

RYDA supports the school curriculum

Curricula in Australia and New Zealand prescribe road safety-related topics in Health/PE (eg. safety, well-being), Science (eg. reaction time, speed and acceleration), Maths (eg. stopping distance, speed measurement), English (eg. research methods, visual language, personal writing, drama) and other subjects. It also allows teachers to choose contexts in all learning areas, and to support General Capabilities (Australia), and Key Competencies (NZ).

The Australian Curriculum includes seven general capabilities which road safety is related to:

Literacy

All types of literacy (written, spoken, visual) are critical to students exploring road safety issues and producing their own work.

The nature of road safety as both a technical, and decision-making domain, makes it content-focused, hence the need for information literacy skills. Most young people either sit the learner permit test or consider doing so. This makes Road Rule Handbooks, car handbooks and road signs essential reading/interpretation for students across the whole spectrum of language capabilities - first language speakers and those for whom English is a second language.

Numeracy

Statistics and computation skills are given deeper meaning when applied to road safety contexts - speed, acceleration, forces, crash rates etc. Students need a base level of understanding about vehicle physics and maths in order to make safer decisions when driving or being a passenger.

Information and communication technology (ICT) capability

ICT, including social media, can be used in sourcing key information in road safety investigations and taking action on personal or school road safety issues; it can be used by students to produce content for presentations, campaigns and analyses. Social media is a powerful medium in spreading road safety messages.

Critical and creative thinking

Road safety is all about critical thinking, evaluating situations, considering alternatives and making the safest decision. Being safe in and around cars involves a mix of factors - physical and human. For example, personal or social pressure, combined with the effect of transient mind states can contribute to already

complex decision points. Giving students tools to deconstruct and pre-plan responses can assist simpler and safer decision-making at critical moments.

Personal and social capability

This is at the core of being safe in and around cars and other vehicles. Decision-making ability, social skills and personal resilience are all key to being a safer driver or a passenger. Research underlines how adolescent brain development patterns as well as lack of road experience makes young drivers and passengers more vulnerable to heightened risk and lower hazard perception skills. This is complicated by peer influence. Road safety education that involves young people in developing and practicing strategies contributes to building this capability.

Ethical understanding

Ethics involves evaluating right and wrong human actions. Road safety behaviour involves building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook with an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others, especially considering the huge consequences of wrong decisions. Best practice road safety education places students in decision-making situations and supports them to discuss outcomes, and also consider what effect their decisions have on others (their friends, other road users and the wider community that is affected by road trauma).

Intercultural understanding

Road behaviour is one area of confluence of different beliefs and understandings. Road rules provide the legal framework for behaviour but creating connections with others and cultivating mutual respect needs explicit coverage in road safety education. Our evidence-led programs emphasise not only social responsibility but provide students with tools to notice and manage counterproductive mind states.

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The New Zealand Curriculum identifies five key competencies:

Thinking

Using creative, critical, and metacognitive processes to make sense of information, experiences, and ideas) Young drivers need to reflect on driver behaviour and how it contributes to risk, particularly on a personal level. Metacognition is an emerging area in the research on its significance to safer driving behaviour. Reflecting on what you as an individual brings to the car as driver/passenger helps develop self-understanding, decision making, shaping actions, and constructing knowledge about how to keep safe.

Using language, symbols, and texts

Written, oral/aural, and visual; informative language; mathematical, scientific, and technological literacy can be extended through their application to a key focus area for young people. Road rules, signs, physics and the interpretation of situations through language and symbols are ingredients in young driver awareness education.

Managing self

Self-management and being a driver or passenger are intertwined capabilities. Key strategies for safer decision-making include developing strategies for meeting challenges, knowing when to lead, when to follow, and when and how to act independently. This is a key to becoming a low risk driver, particularly in relation to managing peer pressure, distraction and risks (speed, alcohol etc). Resilience and reliability are important elements of this.

Relating to others

Safe behaviour as a driver or passenger depends on two interrelated aspects. One is social responsibility. Social responsibility is recognising the essentially social aspects of driving - sharing the road, thinking about the impact of your actions, and exercising courtesy. The other is managing interpersonal relationships with friends and family when planning and taking trips to negotiate safer outcomes. Protecting friends from harm is an effective motivator when changing young driver attitudes.

Participating and contributing

Understand the importance of balancing rights, roles, and responsibilities is an important aspect of road safety and includes legitimisation of road rules, the graduated licensing system, and cooperation with other drivers.