

MY LIFE MY VOICE

WE are a group of children and young people, from 8 different countries. We met together a few times and had a lot of fun - we have included some pictures here to give you an idea of what we did.

Leave (how many?) blank spaces in the design for each country to add their own images. English version to include pictures from all countries involved in My Life My Voice. Avoid using photos where consent will expire quickly, maybe use picture of children's work instead. Each country to include comic strip winning entries.

Hope and Homes for Children (HHC) asked us what being safe means to us and what they can do to help us stay safe. Even though we come from different places we realised we have a lot of things in common. We all like being listened to and taken seriously, we feel the safest at home and amongst people close to us and we believe parents and grownups should respect us.

NOW we are going to give you some pointers about what you can do to stay safe and also what HHC has promised to do and how they can help you.

HHC is here to help children to be safe, to grow up happily, and to make a good life for themselves when they are grown up. To do this we work with people in governments, schools, families, communities, hospitals and media. But for us the most important person is YOU. So HHC promises to do everything they can to keep you safe so that you grow up happy.

HHC takes special care to make sure that all the adults working for them are safe people. But if someone from HHC does hurt you or make you feel unsafe, tell a safe adult (give contact). If you don't know who to tell, you can call or ask someone to call for you (name of focal person for the country).

Regardless of how HHC has helped you, we care about what you think and what you want to do. Our future plans are based on your opinion.

HHC has promised that they won't ever take your photo unless you want them to. They will tell you exactly why they want to take your photo and how they would use it. Maybe they want to put your photo and a story about you on their Facebook page or their website, so that other people can understand how they help children. That's great if you're happy about it, but if you don't want to then just say no. Even if you said yes at

first but now that they have started you don't feel so good about it, you can still say no. And the best thing? HHC has promised that they will carry on helping you just the same as before even if you never let them take a single photo of you!

The same goes for visiting you at your home. Sometimes people from HHC or people who work with HHC may want to come and visit you to see how you are doing. If you enjoy that kind of thing then great. If not, or if you are feeling tired of people visiting you, just say no and they won't come.

And here are some ideas of things you can do yourself to stay safe¹

- ✚ When you don't like what someone is doing to you, you can stop them by having a strong, clear voice and making a fence with your hands (as if you are pushing something away from you) while you say the word "STOP!"
- ✚ When someone is acting scary, you can yell "NO!" Your voice can keep you safe. When someone scares you, you can yell "NO!" and run to get help at the same time.
- ✚ If another child is mean to you, you should take a deep breath and put your hands down next to your body. Even if you feel like hitting, it is better not to.
- ✚ You can also walk away to stay safe. You do not have to stay next to someone who is acting mean.
- ✚ If someone says something that hurts you, put your hand on your hip. Imagine the hole it makes is your Rubbish Bin. Catch the hurting words, push them through into your Rubbish Bin, and say something good to yourself.

- ✚ Use compliments. Compliments are nice words. They do not belong in the rubbish bin. We can take compliments into our hearts and say, "Thank you!"

- ✚ Check First to be safe: let's say you are playing outside and a neighbour wants to show you her little kittens... move away and Check First with the grownup in charge at your home. Your job is to Check First before you change your plan. Your grownups can tell you if it is okay for you to go to your neighbour's house.

- ✚ People will listen to you more and bother you less when you are aware, calm, and confident. Try it now - right where you are, right now, put your head up tall, your shoulders back, and your back straight. Turn your head to look around you.

- ✚ Touch or games for play, teasing, or affection should be a choice. The choice of both people. If you do not want someone to touch you, tell them with a strong, clear voice.

¹ You or your grown-ups can find more good ideas like these at <https://www.kidpower.org>

- ✚ Some things that you have to do are not a choice. Going to bed is not a choice. Touch to show affection is a choice. Giving hugs should be a choice.
- ✚ There are safety rules about touching private areas. Private areas are the parts of your body that are covered by a bathing suit. For play or teasing, other people should not touch your private areas. They should not ask you to touch their private areas either.
- ✚ Sometimes grownups, such as doctors, have to touch a child's private area to help them, even if the child does not like it.
- ✚ Touch of any kind should never EVER be a secret. You should always be able to talk about the things you don't like.

- ✚ In case someone does something that makes you feel bad, keep talking about it to get help. If you have a problem, keep talking to adults you trust, even if you have to tell a hundred people, until you get the help you need.

- ✚ Where is Safety? Safety is where there is an adult who can help you. Make a Safety Plan for how to get help if you get lost, for example in a store. If you get separated from your adult, stand tall like the trunk of a tree, and shout your adult's name in a loud, clear voice. If you still can't find them, go to the checkout counter and interrupt the cashier. Tell them that you are lost and need their help.