

Communicating 'stranger danger' incidents

Quick facts:

- During the school year, there are many reported 'stranger danger' incidents near schools.
- A significant proportion of postings on social media sites and various crime report-type websites are not substantiated by WA Police and some are even found to be false.
- All incidents should be verified by police prior to publication or broadcast.
- Schools routinely have protective behaviour talks, run activities with students throughout the year and send safety information home to parents on a general basis.

What schools do:

When a student or parent reports an alleged stranger danger incident to a school, the matter is reported to police. WA Police is the authority which determines how serious, or otherwise, the reported incident is considered to be. Police also make decisions about if and when the community needs to be warned about a potential threat.

Schools take into account the time, place and circumstances of the alleged incident when deciding whether to send a letter to parents. They also consider how recently any similar messages were sent.

Describing reported incidents:

Schools take police advice and are careful about the wording used to describe reported incidents. This is so that police investigations are not compromised.

Schools want families to be vigilant, but do not want to cause unnecessary alarm.

Media representatives should contact the WA Police Media Unit on **9222 1011** when reporting alleged stranger danger incidents.

The majority of incidents should be described as "a suspicious person and/or activity."

Emotive and unsubstantiated reporting of a suspicious person as an attempted abduction incident causes unnecessary fear and panic in the community.

The term "attempted abduction" should only be used if WA Police has specified it as a confirmed attempted abduction.

The WA Police definition of child abduction is the act or carrying off or detaining a child against his or her will by unlawful force.

Related information:

[WA Police](#)

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