What is Protective Behaviours?

A network person is a person to whom we can talk to if we are feeling unsafe and cannot make our Early Warning Signs go away by ourselves. In the PB programme children are asked to identify at least five adults who will be on their network.

These people must:

≈ **Be available:** the child must have regular contact with them and/or the opportunity for communication.

≈ **Listen:** the adult must be able to encourage the child to keep talking until they feel safe again.

≈ **Believe:** the person must believe what the child says and avoid ‘fishing’ for the right answer.

≈ **Take action:** sometimes all we can do is reinforce that we are trying to do something and willing to keep listening if the child still feels unsafe.
What is Protective Behaviours?

Protective Behaviours (PB) is a preventative, living skills programme which enables people of all ages to develop skills to help them deal with all forms of difficult and/or unsafe situations.

Developed by Peg Flanreau West, a pastoral care teacher in Wisconsin, PB was introduced into Australia to replace the Stranger Danger programme in the late 1990’s.

Themes of PB’s

“WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE AT ALL TIMES”

And

“WE CAN TALK WITH SOMEONE ABOUT ANYTHING NO MATTER WHAT IT IS”

Other concepts discussed in the programme include Feelings, Personal Safety, the Body and Private Parts, Early Warning Signs (EWS) and Network People.

Feelings

One of the first concepts taught in the programme is for children to recognise their own feelings, share those feelings with others and recognise feelings in other people.

Ways you can encourage the use of feelings with your child/ren are:

- Ask your child about their day, what did they like the most and the least
- Ask them how they feel in different situations
- Listen to and respect their feelings
- Model the use of feelings language such as “I feel happy when you give me a hug” or “When I see you fight with your brother it makes me feel sad”.

The Body and Private Parts

Children are taught that their body belongs only to them and that they have the right to say NO if they feel unsafe sharing their body.

Children are also educated on the anatomical language for their private parts.

Early Warning Signs

Early Warning Signs (EWS) are the physical sensations which we experience in our bodies when we do not feel safe, or when we are in an exciting or challenging situation.

Children are taught to recognise their own EWS and problem solve strategies to make them go away.

Some common EWS are:

- Butterflies in the tummy
- Jelly legs
- Sweating
- Heart racing
- Difficulty breathing

Personal Safety

Each person has the right to make their own decision about what feels safe and unsafe.