

# McGruff<sup>®</sup> Club

## CASE STUDY GUIDE



McGruff<sup>®</sup> Club

A program of the  
National Crime Prevention Council



The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) is a private, nonprofit tax-exempt [501(c)(3)] organization whose primary mission is to be the nation's leader in helping people keep themselves, their families, and their communities safe from crime. NCPC's strategic plan for 2007 through 2011 is centered on four goals: protect children and youth; partner with government and law enforcement to prevent crime; promote crime prevention and personal safety basics; and respond to emerging crime trends. NCPC publishes books, kits of camera-ready program materials, posters, and informational and policy reports on a variety of crime prevention and community-building subjects. NCPC offers training, technical assistance, and a national focus for crime prevention: it acts as secretariat for the Crime Prevention Coalition of America, more than 400 national, federal, state, and local organizations representing thousands of constituents who are committed to preventing crime. NCPC also sponsors the National Crime Prevention Association, an individual membership association to promote resources and career development to crime prevention practitioners. It hosts two websites: [www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org) for adults and [www.mcgruff.org](http://www.mcgruff.org) for children. It operates demonstration programs in schools, neighborhoods, and entire jurisdictions and takes a major leadership role in youth crime prevention and youth service. NCPC manages the McGruff® "Take A Bite Out Of Crime®" public service advertising campaign. NCPC is funded through a variety of government agencies, corporate and private foundations, and donations from private individuals.



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# Welcome to McGruff Club

For more than 25 years, McGruff the Crime Dog has been educating Americans on preventing crime and staying safe. Now, McGruff Club will teach and engage a new generation of children with trusted information from the beloved icon. Children will learn what they can do to protect themselves from crime and violence and help friends stay safe, and they will contribute to the safety of their schools and neighborhoods by sharing that information through service projects.

Children in McGruff Club will become aware of bullying, strangers, conflict resolution, drugs, and other threats that they may face in their everyday lives. As children learn how to respond to these issues, they will build skills to stay safe. Children will also develop life skills including cooperation, empathy, responsible decision making, and respect for others, while building positive relationships with peers, school personnel, law enforcement officers, and other members of the community. Community service projects will show children that even though they are young, they can still play a part in making their community safer.

This guide outlines the structure of the McGruff Club program and provides examples of how elementary schools implemented the program. If you are interested in learning more about McGruff Club, contact the National Crime Prevention Council to speak with a member of the Children and Youth Initiatives Team.



# Understanding McGruff Club

**M**cGruff Club is a structured curriculum for children in grades 1–4. Each grade features 16 scripted lessons that guide instructors through classroom discussions and activities. The activities, incorporating proven teaching strategies identified by the U. S. Department of Education, develop children’s critical thinking and communication skills. The lessons for each grade build upon each other, so children enhance their skills as they age through the program. Knowledge is reinforced through service projects where children share what they have learned with others and then reflect upon their learning and service experiences.

Educators, counselors, youth center staff members, or law enforcement officers can teach McGruff Club in just 30 minutes a week in school or as part of an afterschool program or summer camp. The scripted, user-friendly lessons make it easy for anyone to implement McGruff Club.

## Program Goals

McGruff Club’s two goals are to

- Increase children’s ability to ensure their personal safety
- Foster the attitude in children that they have a responsibility to keep their community safe

To accomplish these goals, the curriculum helps children

- Recognize unsafe/dangerous behavior and situations (such as pressure to try drugs or requests from strangers to share personal information)
- Identify steps to take to manage unsafe/dangerous behaviors and situations (such as getting away from bullying and talking to trusted adults)

- Build skills so they can confidently keep themselves safe (such as communication and problem-solving skills)
- Identify things they can do to keep the community safe (such as helping friends in trouble and talking to others about safety)
- Build skills so they can confidently take steps to keep their communities safe (such as empathy, citizenship, and respect for others)

## Program Structure

The McGruff Club program features 16 scripted lessons for each grade 1–4. The lessons for each grade are divided into two units of eight lessons each. The lessons address a wide range of safety topics, from bullying and conflict resolution to home and neighborhood safety.

The lessons in each grade build on previous lessons. For example, the concept of bullying is introduced in first grade, with children learning to identify bullying behaviors and to treat others with respect. Second grade students expand their understanding of bullying, talking in more depth about the effects of bullying on others and exploring various strategies for responding to bullying. Finally, the concept is revisited in fourth grade, where students talk about the dangers of cliques, rumors, and using technology to bully others (cyberbullying).

### Unit Topics

#### *Grade 1*

##### *Unit 1: Making Friends*

Children learn how differences among individuals add value to the community. They identify bullying behaviors and learn how they can help a child who is bullied by inviting that child to play or by telling an adult.

##### *Unit 2: Staying Safe*

Children discuss rules for staying safe at home when their parents are away and identify people in their neighborhoods (such as law enforcement officers and teachers) who can help them stay safe.

#### *Grade 2*

##### *Unit 1: Solving Problems*

Children learn strategies for managing anger and problem-solving steps to follow when they have a conflict with another child.

*Unit 2: Standing Up to Bullying*

Children explore the effects of bullying and practice strategies for helping other children who are picked on or teased.

*Grade 3*

*Unit 1: Safe and Unsafe Communities*

Children identify people and places in their neighborhood that make them feel safe, and they discuss how to respond if they encounter weapons or drugs in their community.

*Unit 2: Communication*

Children build skills in listening to and communicating with others so they can better resolve conflicts, resist negative peer pressure, and help those who are bullied.

*Grade 4*

*Unit 1: Safety in Real and Online Communities*

Children discuss how strategies to stay safe in real communities (such as not sharing personal information with strangers and not bullying others) can apply to their online activities.

*Unit 2: Treating Others With Respect*

Children explore stereotypes, discrimination, and prejudice and discuss how to be more respectful of others in their daily lives.

## **An In-depth Look at the Lessons**

Although each McGruff Club unit addresses a different safety topic, the units follow a similar structure. The first lesson in each unit introduces the safety topic and encourages children to share their thoughts and current understanding about the issues. Several lessons are dedicated to knowledge and skill-building, and use whole group and small group discussions, role plays, and other activities to inform students about safety and give them opportunities to practice responding to situations. Each unit then features a service project where students share what they have learned with others. These projects are designed to be completed during class time, and little additional planning is needed to successfully complete the projects. Finally, the children reflect upon the experience of completing the service project and share their thoughts about the lessons.

Each lesson includes a letter from McGruff to students, handouts needed for the activities, a supplemental worksheet that can be used if time allows, and an

instructor journal page for teachers to note comments on the lesson. In addition, each grade features a survey that can be used as a pre- and posttest tool. The 10-question surveys are conducted during the first lesson of unit one for each grade and give instructors an idea of what students already know about the issues that will be addressed. The survey is conducted again during the last lesson of unit two for each grade and indicates changes in student knowledge and attitudes as a result of the lessons. Instructors may use these surveys to measure progress, or they could be graded if instructors need to assess student performance.

The following unit outline provides an example of how lessons are structured.

*Lessons*

*Grade 2, Unit 1: Solving Problems*

**Lesson 1: Introduction to Solving Problems**

Children take a survey to indicate what they already know about problem solving and then discuss as a class the problems they face in their everyday lives.

**Lesson 2: Violence in the Media**

Children identify types of violence (yelling, hitting, etc.) that they see in television shows, movies, and computer games and share their personal views of characters who engage in the fighting.

**Lesson 3: The Effects of Fighting**

Children learn that fighting in the media doesn't show the full effects of violence, and they discuss the physical and emotional effects of fighting.

**Lesson 4: Starting To Solve Problems**

Children are introduced to a process for solving problems and discuss the first two steps: managing their anger when they have a problem and stating what the problem is and how they feel about the situation.

**Lesson 5: Brainstorming Solutions**

Children practice the remaining three steps of the problem-solving process: brainstorming solutions to the problem, choosing a solution, and acting on that choice.

**Lesson 6: Poster Project, Part One**

Students begin working on posters that communicate the five steps of the problem-solving process. By displaying the posters in the school or a local

youth center, students are serving the community by raising awareness of conflict resolution.

#### Lesson 7:Poster Project, Part Two

Students complete work on their posters.

#### Lesson 8:Reflection

Students discuss how it felt to create the posters and have them displayed for others to see.

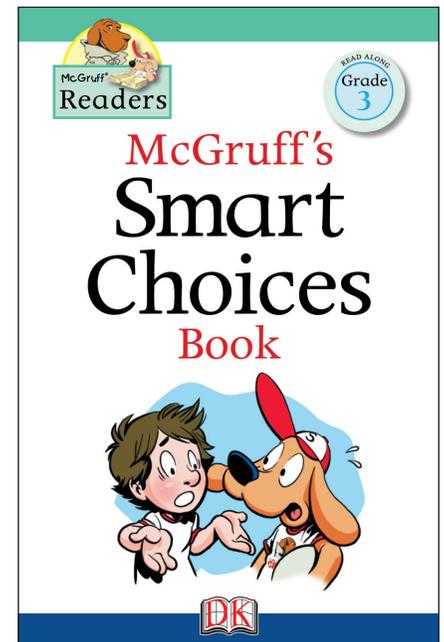
## McGruff Club Enhancements

Various resources can enhance your McGruff Club program. These resources are optional, but they expand children’s understanding of the safety messages presented in the curriculum. Many of these resources can be taken home and shared with parents, serving as reminders of McGruff’s safety tips.

### McGruff Readers

McGruff Readers are storybooks that show children the words to say and the actions to take when they encounter bullying and other dangerous situations in their neighborhoods. McGruff, his nephew Scruff, and other characters experience problems that face children today. The characters model responsible decision making and problem-solving skills, demonstrating safe strategies for managing dangers. NCPC has developed two stories for each grade, corresponding to the messages in the two McGruff Club units for each grade.

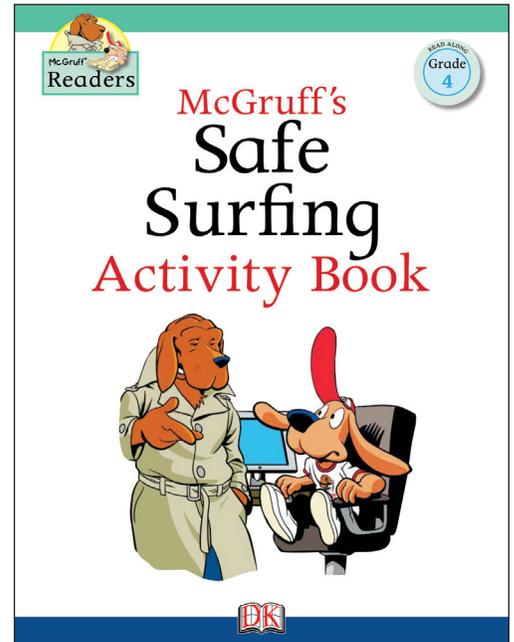
The McGruff Readers can be used in class to supplement the McGruff Club lessons. The lessons offer suggestions on how instructors can use the McGruff Reader stories to reinforce the lessons’ messages. The McGruff Readers can also be sent home with students to share with their families. Parents can read these books with their children over and over again, reinforcing the safety messages and developing children’s literacy. The books will prompt discussions among parents and children, giving parents insight into



their children's experiences, what they are learning through McGruff Club, and how they can guide children to make smart and safe choices.

## McGruff Activity Books

The McGruff Activity Books offer math-based activities, games, and craft projects that reinforce each grade's safety messages. The books can be used during class or sent home with children to share with their families. While all of the books incorporate math-based activities, the activity books for grades 3 and 4, in particular, reinforce age-appropriate math skills as identified by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, including arithmetic, fractions, geometry, and weights and measures.





# McGruff Club in Action

Elementary schools and Boys & Girls Clubs from across the country have used McGruff Club to teach children. The following examples highlight how schools have implemented the program.

## Las Cruces Public Schools, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Las Cruces Public School District is the second largest school district in New Mexico. Located 45 miles north of the Mexican border, it encompasses the City of Las Cruces, the villages of La Mesilla and Doña Ana, and covers the middle third of Doña Ana County. Many of the district's 24,000 students are from Spanish-speaking families living in low socio-economic communities. McGruff Club has served as a powerful tool to educate and teach the importance of safety and crime prevention to children and their families.

While all 24 elementary schools in the district use McGruff resources to teach children, four have been particularly successful at implementing McGruff Club. At Central Elementary School, guidance counselor Maria Escobedo-Vicario used McGruff Club as part of an afterschool program. She worked with AmeriCorps members to teach children the weekly lessons. Ms. Escobedo-Vicario found that the students enjoyed the service project lessons, which provided the students with time to interact with one another and discuss how they could help their neighborhoods and small communities.

Rebekah Martinez, the guidance counselor at Doña Ana Elementary, visits each classroom at the school over the course of the week. This enabled her to teach McGruff Club lessons with each grade and present students with a unified

vision of safety at school and in the neighborhood. Her observations of student behavior and conversations have led her to believe that the students are incorporating McGruff's safety messages and tips into their daily lives. Ms. Martinez augmented her McGruff Club lessons with visits from McGruff. (The county sheriff's department owns a McGruff costume that is used for community appearances.) She shared that the children's faces light up each time McGruff walks into the room.

Mesilla Elementary's guidance counselor, Ollie Ziehl, also teaches McGruff Club during the weekly guidance classes she provides to each classroom. The students particularly enjoyed the lessons involving role plays and the friendship quilt service project (grade 1, unit 1). When children designed posters as part of the lesson, Ms. Ziehl displayed the posters in the classrooms. The children appreciated seeing their work displayed, and the posters served as daily reminders of McGruff's safety messages.

In addition to teaching the lessons to children, Ms. Ziehl worked to engage parents as well. She organized a parent-teacher night where McGruff and Scruff were surprise visitors. The parents and their children were enthusiastic, and everyone lined up to get their pictures taken with them. Ms. Ziehl also worked to engage parents by encouraging their participation in the McGruff House program. McGruff House gives parents and neighbors an opportunity to protect children in the neighborhood by volunteering to call for help if a child asks for assistance. By disseminating information about this program to parents and neighbors at shopping malls and community events, Ms. Ziehl was instrumental in bringing the McGruff House program to Mesilla.

Las Cruces' fourth McGruff Club site is Sonoma Elementary. Mr. Martinez, who facilitates McGruff Club, has been with the

Many law enforcement agencies across the country possess McGruff costumes and can provide McGruff appearances to schools. To arrange an appearance, contact your local law enforcement agency. A crime prevention officer or community policing officer could provide you with assistance. If your local agency does not have a costume, you can contact the National Crime Prevention Council to see if other agencies in your area do have one.

To learn more about the McGruff House program and how McGruff House volunteers assist children in need, visit NCPC's website: [www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org).

school for the past four years. His favorite memory with McGruff Club was when both McGruff and Scruff attended their annual Fall Festival. He said the students had an opportunity to interact with both characters and it was a huge hit.

For future activities, he plans to focus more on how the core curriculum was implemented and students' reactions to the lessons. McGruff appearances and mcgruff.org will supplement the lessons.

Leandro Martinez at Sonoma Elementary enhanced the McGruff Club curriculum lessons with games and activities from NCPC's children's website, mcgruff.org.

The elementary school as a whole is technology-oriented, and NCPC's online games provided an opportunity to not only reinforce safety messages from the curriculum

but also to enhance children's skills and comfort in using technology. Many students at the school don't have computers at home, so they found the games on mcgruff.org exciting and novel. Mr. Martinez would often use the Internet during the reflection lessons at the end of each unit. He would identify games and stories from the website that related to the unit's topic and guide students to those activities.

McGruff.org ([www.mcgruff.org](http://www.mcgruff.org)) features a variety of games, comic stories, and tips for children on issues ranging from alcohol and drug prevention to bullying and Internet safety. In addition to using the educational games during class to reinforce safety messages, you can encourage children to visit the site with their parents and siblings at home.

## South Boston Elementary School, South Boston, Virginia

South Boston Elementary School partnered with the South Boston Police Department and the school's parent-teacher organization to implement McGruff Club as part of their afterschool programming. Officer Julianna Berry taught the McGruff Club lessons once a week. Even though Officer Berry was not a professional educator, she found the structured curriculum easy to use, and the scripted lessons provided guidance on what information to communicate to children and how to facilitate various learning activities. The school's two guidance counselors and members of the PTO also supported the program. The children participating in the program benefited from interacting with these caring adults and learning more about the role of law enforcement in keeping the community safe. The students particularly enjoyed learning about community

safety professionals (such as law enforcement officers and fire fighters) and the service project where they wrote letters to these professionals thanking them for their work in the community.

Officer Berry enhanced the McGruff Club lessons by playing McGruff songs for the children. The first and second grade students she worked with learned the lyrics and performed the songs for their parents and other students at a school assembly.

McGruff songs are available for download through the i-Tunes library and at [www.musicasmesssage.com](http://www.musicasmesssage.com). The songs address issues including bullying, fighting, and neighborhood safety.

## Patuxent Elementary School, Upper Marlboro, MD

This elementary school just outside of Washington, DC, serves more than 500 students. The school's guidance counselor, Diane Privette, taught McGruff Club during her weekly visits to classrooms. Her students enjoyed the McGruff Club lessons, and Ms. Privette felt that the lesson where children identified safe places in their neighborhoods was especially valuable. The third-grade students, who learned about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, participated in a larger service project around the issue of drinking and driving. Students and staff conducted a march in the neighborhood to remind community members of the dangers of drunk driving.

Ms. Privette supplemented the McGruff Club curriculum with various resources to remind students throughout the school of McGruff's safety messages. One resource, *Get the Message*, included short messages from McGruff for each day of the week. Students read these messages about bullying, home safety, and other issues during morning announcements. She also displayed a poster of McGruff in the main lobby of the school, and she brought a plush McGruff doll when she visited the classrooms. The students enjoyed holding and interacting with the doll.

*Get the Message!* and other publications, posters, videos, and other educational resources featuring McGruff can supplement your McGruff Club program. Give-away items, including McGruff dolls, pencils, and key chains, that feature safety messages can be purchased in bulk quantities and given to students in recognition of their participation in McGruff Club. To learn more about these resources, visit NCPC's website: [www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org).



# Conclusion

Children face myriad threats to their safety, and McGruff Club addresses these many threats in a comprehensive, easy-to-use resource. The age-appropriate safety information is based on research for keeping children safe and is presented through learning activities designed to build children's problem-solving and communication skills, and increase their sense of empathy, respect, and citizenship. The curriculum, with its structured, scripted lessons and handouts, includes everything needed to successfully implement the program in just 30 minutes a week for 16 weeks. But McGruff Club instructors also have a wealth of additional resources they can use to enhance the program. From reading activity books that incorporate literacy and numeracy, to Internet activities that bring technology into the classroom, to give-away items that acknowledge children's accomplishments, instructors can build on the curriculum's solid foundation and customize the program for their location. If you are interested in learning more about McGruff Club and how you can bring the program to your school or youth center, contact the National Crime Prevention Council and speak to a member of the Children and Youth Initiatives Team.





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