explode.**
- **Never put fireworks in your pocket or throw them.**
- **Always supervise children around fireworks.**
- **Light sparklers one at a time and wear gloves.**
- **Never give sparklers to children under five**
- **Keep pets indoors**

Lastly remember **Be Safe be Seen**, Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service are reminding everyone to 'Be Safe Be Seen' as the nights draw in and the mornings get darker. When you are out and about with your family, whether you're on foot or cycling follow the top tips below and help make you and our roads safer.

- **Wear high-visibility clothing or accessories, or something white or bright to help to make sure you're seen on the road.**
- **If you're walking or cycling at night wear reflective clothing as it shows up in car headlights.**
- **Make sure you have working lights and reflectors when cycling and always use your lights after sunset, before sunrise and in poor visibility.**

The Road Safety Education Team is urging all drivers and motorcyclists to be extra vigilant for cyclists and pedestrians during the darker evenings, especially in residential areas and around schools.

Visit 365alive.co.uk for lots of great road and fire safety tips and advice.

Further information can be found on the www.thamesvalley.police.uk site. Please help make this years Halloween and Firework nights enjoyable, respectful and safe evenings.

Regards, Mike