**Topic 2: Warning signs and emergencies**

Educators should assess the students’ levels of English and understanding before beginning this topic.

If students have not covered the concept of warning signs before, refer to Focus Area 1: The right to be safe in Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum Primary Years: Years 3–5 for more explicit activities.

### 2.1 Warning signs in unsafe situations

There are physical indicators, external signs and emotional indicators that help young people recognise a situation where they may be at risk of harm. These signs are called warning signs. Introduce the one step removed concept (NNA 3) before discussing unsafe situations. The chart below provides some warning sign examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External signs (Clues indicated by time, location and people nearby)</th>
<th>Physical indicators (Body messages)</th>
<th>Emotional indicators (Feelings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deserted parks</td>
<td>butterflies in stomach</td>
<td>scared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unsupervised toilets</td>
<td>feeling hot or cold</td>
<td>worried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time of day</td>
<td>being frozen to the spot</td>
<td>confused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>heart beating fast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Display the grid below and provide an example of an unsafe situation for students. For students with low levels of English understanding, use a feelings chart with pictures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Physical indicators</th>
<th>External signs</th>
<th>Emotion indicators</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being home alone and hearing a noise</td>
<td>shaking goose bumps</td>
<td>noise</td>
<td>nervous scared feeling vulnerable</td>
<td>Call someone turn on lights go next door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>heart beats faster</td>
<td>dark being alone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students add to the grid using their own examples. Be aware of one step removed technique (NNA 3).

Discuss warning signs, using the following focus questions:

- How might someone’s body react when he/she is in an obviously unsafe situation? (Responses may include: thumping heart, sweaty hands, butterflies in the stomach, paralysed.)
- What uncomfortable feelings are associated with being in an obviously unsafe situation? (Responses may include: feeling panic, being frightened or terrified, becoming angry, feeling vulnerable, being scared.)
Why might someone not experience warning signs? (Responses could include: the person may trust the other people involved, may have a false sense of safety, may not recognise the other person’s behaviour as abusive, may have been ‘groomed’ or conditioned into thinking certain behaviour is normal.)

Other suggested activity

Cyberbullying warning signs
Use the following information to initiate discussion with students on the warning signs of cyberbullying in the webpage Bullying online. See the General introduction of the KS:CPC year level documents for information on cyberbullying and e-crime.

2.2 What if someone does not have warning signs?

Students work in pairs to complete Appendix 8: Warning signs activity.

After the activity, use the following focus questions:

- Why might someone not experience warning signs, including clues that highlight warning signs? (Responses could include: the person may trust the other people involved, may have a false sense of safety, may not recognise the other person’s behaviour as abusive, or may have been ‘groomed’ or conditioned into thinking certain behaviour is normal.)

- If a person doesn’t have physical warning signs, how else can the person tell if he/she is unsafe? (Responses could include: the person can look for external warning signs, for example, being alone late at night on the street with a group of people approaching; the person can determine if the behaviour is appropriate or inappropriate by asking questions such as ‘Is it unsafe?’, ‘Is it illegal?’, ‘Are someone’s rights not being respected?’, ‘Is someone alone?’, ‘Is someone able to get help?’)

- Why might some young people choose to ignore their warning signs? (Responses could include: young people are often keen to try new experiences even if they appear to be risky; it may be seen as a part of growing up; pressure from peers.)

- What are the possible physiological reactions to fear or worry? (Discuss the ‘fight or flight’ response, adrenalin, depression and serotonin.)

- How can a person tell if others are feeling unsafe? (Responses could include: by their body language; comments they make.)

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Appendix 3 | Warning signs

This appendix is for educator reference only. Children should develop personal examples of their own warning signs. Some children may not have warning signs.

- Sweaty forehead
- Red cheeks
- Can’t breathe
- Tight shoulders
- Hands clenched
- Butterflies in tummy
- Jelly knees
- Curl toes
- Feet won’t move
- Headache
- Eyes wide
- Dry throat
- Sweaty palms
- Sweaty armpits
- Heart beats really fast
- Wee or poo pants
- Feel shivery
- Whole body freezing
- Sometimes hot
- Sometimes cold

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