

*Sayville Public Schools*

# Erin's Law Resources for Parents and Guardians



In 2019, New York State became the 37th state to sign Erin's Law into legislation. Erin's Law, named after abuse survivor and advocate Erin Merryn, requires that public schools implement a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program. It is intended to help teachers, parents and students identify sexual abuse, and provide assistance and resource information for children and families who are victims of sexual abuse. According to New York State's law, Chapter 187 of the Laws of 2019, schools are required to teach age-appropriate instruction to students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

# UNDERSTANDING ERIN'S LAW

## ERIN'S LAW IS:

## ERIN'S LAW IS NOT:

### ***Required***

It IS required, in NYS, to teach child sexual abuse prevention to all K-8 students in public schools.

### ***Optional***

It IS NOT something parents can “opt out” of as is allowed with other testing or recommended curriculum.

### ***Proactive***

It IS prevention-oriented instruction which teaches about body safety and healthy boundaries.

### ***Reactive***

It IS NOT guidance on how schools should respond to abuse.

### ***Education about body safety***

It IS teaching about body boundaries, healthy relationships, seeking help from trusted adults.

### ***“Sex Education”***

It IS NOT a discussion about sex and human sexuality.

Sayville Public Schools has updated our health curriculum to include the newly required topics, such as Mental Health Education in Schools. More recently, the district has collaborated with outside agencies to include age-appropriate benchmarks related to Erin’s Law. This resource is intended to answer questions that may come up when discussing the sensitive topic of childhood sexual abuse, as well as provide more information related to this New York State requirement. If you have any questions or want more information, you may contact Mrs. Jillian Makris, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services at [jmakris@sayvilleschools.org](mailto:jmakris@sayvilleschools.org) or 631-244-6505.

# MYTH VERSUS FACT



**Child sexual abuse is so terrible that an abused child will probably ask an adult for help.**

Most abused children are too afraid to tell, or are ashamed or embarrassed. Children also worry about not being believed, and about what the disclosure of abuse may do to their families. Also, children are often carefully manipulated by their abusers to keep the abuse secret.

**A child's parents, doctor or teacher will probably notice physical signs of sexual abuse.**

Most sexually abused children have no obvious physical signs. Most abused kids who get help tell a trusted adult. The adult should then contact the police, sheriff or county Department of Social Services, who are trained in how best to investigate possible child abuse.

**Child sexual abusers are not normal, so they probably won't look or act normal.**

Child sexual abusers look and act like ordinary people. They can be in any family, any neighborhood and any type of job. Abusers often try hard to seem trustworthy and responsible. About 90% of abusers are not strangers to their victims.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Every nine minutes a child is sexually abused
- 90% of the time the abuser is someone the child knows and trusts
- Abuse is often carefully planned; an abuser may spend weeks or months “grooming” a child for abuse (ex: giving gifts or special attention)
- One out of every 10 children is sexually abused before age 18

## SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Trouble sleeping/ nightmares
- Bedwetting
- Fear of certain people, places, activities
- Changes (eating patterns, academics, social patterns)
- Mood swings (rage, fear, anger, insecure or withdrawn)
- Isolating oneself
- Suicidal thoughts
- Exhibiting adult sexual knowledge, behaviors, language

## TIPS TO KEEP KIDS SAFE

- Learn the signs
- Teach the correct names for body parts
- Talk with your children about body safety
- Teach about respecting others' body boundaries
- Talk about internet safety
- Make a family “No Secrets” rule

# Resources

**The following is a list of websites, local agencies and other resources to provide more information on Erin's Law and childhood sexual abuse.**

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RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) information on the latest news, statistics, survivor stories and how to reach out for help

[CLICK HERE](#)

Erin's Law a comprehensive site for all things Erin's Law, including information for parents, teachers, and other resources

[CLICK HERE](#)

Suffolk County Child Advocacy Center (CAC) the Child Advocacy Center is an EAC Network program which serves families and victims of abuse

[CLICK HERE](#)

Suffolk County Crime Victims Center (CVC) the Crime Victims Center operates a 24/7 hotline and provides support services, information and referrals to victims

[CLICK HERE](#)

Fight Child Abuse, a child-friendly site offering videos and resources for child abuse awareness and prevention

[CLICK HERE](#)