



LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Stand Up, Speak Up (Peer influence & personal boundaries)

LESSON SUMMARY

In this lesson, students explore how peer influence can shape the choices they make when travelling in shared spaces. They learn that influence can come through direct comments or through subtle, unspoken pressure, and that it can guide behaviour in both positive and negative ways. Students consider how these pressures can affect their comfort, confidence and decision making, especially when their personal space or safety feels challenged.

The lesson reinforces that everyone has the right to feel safe and the ability to set clear boundaries. A central focus is developing assertive responses - calm, confident statements or actions that communicate needs and protect personal space. Students practise recognising moments when they might stay silent and explore how to respond in ways that are respectful, protective and realistic.

Throughout the lesson, students build the language and strategies they need to recognise peer influence, make considered choices and use positive, assertive communication to support safer, more respectful travel environments.

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



LEVEL

Years 7-8



LESSON NUMBER

4 of 8



LESSON LENGTH

60 minutes

CURRICULUM AREAS



LEARNING AREAS

· Health and Physical Education



CAPABILITIES

· Personal and Social Capability

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Stand Up, Speak Up (Peer influence & personal boundaries)

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

VC2HP8P03 Examine how roles, decision-making, and levels of power, coercion and control within relationships can be influenced by gender stereotypes.

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

VC2HP8P07 Explain and apply skills and strategies to communicate assertively and respectfully when seeking, giving or denying consent across multiple settings (including online and offline).

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

CAPABILITIES

Personal and Social Capability

VC2CP8S02 Strategies for peer support and empathetic communication when others encounter challenge or adversity.

VC2CP8S03 Strategies for reflecting on, using and further developing personal strengths to support themselves and others in different contexts.

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

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Stand Up, Speak Up (Peer influence & personal boundaries)



PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students:

- understand basic travel safety expectations in public spaces (e.g. giving space, waiting in line, moving safely through crowds).
- have explored situational awareness and protective behaviours in earlier lessons in the unit.
- recognise that peer groups can influence behaviour, even if they have not yet examined how subtle that influence can be.
- have begun discussing rights, respect and responsibility in shared community spaces.

VOCABULARY

Peer influence – The way people your own age can affect what you think, say or do.

Assertive – Communicating clearly and calmly to express your needs or boundaries without being rude or aggressive.

Passive – Not speaking up or taking action, even when you feel uncomfortable.

Personal boundary – The physical or emotional space that helps you feel safe and comfortable.

Positive pressure – Encouraging others to make safe, respectful or responsible choices.

Boundary setting – Clearly communicating what you are okay with and what you are not.

Nudge – A subtle influence that guides your behaviour without directly telling you what to do.

Respectful communication – Using calm, clear language that considers your needs and the needs of others.

Social Norms – Shared expectations about how people should behave in a given group or situation

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Whiteboard and markers
- Respectful Journeys Logbook
- [Positive Pressure Language Bank](#) Sheet
- [Using Positive Pressure](#) Worksheet
- [Peer Influence Scenarios](#) worksheet
- Videos:
 - [Raising Children Network - Peer pressure or influence: teen and parent perspectives](#)
 - [Peer Group Influence \(Explained in 3 Minutes\) - The Helpful Professor](#)



LEARNING INTENTION

Students will investigate how peers can influence their behaviour and personal boundaries when travelling, and practise assertive ways to stay safe and respectful in shared spaces.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can explain how peer influence can affect my choices in public spaces.
- I can identify the difference between passive, assertive and aggressive responses.
- I can use clear, respectful language to protect my personal space.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Stand Up, Speak Up (Peer influence & personal boundaries)

TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS

- Establish strong classroom agreements before discussing gender norms, peer pressure and personal space to maintain psychological safety.
- Reinforce "no name, no blame" throughout discussions, particularly when examining gender expectations or group behaviour.
- Be mindful that some students may have experienced boundary violations or exclusion; ensure no one is required to share personal experiences.
- Clarify that exploring social expectations is about understanding influences, not criticising any group or identity.
- Provide opt-in participation structures (e.g. writing before sharing, anonymous examples).
- Monitor any role-plays carefully to ensure assertive responses remain respectful and do not become performative or aggressive.
- Alert wellbeing staff that boundary-related discussions are occurring in case students seek follow-up support.

Enable

- Break down abstract concepts such as social norms, influence and assertiveness into relatable, real-life examples that connect to students' everyday experiences.
- Provide structured scaffolds for practising assertive language so students can build confidence gradually before applying skills independently.

Extend

- Encourage students to critically examine how gender norms and group dynamics shape power, confidence and decision-making in social situations.
- Provide opportunities for students to transfer their learning beyond travel contexts, applying boundary-setting and positive influence skills to broader peer and community situations.



USEFUL LINKS

[Transport Victoria - Smoother journeys on Smarter Roads Kids Helpline - Peer pressure](#) (video)

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

Topic #2 - Personal and cultural strengths

Activity #3: Using strengths.

Activity #4: How hate speech hurts and what you can do about it.

Topic #4 - Problem solving

Activity #2: Introducing assertiveness.

Topic #8 - Positive gender relationships

Activity #1: What is interpersonal gender-based violence?

Activity #2: Getting clear about consent and the law.

Activity #4: Support for peers affected by forms of gender-based violence.



ASSESSMENT

- Observe students' engagement and contributions during discussions about peer influence and personal boundaries.
- Review students' reasoning when identifying pressures, boundaries and outcomes in scenario based tasks.
- Note students' use of calm, clear and respectful language when practising assertive communication.
- Review the completed Positive Influence Plan to confirm understanding of protective behaviours and boundary-setting.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Stand Up, Speak Up (Peer influence & personal boundaries)



LEARNING CONTINUUM

Focus: Understanding how peer influence shapes travel choices, and practising assertive communication to protect safety, personal space and respectful relationships.

| Learning Continuum | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 |
|---|---|---|--|
| Students explore how peer influence and social expectations shape behaviour in shared travel spaces. They learn to recognise spoken and unspoken pressure, understand the difference between passive and assertive responses, and practise using assertive communication as a protective behaviour. | Students identify simple examples of peer pressure or subtle influence in familiar travel situations. They recognise that staying silent can ignore discomfort and begin to identify basic assertive responses. | Students describe how peer influence affects decision-making in travel contexts. They distinguish between passive and assertive responses and explain how assertiveness protects personal space and supports respectful interactions. | Students confidently analyse how peer influence and social norms can increase or reduce risk in shared travel environments. They independently construct and justify assertive responses in socially pressured situations, demonstrating leadership, inclusion and shared responsibility for community safety. |

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

| Organising Element | Action | Insufficient Evidence | Quality Criteria | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| Understanding of Peer Influence. | 1. Identify how peer influence affects travel choices. | 1.0 No response or unrelated response. | 1.1 Names an example of peer pressure in a travel situation. | 1.2 Describes how peer influence shapes behaviour in a specific scenario. | 1.3 Explains how peer influence can increase or reduce safety in shared spaces. |
| Understanding of Assertive Communication. | 2. Describe how assertive responses protect personal space. | 2.0 No response or inaccurate description. | 2.1 Identifies an example of an assertive response. | 2.2 Describes how an assertive response protects comfort or boundaries. | 2.3 Explains how assertive communication protects safety while maintaining respect. |
| Application to Travel Scenarios. | 3. Construct an assertive response to peer pressure. | 3.0 No response or unrealistic response. | 3.1 Suggests a response without clear boundary. | 3.2 Constructs a clear and relevant assertive statement. | 3.3 Justifies how the response influences group behaviour and supports shared safety. |
| Understanding of Personal Rights & Boundaries. | 4. Explain the right to personal space in shared environments. | 4.0 No explanation or unrelated answer. | 4.1 States that people have a right to feel safe. | 4.2 Describes how personal boundaries apply in travel situations. | 4.3 Explains how respecting boundaries promotes fairness and inclusion. |

* continued overleaf

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Stand Up, Speak Up (Peer influence & personal boundaries)

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC (Cont'd)

| Organising Element | Action | Insufficient Evidence | Quality Criteria | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|---|--|
| Personal and Social Capability. | 5. Propose a positive pressure strategy to support safer behaviour. | 5.0 No strategy suggested. | 5.1 Suggests a general idea for speaking up. | 5.2 Describes a realistic positive pressure response. | 5.3 Explains how their response can shift group norms and strengthen community responsibility. |

Structure of lesson:



INQUIRY QUESTION: How do social norms and peer group influence impact our travel choices, and how can assertive choices help us protect our safety and personal space?

1

LESSON PHASE: Introduction (Hook)



TIMING: 5 mins

Begin the lesson by showing the video: [Raising Children Network - Peer pressure or influence: teen and parent perspectives](#)

Explain that students will use what they have just watched to start thinking about how *influence* shows up in everyday situations, including when travelling.

Think, Pair, Share

Ask students to reflect silently for a moment, then discuss the following question with a partner:

1. Have you ever felt like you needed to do something because your friends were doing it? What happened?

Remind the group: no names, no blame. The focus is on the situation, not the people.

After pairs have shared, invite 2–3 students to share their reflections with the class.

Explain that together, we will explore how peer group influence can shape our:

1. personal preferences
2. habits
3. values
4. decision-making

specially in travel and shared space situations.

Clarify that influence is not always negative. It can be helpful, unhelpful, subtle or direct.

Ask students to consider: What are some ways you can tell if you're being influenced positively versus negatively by your peers?

Allow a few students to share initial ideas.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Stand Up, Speak Up (Peer influence & personal boundaries)

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide sentence starters such as:
 - "A time I felt influenced was..."
 - "Positive influence looks like..."
 - "Negative influence feels like..."
- Allow students to jot down their thoughts before sharing aloud to support those who need processing time.

Extend

- Ask students to compare how peer influence might appear differently for different genders.
- Encourage students to analyse how online environments (group chats, trends, challenges, influencers) shape expectations about behaviour in public and travel spaces.

2

LESSON PHASE: Explicit Teaching & Modelled Learning



TIMING: 15 mins

Watch video: [Peer Group Influence \(Explained in 3 Minutes\) - The Helpful Professor](#)

Explain that peer influence is the way people of similar age - friends, classmates, teammates - can shape our choices. Sometimes this happens through what people say, and sometimes it's a quiet nudge we feel without anyone saying anything at all.

Provide examples:

Peer influence through words:

- "Come on, everyone else is doing it."
- "Don't be boring."
- "It's fine, just do it."

Peer influence through subtle nudges:

- Everyone starts crossing before the light changes.
- A group squeezes into a crowded space and you feel expected to follow.
- Friends laugh at something that made you uncomfortable, so you pretend it's fine.

Explain that influence can be:

- Positive - encouraging safe, respectful behaviour.
- Negative - pushing us to ignore our comfort or safety.

Ask students:

- Why can it feel hard to act differently from the group?
- What makes it easier or harder to speak up?

Record key ideas on the board.

Explain that when we feel pressured - whether through words or subtle nudges - we usually have two choices:

- Do nothing (stay silent, go along with it, ignore our discomfort)
- Respond assertively (speak clearly and calmly about what we need)

Emphasise that assertive responses are the safest and most respectful option because they:

- protect our personal space.
- communicate our boundaries early.
- reduce misunderstandings.
- help others know how to treat us respectfully.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Stand Up, Speak Up (Peer influence & personal boundaries)

Provide simple modelled examples:

- "I'm going to wait for the light."
- "I need a bit more space, thanks."
- "I'm not comfortable with that."

Explain that assertiveness is a protective behaviour. It helps us act before a situation becomes unsafe or overwhelming.

Ask students to reflect quietly: *Can you think of a time when you stayed silent even though you felt uncomfortable? What influenced your choice?*

Allow students to record their thoughts in their Respectful Journeys Logbook.

Explain that everyone has a right to feel safe and comfortable in shared spaces - on paths, buses, trains and in crowds. Protecting your personal space is not rude; it is responsible.

Reinforce:

- You are allowed to move away.
- You are allowed to speak up.
- You are allowed to set boundaries.

Standing up for yourself, and for others, is a protective behaviour that helps keep shared spaces safe for everyone.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide sentence starters such as: "A time I felt influenced was..." "An assertive response could be..." "I felt uncomfortable when..."
- Allow students to write privately before sharing aloud.

Extend

- Invite students to explore how peer influence might feel different depending on age, culture or ability.
- Encourage deeper thinking about why some people feel more pressure to "go along" than others.

3

LESSON PHASE: Guided Practice



TIMING: 20 mins

Explain that students will now practise recognising peer influence and choosing assertive responses that protect their comfort, safety and personal space in real travel situations.

Explain to students that for each scenario, they must decide whether the influence is spoken or a subtle nudge, and practise choosing an assertive response instead of doing nothing.

Group students into pairs or small groups.

Distribute the [Peer Influence Scenarios](#) worksheets provided.

Students Think → Pair → Share each scenario.

Circulate amongst the groups, modelling assertive responses and checking for understanding.

Whole Class Debrief:

Bring students together and **reinforce:**

- Peer influence can be spoken or silent.
- Doing nothing often means ignoring your own comfort or safety.
- Assertive responses protect your personal space and help others understand your boundaries.
- Speaking up calmly is a protective behaviour that keeps shared spaces safe and respectful.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Stand Up, Speak Up (Peer influence & personal boundaries)

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide sentence starters such as: "The influence here is..." "If I did nothing..." "An assertive response could be..."
- Allow students to jot down their response before sharing aloud.

Extend

- Ask students to rewrite one scenario from the perspective of someone younger, new to the area, or with sensory sensitivities.
- Invite students to analyse how the assertive response might change depending on who is involved (friend, stranger, older student, adult).

4

LESSON PHASE: Independent Application



TIMING: 15 mins

Explain to students that they will now apply what they've learned about peer influence and assertive communication. They will review and choose assertive, positive phrases that feel natural, respectful and effective.

Distribute:

- [Using Positive Pressure Worksheet](#).
- [Positive Pressure Language Bank sheet](#).

Students work individually or in pairs to complete the worksheet.

Instructions:

1. **Circle** or star 2–3 phrases from the [Positive Pressure Language Bank](#) that feel natural and realistic. Encourage students to choose phrases they would actually use, not the ones that sound the most polished.
2. **Use** these phrases to respond to short scenarios on the worksheet.
3. For each scenario, students **write**:
 - What the pressure is (peer influence, invisible rule, group expectation).
 - What boundary is being crossed (personal space, belongings, comfort).
 - A positive pressure response they could use.
 - Why this response is respectful and protective.

Circulate and **prompt** students with questions such as:

- Is your assertive response clear and calm?
- Does your response protect your personal space?
- What would happen if you did nothing in this situation?
- How does your response encourage safer behaviour for everyone?

Encourage students to revise their responses so they are:

- Respectful.
- Realistic.
- Easy to say in real life.
- Focused on safety and comfort.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Stand Up, Speak Up (Peer influence & personal boundaries)

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Offer simplified versions of the language bank for students who benefit from fewer choices.

Extend

- Challenge students to explain how their assertive response could positively influence the group's behaviour.

5**LESSON PHASE:** Reflection / Review**TIMING:** 5 mins**Positive Influence Plan.**

Students complete the following If-Then-Because statement in their travel journal or say it to the teacher before leaving the class.

"If someone I'm with starts doing something unsafe or disrespectful, then I will say or do....because..."

Encourage realistic, short responses.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Allow private written reflection instead of verbal sharing.
- Offer sentence starters for students unsure how to phrase assertive responses.

Extend

- Ask students to write a second If-Then statement that challenges a gender stereotype.
- Invite reflection on how they could model assertiveness for younger students.