

Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum

Summary

An educational curriculum delivered to all children and young people in South Australian government schools and preschools. The curriculum is designed to help children and young people to recognise abuse and tell a trusted adult, understand what is appropriate and inappropriate touching, understanding ways to keep themselves safe. See <https://kscpc.sa.edu.au/>

The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum (KS:CPC) was identified as a leading respectful relationships and child safety program by the Australian Government which subsequently funded an independent evaluation in 2010. The review found the KS:CPC to be a well-regarded, best practice, flexible curriculum that has a positive impact on students.

Target population

The KS: CPC caters for all children and young people in South Australian government schools and preschools. This includes over 900 sites and over 180,000 children and young people. The KS:CPC is also used by 11 Australian sectors and 47 international schools through licence agreements with the Department for Education.

Delivery organisation

Department for Education, South Australia.

Mode and context of delivery

The KS:CPC was developed by the South Australian Department for Education in 2003–2007 and implemented across schools as a mandated curriculum in 2008 for all children and young people age 3 to year 12 (age 17+). An extensive consultation process involved child protection experts and experienced educators from schools and preschools.

In 2013/14 the KS:CPC was reviewed and updated to align with current curriculum and pedagogy, and to reflect contemporary issues such as bullying and cyber safety. In July 2017, a second edition was released which strengthens content on domestic violence, problematic sexual behaviour and gender equity. In 2018 the global edition was developed for non-South Australian users and focuses on a more global perspective for international schools.

Under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act (2017), the Department for Education has a legislated responsibility with other agencies to protect children and young people under 18 years of age from abuse in its own settings and in the wider community. All department sites have the responsibility reinforced by antidiscrimination legislation and duty-of-care requirements to protect and care for every child and young person.

- It is a requirement under the Child Protection in Schools, Early Childhood Education and Care Services Policy (2019) that:
- All children and young people in department preschools and schools will access approved child protection curriculum each year.
- The approved child protection curriculum will be taught by staff who have received training in its use.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

Before incorporating the child protection curriculum into their teaching and learning programs, educators must participate in the formal professional learning program provided by department trainers and familiarise themselves with the contents of this curriculum. In South Australia more than 30,000 educators have completed the training since 2005. The training program has also been implemented in other Australian states and for international schools in several different countries. An online update course is also available for previously trained staff.

The KS:CPC is delivered by trained educators in early learning centres, preschools, primary schools and secondary schools. Educators must attend a full day training course prior to implementing the KS:CPC with children and young people.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The KS:CPC is divided into 5 separate documents:

- Early Years: Ages 3-5
- Early Years: Years R-2 (Ages 5-7)
- Primary Years: Years 3-5 (Ages 8-10)
- Middle Years: Years 6-9 (Ages 11-14)
- Senior Years: Years 10-12 (Ages 15-17+)

There are also three support documents for:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children with disability and additional needs
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Educators deliver the program each year at each year level from age 3 to year 12 using developmentally appropriate learning strategies outlined in the KS:CPC.

The KS:CPC concepts and activities can be integrated into the preschool and school program through multiple learning areas such as Health, English, Technology, Social sciences, Art, Science and Maths. Curriculum mapping tools provide teachers with examples through the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum.

Description of intervention

The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum Aims: The KS:CPC teaches all children from a young age, in an age appropriate way, to:

- recognise abuse and tell a trusted adult about it
- understand what is appropriate and inappropriate touching
- understand ways of keeping themselves safe.

Themes: It is predicated on two main themes which are presented through topics and activities of increasing complexity.

- We all have the right to be safe
- We can help ourselves to be safe by talking to people we trust

Focus Areas: The themes are explored through four Focus Areas, which are examined in growing complexity in accordance with the age of the learners.

- The right to be safe
- Relationships
- Recognising and reporting abuse
- Protective strategies

The KS:CPC uses a sequential and developmental approach to introduce concepts, and further embed the strategies children and young people require to be safe.

While its specific aim is to help children and young people, from the age three to year 12, to learn to recognise and report abuse and develop ways of protecting themselves from abuse, its wider focus covers rights and responsibilities, relationships, warning signs, trust and networks, bullying and violence, cyberbullying, cyber safety, ethical behaviour, problem solving, persistence, sexual health, sexual diversity and help-seeking services.

Information for educators: The KS:CPC details some important aspects to assist in educators understanding of child abuse, their responsibilities, recognising signs of abuse, strategies for responding to abuse, embedding the KS:CPC into the preschool/school curriculum, catering for a diverse range of students, and providing students with strategies to keep themselves safe. Some of this information includes:

Child abuse: The KS:CPC provides information to educators on the 4 different types of abuse:

physical, sexual, emotional/psychological and neglect. For the purpose of the ECSA research into child sexual abuse a more detailed description of the KS:CPC's sexual abuse content includes:

Educators:

- Definition of sexual abuse
- Understanding developmentally appropriate sexual behaviour
- Responding to problem sexual behaviour
- Educator's responsibilities
- Grooming (online and offline)
- Cyber safety and cyberbullying (inappropriate material, sexting)
- Sexual abuse, discrimination and harassment

- Criminal implications
- Children and young people (age appropriate):
- Anatomical names for parts of the body
- Touching and secrets
- Grooming (online and offline)
- Cyber safety and cyberbullying (inappropriate material, sexting)
- Rights and responsibilities in sexual relationships
- Abuse of power
- Sexual abuse, discrimination and harassment
- Sexual diversity
- Criminal implications

Non-Negotiable Aspects: To deliver the KS:CPC safely and effectively, some aspects are considered 'non-negotiable'. These 11 aspects concern how the curriculum is managed regarding such things as communication with parents/carers, confidentiality, involvement of visitors, and self-protection.

Recommended Learning Strategies: The 18 strategies are recommended by educators with experience in the area of teaching protective strategies and child protection. Activities within the KS:CPC include a recommended learning strategy to assist educators in effectively delivering the lessons.

Whole site approach: A whole site approach involves staff working as a collective group of professionals led by the site leader to develop a clear and coordinated curriculum across all year or age levels and accessible to all children and young people. Research confirms that a whole site approach is critical in ensuring successful implementation of curriculum initiatives.

Parent/Carer information and communication: Although parent permission is not required under the Education Act (1972), sites keep parents/carers informed and encourage them to seek further clarification if required. This is done through newsletters, parent/carers letters, information sessions and Governing Council meetings.

Reporting: A suite of parent/carer resources is available for sites to use such as: sample parent letter, factsheets, student report examples, newsletter articles, concept summaries, PowerPoint presentation, and information in multiple languages.

Student diversity: Whilst child abuse and neglect occur across all socio-economic and cultural groups, a number of factors can contribute to some groups of children and young people being at greater risk of abuse and/or neglect. The KS:CPC provides additional information and resources for educators working with children and young people in high risk groups.

Evaluation

In 2010, an independent organisation KPMG undertook an extensive evaluation of the KS:CPC to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum and its transferability to other jurisdictions. Evaluation evidence was captured using a Site Implementation Rubric and moderation process, interviews with 35 stakeholders, and 16 focus groups. In total more than 200 people were involved in the evaluation.

The evaluation demonstrated that the KS:CPC:

- is well regarded and seen as best practice by educators
- is having a positive impact
- is flexible and capable of being used in a range of different contexts.

In 2013, a research project on Child sexual abuse prevention education: A review of school policy and curriculum provision in Australia by Walsh et al. (2013) assessed and compared the policies and curriculum initiatives in primary schools across state and territory Departments of Education in Australia. The research concluded that South Australia:

- was the only state that provided connections with the child protection education and the state's child protection policies
- provided a strong commitment to the provision of child sexual abuse prevention education through the KS:CPC
- was one of only 2 states where educators must be trained to deliver child protection education
- that the KS:CPC must be taught to all children
- was the only state to have conducted independent research into the implementation and outcomes of the KS:CPC.

The curriculum is currently being reviewed, please see <https://kscpc.sa.edu.au/about/review/> for more information.

References

Department for Education and Child Development, South Australia (2017) Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum, Government of South Australia.

Department for Education South Australia. (2019) Child Protection in Schools, Early Childhood Education and Care Services Policy.

Children and Young People (Safety) Act (2017) Government of South Australia.

Walsh, K., Berthelsen, D., Nicholson, J.M., Brandon, J.S., & Rachele, J.N. (2013). Child sexual abuse prevention education: A review of school policy and curriculum provision in Australia. Oxford Review of Education. Vol.39. No. 5, pp649-680.

Contact details

Phone: +61 8 8463 5910

Team email: education.cpc@sa.gov.au

Department for Education: [KS:CPC for educators](#) and [KS:CPC for parents](#) and carers



RATING: *Pioneering*

Information correct at March 2023