

Playsafe for capital's primary schoolchildren

A thousand primary one schoolchildren from 21 schools across Edinburgh are learning how to keep themselves safe during a four-day personal safety event in the city.

'Playsafe 2011' is a partnership initiative taking place at The Mary Erskine School for Girls between 6th and 10th June, involving Lothian and Borders Police, British Transport Police, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue, the Royal National Lifeboat Institute, the Scottish Ambulance Service, and the City of Edinburgh Council.

Now in its sixth year, the programme aims to teach children throughout the west of the Capital how to keep themselves safe in various situations.

The event is a combination of structured inputs and practical scenarios designed to help the visiting children learn by experiencing different realistic situations involving the emergency services.

Lothian and Borders Police will be running through scenarios on 'Keeping Myself Safe', as well as bringing the mounted section and police motorbikes along.

British Transport Police will be bringing along a section of a real railway sleeper to educate kids on the dangers of playing on railway tracks, as well as showing an educational DVD.

As part of the service's Child Safety Campaign, firefighters from Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service will be taking the children through their key safety messages for the summer, such as the dangers of playing with matches and fire, and around open water.

Staff from the Council's West Neighbourhood Team will be on hand alongside officers from the services involved to run the event.

Superintendent David Carradice, West of Edinburgh Commander, said: 'Initiatives like Playsafe are invaluable in teaching our young people how to keep themselves safe.

'With the school holidays coming up, this is a fantastic opportunity to not only educate children about the potential dangers of various situations, but also how to avoid getting themselves into harm in the first place.

'We are extremely grateful to The Mary Erskine School for Girls for hosting the event, as well as BAA, who provided us with snacks and drinks for the children and provided funding for buses to allow pupils from all over the West of Edinburgh to attend.'

Inspector Sue Maxwell from British Transport Police, said: 'Playsafe is a long standing and extremely important event which allows children from throughout Edinburgh to gain an understanding of the rail network and the potential dangers it poses.

'Children are enthusiastic about trains with a keen interest in how they operate. So it's extremely important that we let them know that it remains extremely safe to travel by train. '

Councillor Paul Edie, Leader of Community Safety for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "Playsafe is a fun and engaging way of showing young people how they can keep safe and out of harm and we are delighted to be working with Lothian and Borders Police and other partners on this event. Personal safety is very important and we want to engage with young people on these issues, which can stop them from becoming caught up in dangerous or antisocial behaviour in the future."

David Lockhart, Community Safety Manager at Lothian and

Borders Fire and Rescue Service added:

'Our workstation is always very popular. The children really benefit from an interesting and engaging way to learn about personal safety, the fire and rescue service and the important role firefighters play in the local community.

"It's an excellent chance for the Service to spend time with young people from the west of Edinburgh in a fun environment, whilst passing on vital safety lessons. They get an understanding of fire safety and we can encourage them to grow into responsible citizens.'