

Midlands Co-op Stays on the Safeside

Midlands Co-op has created a replica of one of its convenience stores at Safeside, the interactive safety education village next to Fire Service Headquarters in Birmingham which was opened by the Duke of Kent in April.

Safeside is a full size indoor village with realistic scenarios including a real bus, train, canal, house, cinema, road-crossing, car and dark alleyway. During a two hour visit, primary school groups are taken round ten of these scenarios by trained visitor guides. Messages on fire, road, water, railway and domestic safety are delivered in a lively and interactive style. Issues such as citizenship, sustainability and life skills are also addressed.

Safeside Education Co-ordinator Rob Hattersley said: "We are delighted that Midlands Co-op has so generously kitted out our convenience store. This is now enabling us to deliver important messages on restricted goods such as tobacco and alcohol, along with financial awareness, crime, and environmental issues, through a range of interactive activities which engage the children in experiential learning. For example, children on our Junior Citizen programme have to do some 'shopping' in the store for a neighbour. This is a good team activity, but on the shopping list is alcohol and tobacco. The children are refused sale at the till, and this stimulates a discussion on the reasons behind such restrictions."

Speaking on behalf of Midlands Co-op, Alison Cooper said: "The Co-operative has always led the way in demonstrating how retailers can play a proactive role in the community. We are very pleased to be able to support the delivery of such important messages on citizenship to children across the West Midlands."

Safeside relies on volunteer visitor guides. If you are interested in finding out more about this exciting opportunity, please visit www.safeside.org.uk, email safeside.volunteers@wmfs.net or phone 0121 380 6429 and ask for Janet Wilson.