**Child Protection Education – programming and planning through PDHPE**

This article guides teachers through the decision making process in relation to child protection education.

Child protection education is required to be taught in every stage of learning from Kindergarten to Year 10 as part of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

Child protection education should not be taught as an isolated component. It should be integrated with related PDHPE content. To ensure that an effective child protection education component is taught in each stage, schools will find it beneficial to develop a whole school curriculum plan for PDHPE, of which child protection education is a component.

**How to scope and sequence child protection education as part of PDHPE**

A school PDHPE scope and sequence needs to provide teachers with the scope and sequence of learning from year to year and from stage to stage.

Examine your school’s current PDHPE scope and sequence to identify:

* child protection content or focus areas which are already addressed in other areas.
* opportunities for students to build on prior learning
* areas that need to be included or strengthened to ensure a balance of the three themes in child protection education from Kindergarten to Year 10.

**What is balanced Child Protection Education?**

Balanced child protection education involves teaching and learning about three themes:

* Theme 1 Recognising abuse
* Theme 2 Power in relationships
* Theme 3 Protective strategies.

Schools may not need to teach all these themes in each year or stage. Nor do they need to treat them in any particular order or as separate entities. How schools approach each theme will depend on what students already know and can do, and how the school PDHPE program is constructed.

The Child Protection Education curriculum materials integrate the three themes in each unit of work.

**When should it be taught and for how long?**

Child protection education is required to be taught in every stage of learning from Kindergarten to Year 10 as part of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

Whether schools teach aspects within each year of each stage is a school decision. The number of lessons that schools program for child protection education in PDHPE is also up to each school.

Schools should consider the following when making these decisions:

* It is important to develop in students as early as possible understandings and skills in the area of child protection. Children are most vulnerable when young.
* Schools which do not incorporate child protection education into each year’s PDHPE program need to consider ways to build on and reinforce prior learning. There should not be a gap of more than one year between child protection education in stage-based PDHPE curriculum scope and sequence or programs.

## What is the most effective way to plan and program child protection education?

There are three main approaches which schools can take to incorporate child protection education into their PDHPE programs and units.

1. Programming child protection education as blocks or units of work. For example, units of work based on the three child protection education themes are taught in each year, or across each stage.
2. Integrating child protection concepts throughout other PDHPE units. For example, combining child protection concepts, such as relationships, rights and responsibilities, touch and consent with similar content related to relationships or sexuality education.
3. A combination of the above two approaches. For example, in a Year 4 PDHPE program there is an integrated unit called “Hang with the ‘in crowd’ ” which includes such child protection concepts as relationships, bullying, abuse of power, bribes and threats. Later in the year there is a whole unit on child protection education to cover the rest of the three child protection themes.

Each approach has advantages and disadvantages.

The approach which schools choose to take will depend on the school. If your school wants to take the first approach, then ensure that the unit is not taught in Term 4. Units contain content specific to abuse. There is risk of personal student disclosures and teaching it last in the year inhibits adequate follow-up.

**What am I going to program?**

Key questions to focus the process of programming include:

* What is it that the students currently know and can do?
* What do I want the students to know and be able to do?
* How will I help them to know and do?
* How will I know when they have learnt?

Teachers should select activities that best meet the needs of their students and match their program. There is no expectation that all of the units and activities in the Child Protection Education curriculum support materials are to be taught.

The Child Protection Education curriculum support materials include stage based units of work which include a consistent structure:

* switch on – short activity based around the theme of the lesson to ignite thinking
* understand - core essential learning of the focus area
* act and apply - activities which enable students to have the opportunity to put their learning into practice

Each unit of work is designed as a sequence of learning. They can be used in their entirety, or teachers may select some sections of the unit to insert into their existing units to complement learning for their student and school context. It is recommended that the learning is of an adequate duration to allow students the opportunity to build in-depth knowledge, understanding and skills.

The units are centred on the key themes of recognising abuse, power in relationships and protective strategies to provide the opportunity for students to revisit, consolidate and reinforce their learning and skills as they progress through stages. When the school PDHPE scope and sequence has been developed, it will be easier for teachers to devise class teaching programs which meet the needs of students and support students in the achievement of PDHPE outcomes.