

General guidance for teaching PSHE

Guidance document

These notes accompany the teaching packs, and should be read before teaching any sessions.

Context for learning

The activities in this pack have been designed to be taught as a structured PSHE education lesson, as part of your developmental programme of PSHE education.

Timings

All the activities within each pack are designed to fit into a one-hour lesson. The timings given are the minimum time required to deliver the activities. While it is always important for PSHE education lessons to be pacey, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils. More may be gained from spending longer

on an in-depth exploration of an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel pupils are progressing toward the lesson objectives. When this is the case, it may be more appropriate to extend the learning over two lessons.

Creating a safe learning environment

It is important to establish a safe learning environment for the pupils and staff in the classroom. This will enable pupils to share feelings, explore values and attitudes, express opinions and consider those of others without attracting negative feedback. As well as encouraging more open discussion, it also helps to make sure that teachers are not anxious about unexpected disclosures or comments. It is important to be well prepared to deal with any issues arising from the taught sessions – consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils' circumstances. Giving

prior notice that an issue will be covered may be advisable, which should also be given to pastoral and other relevant staff. It is best practice to:

- ensure that the content, approach and use of inclusive language reflect the diversity of the school community, to help every pupil feel valued and included
- work with pupils to establish ground rules about how they will behave towards each other in discussion (see notes on 'Ground rules' below)

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- offer some opportunities for pupils to discuss issues in small groups as well as sharing views with the class
- make boxes available in which pupils can place anonymous questions or concerns (see the 'Ask-it basket' section on page 3)
- provide access to balanced information and differing views to help pupils clarify their own opinions and views, while making it clear that behaviours such as racism, discrimination and bullying are never acceptable in any form
- be sensitive to the needs and experiences of individuals – some pupils may have direct experience of some of the themes raised
- always work within the school's policies on safeguarding and confidentiality, ensure that pupils understand school policies on disclosure of confidential information, and follow up concerns in a more appropriate setting outside lessons
- link PSHE education into the whole-school approach to supporting pupil welfare
- make pupils aware of sources of support both inside and outside the school.

Ground rules

Ground rules help to minimise inappropriate and unintended disclosures, plus comments of a negative nature made towards other pupils, intentional or not. Such ground rules support broader class and school rules, and the school's behaviour policy. To be effective, pupils and teachers need to develop ground rules together and then test them in discussion and group activities, amending them as necessary. Examples of ground rules include:

- listening to others and respecting what people say
- not making assumptions about other people
- keeping names and stories anonymous
- not asking personal questions or putting people 'on the spot'
- having the right to 'pass' if you do not wish to comment.

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Ask-it basket

An Ask-it basket, or question box, encourages pupils to ask difficult or awkward questions anonymously and without embarrassment. Introduce the Ask-it basket either while creating the ground rules, or at the beginning of each lesson as a reminder of the ground rules. It should be accessible both in and after every lesson. The purpose of the Ask-it basket should be explained to the pupils, for example:

- anyone can use it to post a question, at any time and as many times as they want
- questions can be anonymous, or if the pupils want to they can put their name on their question, so the teacher can follow it up
- only the teacher will see the questions, unless there are significant issues about a pupil's safety or wellbeing that need to be shared with others – see the 'Limits of confidentiality' section below
- questions raised will be dealt with in the following session (or sooner if relevant to a pupil's safety and wellbeing).

Tip

To ensure that pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, give each pupil a piece of paper and ask them to write down what they had for breakfast or lunch, and then add any questions they have. This means that everyone is writing at the same time. Set some time aside at the end of each session to do this.

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Limits of confidentiality

It is important that teachers are well prepared to deal with any issues arising from the taught sessions. Teachers should explain to pupils in simple terms that, whilst we usually try to keep everything said in the room, in the room; if they were concerned about a pupil's safety or wellbeing, they would have to tell one other member of staff. If a question, behaviour, or language arises that, as a teacher, you may find concerning, this should be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead in school—in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection policies.

There may be times when a question raised by a pupil should be referred to parents/carers. It is good practice to talk to the pupil(s) concerned before involving a parent or carer – to explain that it is in their best interests to talk to their parent(s) or a trusted adult. If a child refuses or rejects talking to their parent or carer, this should be taken seriously and discussed with the head/designated safeguarding lead and acted upon in accordance with the school's confidentiality policy.

Guidance for delivering baseline and end-point assessment activities

Before teaching PSHE education lessons, it is important to gain a clear sense of pupils' current understanding, pre-developed skills and attitudes towards the issue being explored. Teachers can then ensure that pupils' starting point is built on and any misconceptions addressed.

A baseline (before teaching) and end-point (after teaching) assessment activity should be included. The activity chosen will depend on the content of the pack, but may involve a 'draw and write' activity, for example, where the pupils are posed a question, story or snippet of information and are asked to respond.

The initial (baseline) assessment should be carried out before starting the sessions. It is important that the topic is not discussed with pupils beforehand. It should take no more than 15 minutes. Pupils should understand that it should be their own thoughts and ideas, that there are no right or wrong answers and that spelling does not matter. If pupils record their

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ideas on blank paper, they can write their name at the top. Ideally, this should be an activity carried out by each individual but can be adapted as a small group activity. Once completed, teachers may wish to open up a brief class discussion, to get a general sense of the class responses, but then papers should be collected and kept safe until the end of the lesson.

At the end of the lesson, pupils are given back their initial assessment sheets and using a different colour pen or pencil, asked to add to or amend them in the light of any new or consolidated learning and to demonstrate progress made. These can then be kept as evidence of learning.

For further advice and guidance on teaching PSHE education: www.pshe-association.org.uk