



LESSON PLAN

Lesson 3: Switched on to Safety (Digital devices & distractions)

LESSON SUMMARY

In this lesson, students explore how digital devices can affect awareness, judgement and safety during everyday travel. They examine how risk can increase when attention is diverted by phones, headphones, notifications or social pressure, and how this can compete with real-world cues such as movement, sound, signals and other people. The lesson emphasises that digital devices are not "bad" or forbidden, but that safety depends on making context-aware decisions about when and how to use them.

Students consider how their choices impact their own safety and the safety and comfort of others in shared public spaces. The lesson focuses on respectful travel behaviours, including managing distractions, responding to peer pressure, recognising risky moments, and using protective strategies such as pausing, stopping or refocusing attention. Students reflect on their own digital habits and identify practical ways to balance connection with situational awareness during daily travel.

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



LEVEL

Years 7-8



LESSON NUMBER

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

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.

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

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

VC2CP8O02 The nature of human rights and responsibilities and how respect for human rights and responsibilities contributes to social cohesion.

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PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students may:

- regularly use mobile phones and headphones.
- understand basic pedestrian and travel safety rules.
- have explored independence and situational awareness in previous lessons or discussions.
- have experienced or witnessed near-miss moments involving digital distraction, even if they don't label them as risky.

VOCABULARY

Awareness – noticing what is happening around you in the real world.

Distraction – anything that pulls attention away from what matters for safety.

Protective behaviours – choices we make to reduce risk and keep ourselves and others safe.

Reaction time – how quickly you respond to something happening.

Risk – the chance that something unsafe could happen.

Attention – what your brain is focused on at a moment in time.

Peer pressure – feeling pushed by others to act in a certain way.

Respectful travel – moving safely while considering other people sharing the space.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- White board and markers
- Student Respectful Journeys Logbook
- Videos:
 - [PTV - Look and listen around trams and trains](#)
 - [Transport Victoria - Minimise distractions around trains](#)
 - [Yarra Trams - CCTV Pedestrian Near Misses](#)
 - [National Geographic - Walking While Texting | Crowd Control](#)
 - [The Dangers Of Text Walking - BTN High](#)



LEARNING INTENTION

Students will understand how digital devices can distract them when travelling and learn how to make safer and more respectful choices in real-life situations.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can explain how phones and headphones change attention and reaction time.
- I can identify risky and safer digital behaviours in different travel contexts.
- I can describe at least one protective behaviour I can use while travelling.
- I can reflect on how peer pressure can influence digital decisions.

TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS

- Avoid blame or judgement — focus on decisions, not people.
- Acknowledge that phones are useful and important; the lesson is about when and how to use them safely.
- Be mindful that some students may rely on phones for safety or communication with caregivers.
- Encourage respectful listening during discussions, especially around peer pressure scenarios.
- Use real, local travel examples to increase relevance and engagement.

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Enable

- Break complex ideas about attention and distraction into clear, relatable concepts and model the thinking process step by step.
- Provide flexible ways for students to demonstrate understanding, allowing thinking time and collaborative talk before independent responses.

Extend

- Encourage students to analyse the cumulative impact of distraction across different contexts and levels of independence.
- Provide opportunities for students to transfer their thinking to emerging technologies or unfamiliar travel situations, deepening their capacity to apply protective behaviours independently.



USEFUL LINKS

[TED Ideas Studio - The Distracted Mind](#)

[BTN - Should You Use Location-Sharing Apps?](#)

[ABC News - Texting while walking increases the chances of a fall, study finds](#)

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

Topic #3 – Positive coping

Activity #1: What is self-talk?

Activity #3: Building skills in positive self-talk.

Topic #4 – Problem solving

Activity #1: Tree change!

Activity #2: Introducing assertiveness.



ASSESSMENT

- Student contributions during discussions and guided practice.
 - Completion of the personal digital safety experiment reflection.
 - Observation of reasoning during the Safety Focus Line activity.
 - Completion of the Decision–Impact–Choice table.
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LEARNING CONTINUUM

Focus: Understanding how digital devices affect awareness during travel and practising protective behaviours that support safe, respectful shared travel.

Learning Continuum	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Students explore how staying safe when travelling requires managing attention and making respectful digital choices in shared spaces. They learn to recognise how digital distractions affect awareness, understand why attention matters for safety, and practise applying protective behaviours when phones or headphones compete with real-world cues.	Students identify simple examples of digital distraction during travel with support (e.g. looking at a phone while walking). They show emerging awareness that attention can shift away from surroundings and begin to notice when this might create risk.	Students describe how digital devices affect awareness and reaction time in common travel situations. They explain why distraction increases risk and apply simple protective behaviours (e.g. stopping before using a phone, pausing music) to reduce risk for themselves and others.	Students confidently explain how managing digital attention supports safety, respect and inclusion in shared travel spaces. They independently justify protective choices in complex or pressured situations, showing awareness of how their decisions impact both their own safety and the safety of others.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Organising Element	Action	Insufficient Evidence	Quality Criteria		
Awareness and attention in travel environments.	1. Identify how digital devices affect awareness when travelling.	1.0 No response or response unrelated to awareness or devices.	1.1 States that phones or headphones affect attention without explanation.	1.2 Describes how a digital device shifts attention away from surroundings in a travel situation.	1.3 Explains how attention shift increases risk by reducing awareness of people, vehicles or signals.
Risk recognition and safety.	2. Describe how distraction changes risk during travel.	2.0 No response or describes risk inaccurately.	2.1 Identifies that distraction can be unsafe without linking to consequences.	2.2 Describes one or more risks caused by delayed awareness or reaction time.	2.3 Explains how distraction increases risk for self and others in specific travel contexts.
Protective behaviours.	3. Select appropriate protective behaviours for digital distractions.	3.0 No protective behaviour identified.	3.1 Names a protective behaviour without linking it to the situation.	3.2 Matches a protective behaviour to a specific travel scenario.	3.3 Justifies why a chosen protective behaviour reduces risk in that situation.

* continued overleaf

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ASSESSMENT RUBRIC (Cont'd)

Organising Element	Action	Insufficient Evidence	Quality Criteria		
Decision-making and reasoning.	4. Explain decision-making when priorities compete.	4.0 No explanation of decision or priorities.	4.1 Identifies competing priorities (e.g. phone vs safety).	4.2 Explains how one priority affects safety decisions.	4.3 Justifies a decision by weighing attention, safety and context.
Personal and social capability.	5. Describe how digital decisions impact others in shared spaces.	5.0 No reference to others.	5.1 States that others could be affected.	5.2 Describes how distraction may affect another person in a shared space.	5.3 Explains how responsible digital choices support safety, respect or inclusion for others.

Structure of lesson:



INQUIRY QUESTION: How do digital devices impact our awareness and influence the decisions we make when travelling?



LESSON PHASE: Introduction (Hook)



TIMING: 10 mins

Explain: 'Almost' moments!

"You're about to watch three very short clips. None of them show accidents. But all of them show moments where something could have or almost did go wrong. Your job isn't to judge anyone. Your job is to notice what attention was missing."

Show the following videos.

Play all three back-to-back - No pausing; No commentary.

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

[Transport Victoria - Minimise distractions around trains](#)

[Yarra Trams - CCTV Pedestrian Near Misses](#)

Ask:

- What did all three videos have in common?
- Did you think anyone meant to be unsafe?
- What made these moments risky?

Explain: In each clip, the danger didn't suddenly appear. It was already there.

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Discuss:

- What took attention away?
- What signs or signals were easy to miss?
- Where do you think eyes, ears, or attention were focused instead?

Check responses for mentions of phones, headphones, conversations, rushing, assumptions.

Summarise: Phones and headphones don't cause danger by themselves. They change what your brain is paying attention to. Around roads, trams and buses, attention is safety.

Emphasise: Our attention is a limited resource. When we split it, something always gets less attention. This happens when we use digital devices while travelling.

Reinforce this by showing the following video: [National Geographic - Walking While Texting | Crowd Control](#)

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide a short sentence stem to support responses (e.g. "The risk increased because attention moved from ____ to ____.")
- Allow students to note or draw what was missed in the videos before sharing verbally.

Extend

- Ask students to identify one moment where a different attention choice could have prevented the near miss.
- Challenge students to link one video to a real place they use (e.g. tram stop, crossing, station).

2

LESSON PHASE: Explicit Teaching & Modelled Learning



TIMING: 15 mins

Explain: Your brain can only properly focus on one thing at a time. When you switch tasks, your brain doesn't split attention - it switches it. That switch takes time. Sometimes it's less than a second. Around roads, trams and buses, that delay matters.

Write on the board and say clearly: *Distraction = delayed awareness.*

Emphasise: Phones and headphones are designed to pull your attention. Notifications, messages, videos and music don't just sit in the background - they compete for priority.

Watch video to consolidate this point: [The Dangers Of Text Walking - BTN High](#)

Ask: (remember - no name, no blame.)

- Who has seen someone walk into others while on their phone?
- Who has seen people block pathways or doors without realising?

Summarise: When we use digital devices while travelling, three things change:

1. Phones change what we notice - our attention shifts from the environment to the screen.
2. Distraction reduces reaction time - we respond slower to people, vehicles, and dangers.
3. Risk increases when digital attention competes with real-world cues.

Write this question on the board: *So how can we stay safe, while staying connected?*

Explain: Protective behaviours aren't about banning phones or never using music. They're about making active choices based on where you are and what you're doing.

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Brainstorm answers and **record** examples on the board.

Examples might include:

- pausing music when crossing roads.
- checking surroundings before replying to a text.
- stepping to the side of the footpath and remaining stationary before using a phone.

Finish with this message:

Staying connected is important. Staying aware is essential.

Safe and respectful travel means knowing when to prioritise each one.

Explain:

- Awareness includes what's happening around us, not just online.
- Protective behaviours help us choose when and how to use phones.
- Respectful travel means being aware of other people sharing the space.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Use a simple visual (traffic light or pause/play icon) to represent *full attention vs split attention*.
- Provide a short list of example protective behaviours for students to choose from during brainstorming.

Extend

- Ask students to explain why reaction time matters more in travel spaces than in classrooms or at home.

3

LESSON PHASE: Guided Practice



TIMING: 25 mins

Digital Decision Snapshots

Explain: Small groups of students will act out one short freeze frame moment each, where a digital decision needs to be made.

Each group will act out one 'snapshot' each before other groups discuss the snapshot questions.

Allocate one of the following 'snapshots' to each group.

1. Phone vibrates while riding a bike on a shared path.
2. Headphone music volume blocks surrounding sound on a train.
3. Looking at maps while riding an e-scooter.
4. Message arrives while walking, asking for live location.
5. Friend pressures you to reply to a text immediately.

Explain that after each group acts out their snapshot, other groups answer the following questions:

- What decision needs to be made right now?
- What are the competing priorities?
- What might happen to your own safety when your attention shifts?
- Who else could be affected if you get distracted here?
- What respectful (protective behaviour) would fit this moment?

Record thinking on the board using a **Decision–Impact–Choice** table.

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DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Assign clear roles within each group (actor, safety observer, speaker) to support participation.
- Allow groups to rehearse their freeze frame once before presenting to build confidence.

Extend

- Ask students to add a second layer to their snapshot (e.g. peer pressure, rushing, crowded space).
- Challenge students to predict who else might be impacted by the decision?

4

LESSON PHASE: Independent Application



TIMING: 10 mins

Mark a line across the room and label it *The Safety Focus Line*.

Alternatively: Students can draw this line in their *Travel Journey Logbooks*.

For example:

Focus on what's around me ←-----→ **Focus on my phone**

Explain that you will read digital behaviours to the class.

Instruct students to position themselves on the line or place a marker on the line in their logbooks that matches what they believe,

Instruct students to place themselves or a mark on the line in silence.

Once complete, allow students to share their decision with a class member next to them.

Encourage students to briefly share their reasoning for their decision before reading out the next distraction example.

Select and **share** a mix of examples from the following list.

Create any different or unique examples that may be relevant to the students.

Encourage students to create and share some of their own distraction scenarios that aren't listed.

a) Lower risk / safer end examples

- Checking a message after stopping well away from traffic.
- Sharing live location with a parent before starting a trip.
- Using maps while standing still, then putting the phone away.
- Pausing music when crossing roads or platforms.
- Recording a voice note after getting on the bus.
- Sending a quick "I've arrived" text once seated.
- Live location sharing with a friend.

b) Middle / "It depends" examples (great discussion starters)

- Wearing one earbud on a quiet street.
- Checking notifications while waiting behind a safety barrier.
- Filming friends while standing still at a tram stop.
- Using noise-cancelling headphones in a familiar area.
- Looking at a message while walking with friends who are alert.

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c) Higher risk examples

- Replying to a message while crossing a road.
- Filming content while moving near traffic.
- Watching videos while walking on a platform.
- Using maps while riding a bike or e-scooter.
- Wearing headphones so loud you can't hear bells or warnings.

d) Peer pressure–focused scenarios

- Friends say, "Just reply, it'll take two seconds," while walking near traffic.
- A friend asks you to film a video of them while moving through a station.
- Group chat blowing up and friends expect fast replies at the tram stop.
- Friends tease you for taking your headphones out at crossings.
- A mate says, "Everyone does it — it's fine," about scrolling while walking.

Follow-up with the following questions:

1. Where would you stand if you were alone?
2. Where would you stand when others are watching?

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide a visual cue on the line (icons for *safe / risky*) to help decision-making.

Extend

- Ask students to shift position when considering the same behaviour in a different location (e.g. quiet street vs station).
- Challenge students to justify when a "middle" position could move safer with one small change.

5 LESSON PHASE: Reflection / Review



TIMING: 5 mins

My Digital Safety Experiments

Students design a short *personal experiment* to try over the next week:

- One digital habit to pause or change while walking, biking or riding e-scooters/e-bikes.
- One situation where stopping is safest before using a device.
- One question or awareness check they'll do before picking up a phone or device.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide a simple template with sentence starters (e.g. "This week I will try...").
- Allow students to choose one travel situation they experience most often.

Extend

- Ask students to include how they'll check if the experiment worked (e.g. fewer near misses, feeling calmer).
- Challenge students to design an experiment that also improves safety for others, not just themselves.