



LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Confidence on the Move (Assertive choices & seeking help)

LESSON SUMMARY

This lesson explores how recognising early warning signs, seeking help and making assertive choices can improve students' safety, independence and respect when travelling alone or with peers. Students consider common travel situations where uncertainty, peer influence or environmental changes may increase risk and reflect on how awareness and decision-making play a role in staying safe.

The lesson reinforces that help-seeking is a positive and responsible action that supports independence rather than reducing it. Students examine who and what can provide support in public spaces, including trusted people, community helpers and appropriate authorities, and understand when reporting concerns is necessary.

Additionally, assertive choices are positioned as respectful actions that protect personal boundaries and wellbeing without escalating situations. Students reflect on how assertiveness helps manage peer pressure, respond to discomfort, and make safer travel decisions.

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



LEVEL

Years 7-8



LESSON NUMBER

5 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

VC2HP8P04 Examine the roles of respect and empathy 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).

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

VC2CP8S02 How to distinguish between productive and unproductive help-seeking and other coping strategies when responding to challenge or adversity; strategies for peer support and empathetic communication when others encounter challenge or adversity.

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

VC2CP8O03 Factors that affect the ways in which personal and group relationships are expressed and experienced, including personal boundaries, extent of intimacy, distribution of power and social expectations.

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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.

VOCABULARY

Situational awareness - Paying attention to what is happening around you so you can notice risks early.

Respect - Treating yourself, other people, and shared spaces in a safe and considerate way.

Protective behaviours - Actions and strategies that help keep you and others safe, especially in unfamiliar or risky situations.

Distraction - Anything that takes your attention away from what is happening around you and can increase risk.

Digital habits - The regular ways you use devices and apps, which can affect your focus, safety and decision-making.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Scenario cards or printed journey narratives
- Large paper or whiteboard for mapping journeys
- Markers, pens and sticky notes
- [Help-Seeking Investigation Worksheet](#)



LEARNING INTENTION

Students will learn how noticing early warning signs, asking for help, and making assertive choices can help them stay safe, independent and respectful when travelling alone or with friends.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can recognise early warning signs in travel situations.
- I can identify when and how to seek help to stay safe.
- I can make assertive choices that protect my personal space and wellbeing.
- I can explain how these choices help me travel more confidently and respectfully.

TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS

- Some scenarios may connect to students' real-life experiences; create a supportive environment and allow students to opt out of sharing personal examples.
- Reinforce that help-seeking is a strength and part of being independent.
- Emphasise respectful language and non-judgement when discussing peer pressure and unsafe situations.

Enable

- Use visual supports, structured prompts and guided discussion to help students make abstract ideas (like reaction time and awareness) more concrete.
- Provide flexible ways for students to demonstrate understanding, allowing thinking time and collaborative talk before independent responses.

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Extend

- Encourage students to analyse the cumulative impact of distraction across different contexts and levels of independence.
- Prompt students to justify their decisions using cause-and-effect reasoning, particularly around shared responsibility in public spaces.



USEFUL LINKS

[Why Teens Love Location-Sharing - Psychology Today](#)

[Transport Victoria - Mobile apps for public transport](#)

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

Topic #4 – Problem solving

Activity #2: Introducing assertiveness.

Topic #6 – Help seeking

Activity #1: What could you do?

Activity #2: Assertive help seeking - what could you say?

Topic #8 – Positive gender relationships

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

Activity #5: Safety and help seeking in response to gender-based violence.



ASSESSMENT

- Observation of student contributions during discussions and scenario responses.
 - Review of student responses on the Help-Seeking Investigation Worksheet.
 - Student reflections identifying where they feel confident travelling and where they may need to seek help or act assertively.
 - Use of correct language related to early warning signs, help-seeking, and assertive choices in explanations.
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LEARNING CONTINUUM

Focus: Recognising early warning signs and applying help-seeking and assertive strategies to improve safety, independence and respect when travelling alone or with peers.

Learning Continuum	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Students explore how recognising early warning signs and using help-seeking and assertive choices improves safety and independence during travel. They learn to identify situational and social risks, understand when support is needed, and practise responding in ways that protect themselves while respecting others.	Students identify a small number of early warning signs in familiar travel scenarios with support (e.g. someone standing too close, a vehicle pulling out unexpectedly). They name a simple help-seeking option or assertive response and show emerging awareness that these actions improve safety.	Students describe a range of early warning signs (physical, environmental or social) and explain what they might signal. They apply appropriate help-seeking or assertive strategies to specific scenarios and explain how these responses protect safety and maintain respectful relationships.	Students confidently explain how early recognition of warning signs supports proactive decision-making. They independently select and justify help-seeking and assertive responses in complex or peer-influenced situations, demonstrating how these choices strengthen safety, independence and respect for themselves and others.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Organising Element	Action	Insufficient Evidence	Quality Criteria		
Situational Awareness and Risk Recognition.	1. Identify early warning signs in travel situations.	1.0 No response or response unrelated to warning signs.	1.1 Names one warning sign from a scenario.	1.2 Describes a warning sign and what it might signal.	1.3 Explains how a warning sign signals increased risk in a specific travel context.
Help-Seeking Strategies.	2. Select appropriate help-seeking responses in travel contexts.	2.0 No help-seeking strategy identified.	2.1 Names a person or service that could help.	2.2 Matches a help-seeking strategy to a specific scenario.	2.3 Justifies how the selected help-seeking strategy improves safety or independence.
Assertive Communication.	3. Demonstrate assertive choices in response to pressure or uncertainty.	3.0 No assertive response identified.	3.1 States a simple assertive phrase.	3.2 Applies an assertive response to a specific scenario.	3.3 Explains how the assertive choice protects safety while maintaining respect.
Decision-Making and Reasoning.	4. Explain the impact of different choices in travel situations.	4.0 No explanation of impact.	4.1 Identifies a possible outcome of a choice.	4.2 Describes how a choice affects safety or relationships.	4.3 Justifies a decision by linking safety, independence and respect.

* continued overleaf

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ASSESSMENT RUBRIC (Cont'd)

Organising Element	Action	Insufficient Evidence	Quality Criteria		
Personal and Social Capability.	5. Connect help-seeking and assertiveness to independence	5.0 No connection made.	5.1 States that help-seeking supports safety.	5.2 Describes how help-seeking or assertiveness supports independence.	5.3 Explains how proactive help-seeking and assertiveness build long-term travel confidence.

Structure of lesson:



INQUIRY QUESTION: How can help-seeking and assertive choices improve safety, independence and respect when travelling alone or with peers?

1

LESSON PHASE: Introduction (Hook)



TIMING: 10 mins

Interactive Story Mapping

Explain: Today we're exploring how help seeking and assertive choices improve safety, independence and respect when travelling alone or with peers. To support this, we will review certain aspects of situational awareness from Lesson #2 - Awareness in Action, as well as recognising our early warning signs that tell us something might not be quite right.

Engage students in the following *journey mapping* activity:

Present one of the short scenario narratives below based on the location of your school. Both scenarios have embedded moments of uncertainty or risk.

Metropolitan Scenario:

A Year 8 student is travelling home from school after sport training:

- They walk through a busy tram stop where a group of older teens are arguing loudly.
- An unknown adult asks them for directions as they approach them and end up standing very close.
- A tram arrives crowded, with only one seat left next to someone who seems agitated.
- Their phone battery drops to 0% just as they reach a poorly lit side street.

Regional Scenario:

Year 7 student is biking home in a regional town:

- A dog runs loose on the footpath and is barking as it runs towards them.
- A ute pulls out of a driveway without looking.
- Their bike chain slips near a quiet stretch of road with no houses nearby.
- A neighbour they don't know well offers them a lift.

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In pairs or small groups, students collaboratively draw the scenario - mapping the journey on a large sheet of poster paper or on the whiteboard, marking points where the traveller might:

- feel unsafe
- need help
- need to make an assertive choice.

Encourage students to add 1-2 other real-life moments that could happen or that they have previously encountered on a journey home.

Circulate amongst the pairs and small groups and ask questions to check for understanding and to encourage initial thinking regarding help-seeking and assertive choices. For example:

- What can you do if someone stands too close to you?
- How do you ask for help if your phone battery is flat?
- How can you stay safe when riding past driveways on your bike?

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide a partially completed journey map with one example already labelled to model expectations.
- Allow students to verbally explain their thinking to a partner before writing it down.

Extend

- Students categorise each risk as low / medium / high and justify their reasoning.
- Students identify which risks require immediate action versus monitoring the situation, explaining why.

2

LESSON PHASE: Explicit Teaching & Modelled Learning



TIMING: 15 mins

Explain: *Situational awareness means paying attention to what's happening around you — the people, the environment, the sounds, the behaviour of others and your own feelings. Early warning signs are clues that something might not feel right. These can be:*

- **physical signs:** *tight stomach, faster breathing, feeling on edge*
- **environmental signs:** *a place suddenly becoming quiet, someone standing too close or blocking your path, a vehicle slowing down*
- **social signs:** *a friend acting differently, someone pressuring you, a stranger asking personal questions*

When we notice these signs early, we can make safer choices before a situation becomes risky.

Link back to the inquiry question and explain: Being aware and recognising these early warning signs help us decide when help seeking or assertive choices might be necessary to improve our safety and independence.

Discuss why help seeking matters

Explain: Help seeking means reaching out to someone - a friend, a trusted adult/carer, a transport worker, a shopkeeper, or police - when you need support. It's important because:

- You don't have to solve every situation alone.
- Asking for help early prevents situations from escalating.
- It increases your independence, because confident travellers know when and how to get support.
- It builds respect, because you're taking responsibility for your own safety and wellbeing.

Help seeking is a strength, not a weakness.

Ask How might gender, age or cultural expectations make it harder or easier for someone to seek help?

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Share with students what to do if they feel unsafe in public.

Explain: If you feel unsafe in public, or someone makes you feel uncomfortable, everyone is encouraged to report it.

- If an incident happens near school, tell your parents/carers or teachers
- If you feel unsafe on public transport, talk to a Protective Services Officer (PSO). They are on platforms and trains until the last train.

Emphasise: No issue is too small to report.

For emergencies, to report a crime in progress, or for immediate police attendance, call **000**.

For non-emergencies: call the Police Assistance Line on **131 444** or report anonymously at **Crime Stoppers** by:

- submitting an [online report](#)
- calling **1800 333 000**

Discuss assertive choices and why we practise them.

Explain: Assertive choices are decisions and actions that protect your safety while also respecting others.

Brainstorm examples of what being assertive looks like and sounds like.

Share the following examples if not mentioned.

Being assertive means:

- speaking clearly
- setting boundaries
- saying "no" when something doesn't feel right
- choosing a safer route
- asking for space
- leaving a situation early
- telling a friend, "I'm not comfortable with that - let's do something else."

Think-Pair-Share: Why do we need to practise assertive choices?

Ask 2-3 students to share their responses.

Highlight the following:

- they help us respond confidently under pressure
- they make it easier to act when early warning signs appear
- they reduce the influence of peer pressure
- they help us stay safe without being aggressive or passive
- they build independence for real world travel
- Assertiveness is a skill and like any skill, it gets stronger with practice.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide a **three-column scaffold sheet:** *Early Warning Sign* → *What It Might Mean* → *What I Could Do* (with one example completed).
- Provide assertive sentence starters such as:
 - "I'm not comfortable with..."
 - "I need some space, please."
 - "Let's choose a safer option."

Extend

- Students create a **short role-play script** showing the difference between passive, aggressive and assertive responses in one travel scenario.
- Students analyse a scenario and explain how help-seeking increases **independence**, not dependence, using the inquiry question language.

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LESSON PHASE: Guided Practice



TIMING: 20 mins

Engage students in the following **Question Carousel** activity.

Set up posters provided around the room that contain prompts to assist students to explore help-seeking and assertive behaviours:

- Poster 1: Peer dilemmas.
- Poster 2: Adults, authorities, and digital support.
- Poster 3: Environmental or situational risks.

Explain:

Poster 1: Peer Dilemmas

This rotation is important because friends influence our choices more than anyone else when we are teenagers. Most unsafe decisions young people make while travelling come from peer influence, group expectations or wanting to fit in. Understanding how to be assertive with friends helps you stay safe and maintain respectful relationships.

Poster 2: Adults, Authorities & Digital Support

This rotation matters because help seeking often involves adults you don't know well such as bus drivers, shop owners, station staff or even digital tools like maps and safety apps. Knowing how to communicate clearly, ask for help or use technology confidently increases your independence and reduces stress when something unexpected happens.

Poster 3: Environmental or Situational Risks

This rotation is relevant because the environment can change quickly - weather, lighting, crowds, transport delays or the behaviour of strangers. Recognising early warning signs in your surroundings helps you make safer choices before a situation becomes risky.

In small groups, students rotate through all 3 poster stations every 3-4 minutes.

At each poster, students write possible solutions for any or all of the questions on sticky notes, highlighting:

1. help-seeking strategies, and
2. positive, assertive choices.

After completing the question carousel, review some of the responses.

Guide discussion and ask questions such as:

- What strategies came up the most across all posters?
- What assertive choices showed confidence without aggression?
- Would the same assertive choices be interpreted differently depending on who says it?
- How do these choices help protect personal safety and relationships?

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Assign clear group roles (writer, reader, idea generator, encourager) to support structured participation.
- Provide a checklist card at each station:
 - Did we include at least one help-seeking strategy?
 - Did we include at least one assertive response?

Extend

- After rotations, students identify **one strategy that works across all three posters** and explain why it is transferable.
- Students evaluate one sticky note solution and refine it to make it more realistic, specific and confident.

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LESSON PHASE: Independent Application



TIMING: 10 mins

Explain: This activity is designed to help you build your own 'toolkit' of strategies.

Students work through three short sections, each focusing on a different part of safe travel:

1. Realworld scenarios world scenarios
2. Digital support tools.
3. Assertive communication.

Students will use a simple thinking routine called **Decision–Impact–Action** to help them break down each situation.

Distribute a *Help Seeking Investigation* Worksheet to each student.

Allow students to work individually or in pairs.

Encourage students to keep their answers short - one or two sentences is enough.

Refer to the lesson inquiry question again before students begin: *How can help seeking and assertive choices improve safety, independence, and respect when travelling?*

Explain that their answers will help them build their own travel confidence and prepare for real world situations.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Allow students to complete only two of the three sections, focusing on depth rather than volume.
- Provide a modelled example of the Decision–Impact–Action routine before students begin.

Extend

- Students add a fourth column: "Long-Term Impact" (How could this choice affect future confidence or independence?).
- Students design one original scenario based on their own travel context and complete the Decision–Impact–Action routine for it.

5

LESSON PHASE: Reflection / Review



TIMING: 5 mins

My Travel Confidence Map

Create a class circle.

Ask students to reflect on their own common travel routes or travel contexts and share:

1. somewhere they feel confident
2. any points where they might need help or make an assertive choice.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Allow students to write their reflection privately on a sticky note before sharing verbally.

Extend

- Students explain how confidence, safety and respect are connected, linking directly back to the inquiry question.