The Department for Education and Child Development has a legal responsibility to protect children and young people from abuse in its own settings and in the wider community. All children and young people have a right to:

- Be treated with respect and to be protected from abuse.
- Feel and be safe in their interactions with adults from their family and friends.
- Understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touching.
- Receive the support of counsellors or staff in their education or care setting who are responsible for their safety and wellbeing.

Source: Child Protection in Schools, Early Childhood Education and Care Services Policy (2011)

Further information

Information about the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum is available from your child’s school, preschool or teacher. Alternatively, you can contact the Child Protection Curriculum Officer on 08 8226 5887.

The curriculum teaches all children from a young age, in an age appropriate way, to recognise abuse and tell a trusted adult about it. It helps them understand what is appropriate and inappropriate touching and outlines ways they can keep themselves safe.

Under Section 82 of the Education Act (1972), schools and preschools are not required to seek permission from parents or guardians for their child to participate in the curriculum.
An overview of the curriculum

The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum is divided into five documents. Each document relates to age or year level groups:
- Early Years: Ages 3-5
- Early Years: Years R-2
- Primary Years: Years 3-5
- Middle Years: Years 6-9
- Senior Years: Years 10-12

The curriculum also offers teachers support documents to help them appropriately deliver the information to students from a culturally or linguistically diverse background or those with a disability or additional need. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact teachers with information that could assist with the delivery of the curriculum to their child. All teachers are required to complete professional training to deliver the curriculum.

The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum is based on two main themes:
- We all have the right to be safe.
- We can help ourselves to be safe by talking to people we trust.

These themes are delivered to students through four focus areas that increase in complexity as they age:

- The right to be safe
- Children and young people learn about the various feelings they might have in different situations. They are taught about the external and internal warning signs that help them recognise a situation where they may be at risk.

- Children and young people learn about positive and negative relationships and how they can complement their personal identity and sense of self-worth.

- Recognising and reporting abuse
  - This is carefully covered in accordance to the students’ developmental level. Children and young people learn about abuse issues, the importance of discussing these with a trusted person, and how to report abuse.

- Protective strategies
  - Children and young people learn about how adults are responsible for protecting everyone. They explore the different things they can do to stay safe.

- Adding to the learning at home
  - Parents/carers play a very important role in child protection. There are a number of topics you can discuss with your child that add to the focus areas being taught at school and preschool.

  **Teach your child about their right to be safe:**
  - Monitor how your child is feeling and if they are showing any warning signs. Physical signs can include tensing muscles or sweating. Emotional signs can include crying or out of the ordinary behaviours. Other signs can include not wanting to undress or being scared to be home alone.
  - Discuss safety in a range of settings, such as at school and preschool, and identify safe places to be. To prevent all or some risk of harm, help them recognise a situation where they may be at risk and know how to report it.
  - Develop a secret family password to be used when someone is picking up your child whom they have never met before or if someone they know but weren’t expecting.
  - Ensure they know how to use the phone and who to call.
  - Support your child’s choice of trusted people in their network. Speak to their teacher if you have concerns.
  - Teach your child about relationships:
    - They can have good and bad relationships. Help them understand that they can change. Teach them how to diplomatically and respectfully communicate their needs and boundaries.

  **Recognising and reporting abuse:**
  - Children and young people learn about how to handle situations that may arise.

  **Proactive strategies:**
  - Children and young people learn about the importance of discussing online safety, security, and passwords. They learn to report abuse by using the anatomical names for body parts so they can accurately describe any abuse they may experience.

  **Teach your child about safe relationships:**
  - Support your child’s choice of trusted people in their network. Speak to their teacher if you have concerns.

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