



LESSON PLAN

Lesson 2: Awareness in Action (Situational awareness & warning signs)

LESSON SUMMARY

In this lesson, students investigate how situational awareness helps young people notice early warning signs and are empowered to make safe, respectful choices when travelling independently. Students explore how environments, distractions, peer dynamics and emotions can affect awareness, and how recognising changes in a situation enables them to act early rather than react late. Through guided scenarios and reflection, students examine how protective behaviours support calm decision-making, boundary-setting and help-seeking before situations escalate. The lesson reinforces that safety is dynamic and can be actively managed through noticing, anticipating and responding to changes.

SEQUENCE TITLE: Protective Behaviours – Resilience, Respect and Safety on the Go



LEVEL

Years 7-8



LESSON NUMBER

2 of 8



LESSON LENGTH

60 minutes

CURRICULUM AREAS



LEARNING AREAS

· Health and Physical Education



CAPABILITIES

· Personal and Social Capability

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Creating a Safe Social Space for Participation and Learning



- In alignment with the Department of Education's **Respectful Relationships** (RR) teaching and learning resources:
- Establish class agreements that help all students and staff to feel safe and respected.
 - Notice, name and address sexist or inappropriate behaviour, utilising classroom agreements and school codes of conduct.
 - Be clear about what is appropriate to share in a group space and what is better suited to a private setting.
 - Provide content advice and help-seeking reminders to support the wellbeing of students when engaging with sensitive material prior to and at the beginning of lessons.
 - Remind students that they are not expected to disclose personal experiences and use protective interrupting to redirect students to a conversation with a teacher in a more private and safe space.
 - Let wellbeing staff know the lesson is running in case students seek support afterwards as discussions may bring up concerns about harassment, disclosures of gender-based violence, unsafe environments, or anxiety about travel.

Achievement Standard (Extract)



Health and Physical Education:

Students analyse health information and messages to propose and design strategies that can enhance their own and others' health, safety, relationships and wellbeing. They analyse the effectiveness of assertive communication strategies, protective behaviours and help-seeking strategies applied online and offline.

Personal and Social Capability:

Students identify, explain and reflect on strategies for responding to challenges and factors that influence success in responsible decision-making and working independently.

Victorian Curriculum Content Descriptions



LEARNING AREAS

Health and Physical Education

VC2HP8P02 Analyse the impact of changes and transitions, and devise strategies to support themselves and others through these changes.

VC2HP8P04 Examine the roles of respect, empathy, power and coercion in developing respectful relationships.

VC2HP8P06 Analyse factors that influence emotional responses and devise strategies to self-manage emotions.

VC2HP8P08 Refine protective behaviours and evaluate community resources to seek help for themselves and others.

VC2HP8P10 Plan and implement strategies, using health resources, to enhance their own and others' health, safety, relationships and wellbeing.

CAPABILITIES

Personal and Social Capability

VC2CP8S03 Strategies for reflecting on, using and further developing personal strengths to support themselves and others in different contexts; strategies for connecting personal interests to broader life such as careers.

VC2CP8S04 Strategies for improving confidence, adaptability and perseverance in response to challenges, including utilising personal strengths and appropriate coping strategies.

VC2CP8S05 Enablers of and barriers to improvements in working independently, making effective and responsible decisions and setting and achieving goals.

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PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- Basic understanding of safe travel behaviours (e.g., using crossings, staying behind the yellow line, listening for announcements).
- Experience noticing obvious hazards in everyday environments.
- Introductory awareness of respectful behaviour in public spaces.
- Some familiarity with the idea that feelings can signal safety or discomfort.
- Prior exposure to group discussions and scenario based learning.

VOCABULARY

Protective Behaviours – Skills and actions that help us keep ourselves and others safe in different situations.

Situational Awareness – Paying attention to what's happening around you so you can notice changes early.

Early Warning Signs – Clues from your body or environment that something might be changing or becoming unsafe.

Environment – The physical surroundings, such as lighting, noise, space, and time of day.

Behaviour – What people are doing, saying, or showing through their actions.

Boundaries – Limits we set to keep ourselves safe, comfortable, and in control.

Respectful Choices – Decisions that keep you safe while also considering the safety and comfort of others.

Distraction – Anything that takes your attention away from what's happening around you.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Whiteboard and markers.
- Student logbooks (Respectful Journeys Logbook)
- Highlighters or pens
- [Scenario Investigation Worksheets](#)
- [Situation awareness - Paired travel photos](#)
- [Summary of Photo Difference](#) Teacher reference sheet
- Four corner signs: *People, Environment, Behaviour, Feelings*.
- **Video:** [PTV - Look and listen around trams and trains](#)



LEARNING INTENTION

Students will learn how to notice changes in travel situations and use protective behaviours, like being aware of what's around them, to make safe and respectful decisions in the community.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can identify relevant changes in a travel situation and explain why they matter.
- I can describe what situational awareness is and what to pay attention to (people, environment, behaviour, feelings).
- I can recognise early warning signs in a scenario.
- I can suggest protective behaviours that keep myself and others safe and show respect.
- I can apply these skills in guided and independent scenarios.

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TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS

- Keep examples non judgemental and avoid blaming language; focus on skills, not mistakes.
- Some students may have lived experiences of unsafe situations - maintain sensitivity and provide opt out options.
- Use inclusive language that acknowledges diverse travel experiences (walking, public transport, riding, being driven).
- Model calm, practical responses rather than fear based messaging.

When inserting gendered discussion:

- Keep examples balanced and avoid reinforcing stereotypes.
- Frame discussion around social expectations rather than biological differences.
- Emphasise that safety experiences vary across individuals.
- Avoid implying one gender is always at risk or always responsible.

Enable

- Break learning into clear, manageable steps and explicitly model how to notice and interpret changes in a situation.
- Use visual prompts, structured frameworks and guided questioning to help students focus their attention on key elements.
- Encourage collaborative discussion before independent responses to build confidence and shared understanding.

Extend

- Challenge students to analyse how multiple changes interact and compound risk within a situation.
- Encourage students to justify their reasoning and prioritise which changes have the greatest impact on safety.
- Provide opportunities for students to apply situational awareness thinking to unfamiliar, complex or real-world contexts beyond the classroom examples.



USEFUL LINKS

[Royal Children's Hospital - Taking risks - teens and young people](#)

[Huffpost - 'Stranger Danger' Doesn't Cut It Anymore.](#)

[Victoria Police - Staying Safe in Public](#)

[Safe Transport Victoria - Get on board with Kindness](#)

[Yarra Trams - Safety - On Trams and Stops](#)

[Track Safe Education - Rail safety for schools - Lesson 1](#)

[Track Safe Education - Teacher resources - Year 7&8](#)

[Vic Dept. of Education: Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Level 7-8](#)

Topic #1 – Emotional Literacy

Activity #1: 'Emotions' vocabulary

Activity #2: Hidden emotions.

Topic #4 – Problem solving

Activity #1: Tree change!

Activity #2: Introducing assertiveness.

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ASSESSMENT

- Observing student responses during the photo analysis (noticing changes, explaining impact).
- Listening to partner and whole class discussions for understanding of early warning signs and protective behaviours.
- Checking student movement choices during The Situation Shuffle and their reasoning.
- Reviewing Scenario Investigation worksheets for ability to identify changes, interpret risk, and propose protective responses.
- Exit reflection through "My Journey Checkpoints" to assess transfer of learning to real world contexts.



LEARNING CONTINUUM

Focus: Developing situational awareness when travelling; recognising changes, identifying risk, and applying protective behaviours to support personal and shared safety.

Learning Continuum	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Students explore how being aware of their surroundings helps them stay safe when travelling. They learn to notice changes in travel situations, recognise when something feels unsafe or different, and practise choosing protective behaviours that support their own safety and the safety of others.	Students identify a small number of obvious changes in a travel situation with support (e.g. more people, noise, unfamiliar behaviour). They begin to recognise that changes can affect safety and can name one simple protective action (e.g. move away, find help).	Students describe several changes in a travel situation and explain how these changes might increase or reduce risk. They make simple connections between the situation, how it feels, and an appropriate protective behaviour. They begin to justify their choices.	Students confidently analyse changing travel situations and explain how multiple factors affect safety. They independently select and justify protective behaviours and show awareness of how their actions support the safety, respect and wellbeing of others in shared travel spaces.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Organising Element	Action	Insufficient Evidence	Quality Criteria		
Situational awareness.	1. Identify changes in a travel situation	1.0 No response or identifies no change.	1.1 Names one obvious change when prompted (e.g. weather, number of people).	1.2 Describes one or two changes using details from the scenario.	1.3 Identifies multiple changes and explains how the situation has shifted.
Risk recognition.	2. Explain how changes affect safety or risk	2.0 No link made between change and safety.	2.1 States that a change makes the situation safer or less safe.	2.2 Explains how a specific change increases or reduces risk.	2.3 Explains how different changes interact to affect risk.

* continued overleaf

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ASSESSMENT RUBRIC (Cont'd)

Organising Element	Action	Insufficient Evidence	Quality Criteria		
Protective behaviours.	3. Suggest a protective response to a changing situation	3.0 No action suggested or response is unsafe.	3.1 Names one simple protective action.	3.2 Selects a protective action that matches the situation.	3.3 Justifies a protective action based on the change identified.
Awareness of body cues and feelings.	4. Recognise feelings or body cues linked to awareness	4.0 No feelings or body cues identified.	4.1 Names a feeling or body cue (e.g. nervous, distracted).	4.2 Explains what the feeling or cue might signal	4.3 Links body cues to decision-making in the situation.
Personal and social responsibility.	5. Consider how awareness supports safety and respect for others	5.0 No reference to others.	5.1 States that being aware helps others stay safe.	5.2 Explains how their choice affects another person.	5.3 Explains how awareness supports shared safety and respectful behaviour in the community.

Structure of lesson:



INQUIRY QUESTION: How can being aware and noticing changes in a situation help us stay safe and respectful when travelling?

1

LESSON PHASE: Introduction (Hook)



TIMING: 10 mins

Show video: [PTV - Look and listen around trams and trains](#)

Ask: What changes in our surroundings does the video ask us to notice, and how could missing those changes increase risk when travelling?

Explain: "Today we're starting with a challenge. I'm going to show you a series of paired photos of everyday travel moments - nothing dramatic, nothing unusual. But in each one, something changes. Your job is to notice any changes in each travel situation and raise your hand as soon as you see one."

Display the *Situation Awareness paired travel photos* provided - one at a time.

Show the original scene first, and then the second scene with one or more changes (e.g. time of day, who is nearby, behaviour of others, physical environment).

Choose different students to describe one change they noticed.

Share the images side by side and discuss any further observations or questions students may have about the scene.

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Write each change on the board as it is identified.

Refer to Summary of [Photo Difference Teacher reference sheet](#) provided for noted changes.

Brainstorm: How might each change make the situation feel **safer or less safe** for someone travelling there?

Additional prompts for deeper reflection and discussion about gender and vulnerability perceptions, and social expectations around confidence:

- Would this situation feel the same for everyone?
- Might different people experience this change differently?

Summarise: Small changes can tell us a lot. When we notice them early, we make better decisions, keep ourselves safe and show respect to the people around us. Today you proved you can spot some of those clues – even some very subtle ones.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide students with their own copy of the photos so they can see them side by side.
- Allow students to work with a partner to discuss and review the photos separately.
- Highlight key areas of the image to guide attention.

Extend

- Ask students to create their own "travel change moment" scenario for the class to decode later.

2

LESSON PHASE: Explicit Teaching & Modelled Learning



TIMING: 15 mins

Explain: *Protective behaviours* are the skills, actions and attitudes that help us keep ourselves and others safe – physically, emotionally, socially and online. They are about confidence, awareness and knowing what to do when something doesn't feel right.

Protective behaviours help us to:

- Notice early warning signs.
- Make safe and respectful choices.
- Set boundaries.
- Seek help when needed.
- Look out for others in positive and appropriate ways.

Emphasise: When we travel or spend time in the community, situations are not fixed. Something that feels safe at the start can change quickly. Safety isn't just about following rules – it's about paying attention to what's happening around you and being ready to act if things change.

This is where **situational awareness** becomes important.

Situational awareness means actively noticing:

1. **The people** around you – how many, where they are.
2. **The environment** you are in – location, lighting, noise, space and exits.
3. **The behaviour** of people – both yours and others.
4. **Your body cues** including feelings – unsure, uncomfortable, rushed, anxious or distracted.

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Discuss: *Situational awareness* is a powerful protective behaviour. It helps you stay connected to what's happening around you as you walk, ride, catch public transport or spend time with friends. You are constantly picking up clues about how a situation is shifting.

People who notice these clues early can make confident, informed choices. They are better able to protect themselves, show respect for others, and move through the world with greater independence because they understand what's going on and know how to respond to reduce any risks to themselves and others.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide students with a short checklist or visual prompt showing what to notice (people, environment, behaviour, feelings).
- Allow students to work with a partner to generate and refine inquiry questions before sharing.

Extend

- Ask students to prioritise which theme (environment, people, behaviour, digital distraction, time/place) has the biggest impact on their own safety and explain why.

3

LESSON PHASE: Guided Practice



TIMING: 15 mins

Play *The Situation Shuffle* game.

Place four signs in the corners of the room labelled:

1. **People**
2. **Environment**
3. **Behaviour**
4. **Feelings**

Ask students to stand in the middle of the room.

Explain: When we travel, situations are not fixed. Even if something feels safe at the start, it can change quickly.

Point to each corner and explain:

1. **People** = who is around you, how many there are and where they are positioned.
2. **Environment** = amount of lighting, noise level, space available, time of day, location.
3. **Behaviour** = what people are doing and saying, including you.
4. **Feelings** = your gut instincts or emotional shifts that can show in your body reactions.

Read out the *Base Travel Scenario* provided and the situation changes one at a time.

Explain that after each change, students are to move to the corner of the room that, in their opinion, best matches the most significant change mentioned.

Before reading each situation change, ask 1–2 students to explain in their own words:

- What early warning sign might they notice?
- What, if anything, could they do to help maximise their safety now?

After each scenario change, consider asking:

- Would this feel like a bigger early warning sign for some people than others?
- Would your response change depending on who you are travelling with?
- Would your response change depending on your gender, age or if you had a disability?

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Engage students in a pair reflection after all changes have been read:

1. Which change felt like the biggest early warning sign? Why?
2. What Protective Behaviour made you feel most safe?

Reinforce: Protective behaviours are about early, confident choices - not waiting until a situation becomes dangerous. Changing direction, crossing early, creating space and trusting your gut are smart, proactive decisions.

Summarise: We've just seen how situations can shift quickly and safety isn't fixed. Early warning signs are clues that things might be becoming unsafe. The earlier we notice them, the more choices we have. Protective Behaviours are about acting early, calmly and respectfully to manage risk.

4

LESSON PHASE: Independent Application



TIMING: 10 mins

Scenario Investigation

Distribute copies of the Scenario Investigation worksheets provided.

Explain to students that their goal is to practise noticing any changes, reflect on how these changes affect their safety and choose calm, protective responses.

Students can work individually, in pairs or in small groups and look through each scenario.

Circulate and check for understanding and reasoning.

Conclude the activity by drawing attention to patterns across scenarios.

Connect back to the inquiry question - *How can being aware and noticing changes in a situation help us stay safe and respectful when travelling?*

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Use a "One Change-at-a-Time" scaffold where students identify just one change first, then build up to noticing multiple changes once they feel confident.
- Provide small cards labelled People / Environment / Behaviour / Feelings. Students place a card on each scenario to show what changed before explaining why it matters.

Extend

- Invite students to create an additional "change" for one scenario and explain how it would shift the level of risk and the protective behaviours needed.
- Encourage students to connect scenarios to any real world travel moments, identifying where similar changes might appear in their own journeys.

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LESSON PHASE: Reflection / Review



TIMING: 10 mins

My Journey Checkpoints

Draw a line across the board with "School" written at one end and "Home" written at the other end.

As a whole class, each student reflects on their own familiar journey that they take to and from school.

Ask students to identify and share 1 personal awareness checkpoint (i.e. a place or moment where they should pause, look around and check in with themselves).

Write these along the continuum on the board, approximately where they would occur in relation to the distance from 'Home' or 'School'.

Students may also share protective action they could use if something changes at each checkpoint.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide a "Journey Template" map with simple icons (bus stop, crossing, shops, quiet street) so students can choose checkpoints rather than generate them from scratch.
- Offer a set of checkpoint prompts such as "Where do you usually slow down?", "Where do you check traffic?", "Where do you feel most distracted?" to help students identify meaningful moments.

Extend

- Ask students to map two journeys (e.g., morning vs afternoon, or school → home vs home → school) and compare how checkpoints differ depending on time, people, or environment.
- Challenge students to identify a checkpoint where others might need support, and describe how they could act respectfully and safely in that moment.