Director-General’s foreword

The Department of Education, Training and Employment, in consultation with experts in child safety education and other child protection partners, has developed the Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum. The curriculum aims to assist students to recognise, react and report potentially dangerous situations.

Through the curriculum teachers will deliver important learning experiences, informed by current safety education research, that will assist students to better manage their own safety.

This Parent Guide, for parents of students in Years 3–6, is part of a range of resources supporting the curriculum and children’s safety. Inside are key safety messages, an outline of the lessons covered in this phase of the curriculum and tips for communicating with your children. In addition there are resources you can use at home and strategies to support children who report harmful situations.

I encourage you to talk to your children about what they are learning at school, including these safety messages and I invite you to use the information contained in this guide to support your conversations.

Annette Whitehead
Director-General
Department of Education, Training and Employment
Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum

Parent Guide: Years 3–6

The Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum has been developed to support Queensland schools’ delivery of key safety messages to students in Prep to Year 9. The curriculum has been developed by a working group comprising: Bruce and Denise Morcombe; the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian; officers from the Department of Education, Training and Employment; the Queensland Police Service; and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services together with a network of advisors involved in researching child abuse and its prevention.

Through a series of lessons, students will learn how to recognise, react and report when they are unsafe or find themselves in situations that can have a significant detrimental effect on their physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.

The curriculum aligns with the Health and Physical Education (HPE) Essential Learnings.

We encourage you to talk to your child about what they are learning in class. The following table outlines the content to be delivered. This will be supported by take-home postcards and activities completed at school that will assist you to know when specific content is being discussed.

Safety lessons for students in Years 3–6 will include:

| Recognise | • Safety clues and situational awareness  
|          | • Risk taking  
|          | • Rules, rights and responsibilities  
|          | • Private body parts (using anatomical names) and body ownership |  
| React    | • Problem solving  
|          | • Strategies |  
| Report   | • Safety helpers and persistence  
|          | • Online and mobile phone safety  
|          | • Review of personal safety using self-confidence skills |  

The content

Adults are ultimately responsible for keeping children safe, however, there is evidence that safety education can result in important learning with lasting positive benefits for students. Learning about safety can help students become more confident to take steps to avoid unsafe situations and tell someone if they are in situations that are unsafe.

**Recognise:** These lessons focus on students being alert to clues in their environment (e.g. sound clues like alarms, visual clues such as hazard signs or smell clues such as smoke) and to body clues (e.g. goose bumps or racing pulse) which may help alert them to unsafe situations. Students will learn about children’s rights and their right to be treated fairly. They will learn about the importance of rules and that these exist to keep them safe. Learning rules about private body parts is also included to develop understanding about inappropriate touching. Sadly, there is evidence that children as young as Prep-age are exposed to this sort of harm, and in the majority of cases, by someone they know. Students will use anatomical language for private body parts in lessons to remove the shame and embarrassment often associated with discussing genitalia. Using anatomical language (e.g. penis, vagina) can improve the confidence of children to report inappropriate touching and removes any confusion that nicknames can cause.
React: This part of the curriculum focuses on students developing strategies for responding to unsafe situations. They will have opportunities to problem solve real life scenarios and think about different ‘react’ options. They will also learn that breaking rules may be necessary in order to become safe (e.g. crossing the road to escape a menacing dog, saying “No” to an adult who is using inappropriate touch, breaking a window to escape a fire).

Report: A significant message of the curriculum is about reporting unsafe situations to an adult. Students are actively encouraged to become safe as quickly as possible if they can, and are reminded that it is necessary to report ‘unsafe’ incidents to an adult. This includes unsafe phone and online incidents (e.g. accessing rude or offensive materials online). Students nominate adult ‘safety helpers’ who they think will be prepared to listen to them and to give them the help they need. Students will identify a variety of adults including family and friends from inside and outside of their homes. They will be encouraged to let their safety helpers know they are nominated so that they are prepared to listen when approached by the student. Students are also taught to persevere until they get the help they need.

Talking with children about safety

Parents have an important role in reinforcing the messages being delivered in the curriculum. As a result of participating in the lessons, it is possible that your child will want to discuss safety issues or ask questions about safety. The following tips may assist you to talk with your child.

1. Ask your child what they have learnt about safety
   Asking what your child has been learning is a good way to start talking about safety and will help you gauge their current understanding. Some lessons include a take-home postcard with the key safety messages on them. These postcards indicate to families what is being discussed in school and are provided to prompt additional discussion at home. Finding out what your child knows about safety helps you to build on that knowledge. Encourage regular discussions with your child about these safety messages. This shows your child that you are interested and comfortable talking with them about safety and gives them opportunities to raise concerns.

2. Teachable moments
   Often opportunities or ‘teachable moments’ arise in our daily lives that can be used to start a discussion or are useful for considering recognise, react and report strategies. For example:
   - a television show about surf lifesavers could lead to a discussion about water safety
   - using a zebra crossing could lead to a conversation about how to safely cross the road
   - planning what your child should do if you are late collecting them from the pick up zone
   - giving advice on how to answer the phone or front door.

   By talking about safety in everyday situations, you will help your child to build knowledge and develop skills to recognise, react and report if they are in an unsafe situation.

3. Discuss ‘What ifs…’
   While you cannot predict when your child may find themselves in an unsafe situation, speaking with them about what they could do in a variety of situations can help them to be prepared. Using ‘What if…’ questions for a range of safety situations is useful. For example, ‘What if…’
   - there was a fire in the house?
   - they get lost at the local shopping centre?
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   - an adult asks them to help search for a lost dog?
4. Answering questions
Parents may find it useful to familiarise themselves with the websites and stories the teacher will be using during the safety lessons. These resources are listed in this parent guide. You may be able to access the story books used in the lessons through your school or local library. A selection of other safety resources have also been listed that may help you to discuss and answer questions about a wide range of safety topics including beach, fire and online safety as well as private body parts rules.

If you are uncomfortable talking about a topic, be honest with your child and tell them that even though you may feel embarrassed, you are willing to talk about the topic because it is important. And remember, parents don’t have to know all the answers. If you are unsure of the answer to a question, be honest and then find out together. What is most important is that your child knows they can approach you if they have a question about safety, now and in the future.

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Please note, where a book is unavailable, a teacher may substitute another book to teach the key safety message.

(The resources listed were current at the time of publication).

Books


http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Resources-Overview/Resources/For-Every-Child

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Websites

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