Just a joke?

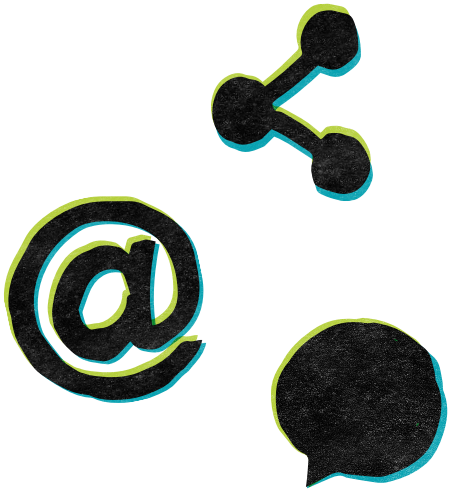
Sexualised online bullying amongst 9-12s

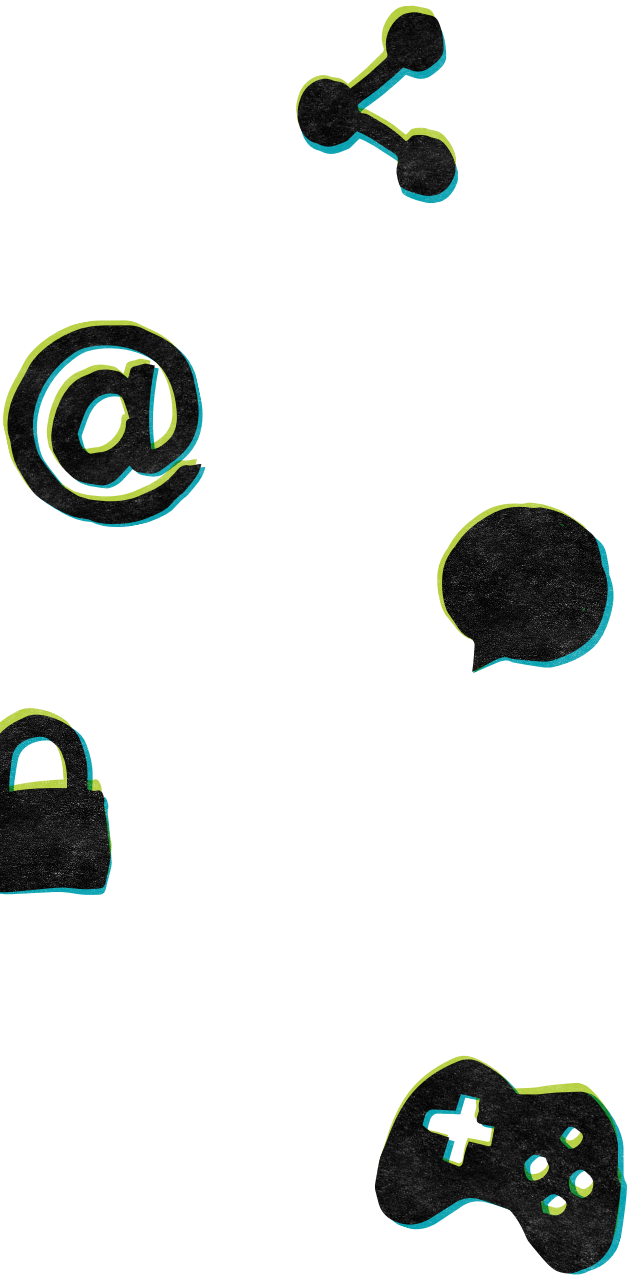
Teaching guide to accompany lesson plans and activities for young people aged 9 – 12

A practical teaching toolkit from

Childnet International

Step Up, Speak Up!





PROJECT
deSHAME II

Digital Exploitation and Sexual Harassment Among Minors in Europe

Childnet International · Save the Children · Kek Vonal · University of Central Lancashire UCLan

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Sexualised online bullying amongst 9-12s

Teaching guide

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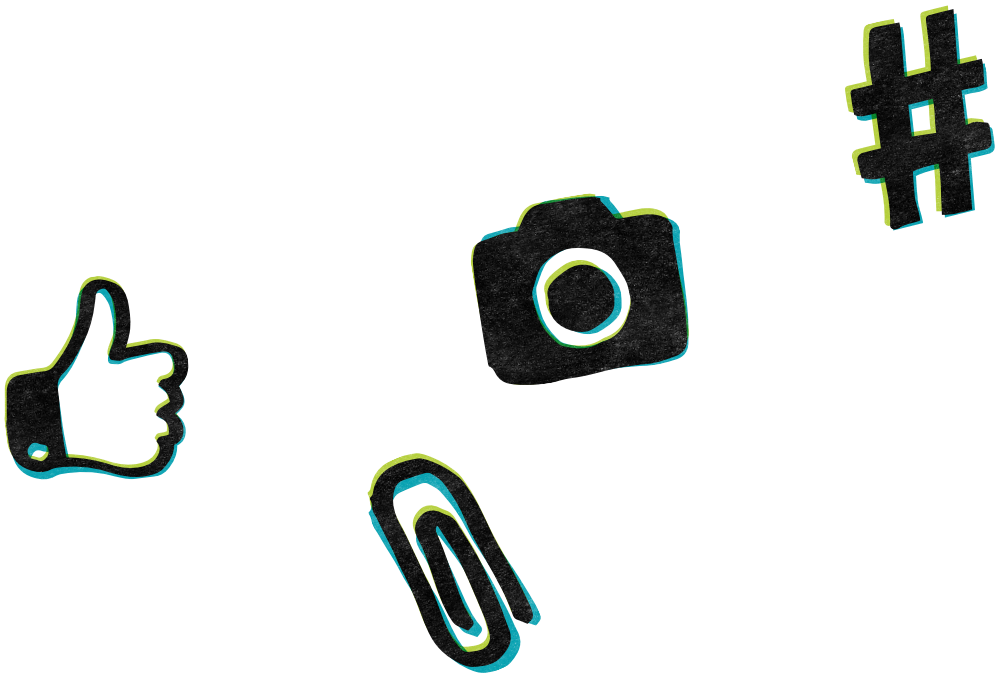

1. Why use this guide?

This guide accompanies the lesson plans, activities and quiz in the Just a Joke? Toolkit.

This toolkit aims to help educators explore problematic online sexual behaviour with 9-12 year olds. We know this topic can seem overwhelming or scary to talk about with this age group, but this toolkit aims to show you how this can be done in a safe, positive and age-appropriate way.

Who is it for?

Educators of children aged 9-12 years old.

What are the learning objectives?

- To support educators in delivering high quality PSHE/PSE and relationships education lessons.
- To give children a safe space to discuss, explore and challenge peer to peer online sexual harassment e.g. bullying or harmful behaviour online based on gender or sexual orientation stereotypes, body-shaming, nudity and sexually explicit content.
- To discuss with children how they can be good friends online.
- To raise awareness of this issue to prevent it from becoming normalised.
- To give children the confidence to report unacceptable online behaviour.

Why was it created?

This toolkit for 9-12 year olds follows on from the creation of a toolkit for 13-17 year olds. Feedback on these resources showed the need and desire for a toolkit to address this topic with a younger age group; this is where the beginnings of online sexual harassment were being noticed, and a need to challenge it early was identified.

To help create this toolkit, Project deSHAME conducted focus groups with 116 young people aged 9-12 years old, and 16 educators and school staff in Denmark, Hungary and the UK.

Find more information about the project and its beginnings here.

This toolkit:

- recognises online sexual harassment as a form of sexual violence;
- recognises that there is no single way that a child may experience online sexual harassment;
- recognises that it can affect children who witness it, as well as those who experience it; and
- focuses only on peer-to-peer online sexual harassment (taking place between children who know, or know of, each other).

See more information about the definition of online sexual harassment here.

Online sexual harassment

This guide uses the term '**online sexual harassment'** to describe the behaviour being addressed. In resources that are used or seen by children, we use the term 'cyberbullying' and refer to the specific type - cyberbullying that uses gender stereotypes, body shaming or nude images. This is because we know the words 'sexual' and 'harassment' may not be understood, used or appropriate for 9-12 year olds.

This is not a resource about online grooming

This resource targets online sexual harassment happening between children who know, or know of, each other. However, it is possible for adults to sexually harass young people online. For further advice and resources to address adult sexual behaviour towards children online, or to report this issue or any other concern around online grooming, please visit ceop.police.uk.

About the authors

This guide has been written by educators, for educators. Between them, the teams in the Project deSHAME partnership at Childnet, Kek Vonal and Save the Children Denmark have experience in teaching, psychology, and online safety.

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2. About Project deSHAME

Project deSHAME - Digital Exploitation and Sexual Harassment Among Minors in Europe

This resource has been created as part of Project deSHAME, a collaboration between Childnet (UK), Kek Vonal (Hungary), Save the Children (Denmark) and UCLan (UK), co-financed by the European Union.

It aims to increase reporting of online sexual harassment amongst children and young people and improve multi-sector cooperation in preventing and responding to this behaviour. The project name was chosen to reflect its purpose – to remove the shame from victims and to give children the tools to support their peers online.

3. What are 9-12s experiencing online?

This chapter talks about how 9-12 year olds experience the Internet. However, the best experts on this subject are your pupils themselves! Asking your pupils about what they like to do online is a great way to open up conversations and show them you are interested in their online lives.

You could ask them:

(On a Monday morning) **What did you do at the weekend? Did you go online?**

If we turned off the internet tomorrow, what would you miss most?

Would you rather...(gaming or watching videos? ... spend more time or less time online? ...go online alone or with friends?)

Whilst this age group enjoy a lot of similar online activities, keep in mind that each child you work with experiences the online world in a unique way, based on their unique identity. Their age, race, religion, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, lived experience and personality all affect how they experience the online world, and how others view them online.

This age group are going through many changes in their lives, both online and offline.

- They are entering the stages of puberty - the average age for girls to begin puberty is 11, while for boys the average age is 12. (www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/stages-of-puberty-what-happens-to-boys-and-girls/).
- Gender stereotypes are a typical feature of school culture at this age. Over a third (34%) of primary school teachers say they witness gender stereotyping in their school on at least a weekly basis. Over half (54%) say they witness it on at least a termly basis (NEU, 2017).

21%

of 8-11 year olds reported having a social media account (Ofcom, 2019) despite most social media sites having an age restriction of 13 years old.

37%

of 8-11s have their own smartphone.

49%

of 8-11s have their own tablet.

Between the ages of 9 and 10, smartphone ownership doubles from 23% to 50% as children prepare to move on to secondary school and increased digital independence (Ofcom, 2019).

66%

of 8-11s say they play games online, an increase from 35% of 5-7 year olds (Ofcom, 2019).

What do 9-12 year olds enjoy about going online?

The internet is extremely important to this age group. It plays a role in almost everything they do, from having friendships, to entertainment, to their learning and schoolwork, and making sense of the world around them. By watching the latest viral video, or sharing funny memes amongst their friends, it can help them to feel included in their peer group, and part of a bigger online community.

"Everything I own is internet, like I'm being deadly serious even my air-con needs internet so, you link it to my dad's phone."
Boy, 11-12, UK

Talking
to friends and family

Searching
for information

Watching
videos, clips, livestreams and TV shows

Gaming
either alone or with others online

Sharing
funny memes/gifs/other content

Finding
people they can relate to

Researching
things they like

Listening
to music

52%
of 8-12s say they would feel lost, confused or lost a part of themselves if their online accounts were taken away (UKSIC 2020)

"If something goes wrong you go straight to your phone to text them 'something's gone wrong' or what they can do about it."
Girl, 9-11, UK

62%
of 8-12s say their behaviour online makes up 'who they are' online. (UKSIC 2020)

"My life is the basically the internet."
Girl, 11-12, UK

52%
of 8-12s say being online makes me feel like I am part of a bigger community. (UKSIC 2020)

"Speaking to your friends, in messages and stuff so you can keep in touch even if they're not right there."
Girl, 10-11, UK

What do 9-12 year olds find upsetting about going online?

The mix of increased unsupervised time online, increased phone and tablet ownership, puberty, moving to secondary school and friendship dynamics can result in some negative online experiences for this age group.

This toolkit addresses cyberbullying that happens amongst peer groups who know each other, with a sexualised element. In our research, many pupils spoke about how this can happen as a joke, or as a result of coming across online content that seems rude, adult or inappropriate, and sharing it with others to cause a reaction.

Arguing
or falling out with a friend

Violence
images and video

Bullying
either as a victim, or as a bystander

Nudity
seeing images of people without their clothes (i.e. pornographic content)

Being judged
negatively for who they are

Hate speech
bullying, fighting

Use of personal content
posted online about them with their permission

"This person was just being themselves and they had really short hair and they were a girl but they looked a little like a boy. Then all these people online ganged up and were being mean to her because she looked different. And that stopped her posting things and made her really upset."
Girl, 9-11, UK

60%

of 8-12s say they are more careful about what they share online because of people being mean to each other based on who they are. (UKSIC 2020)

"They could have sent pictures all round the school, adding things on to it to."
Girl, 9-11, UK

1 in 10

of 8-12s say they have felt out of control of the information that is up about them online. (UKSIC 2020)

"You might feel surprised and shocked because I don't know who would send a photo like that. It's just really inappropriate."
Boy, 9-11, UK

50%

of 12-15s who go online say they have seen something hateful about a particular group of people based on, for instance, their gender, religion, disability, sexuality or gender identity). (Ofcom, 2019)

"...they were a girl but they looked a little like a boy. Then all these people online ganged up and were being mean to her because she looked different."
Girl, 9-11, UK

What does online sexual harassment look like for 9-12s?

Bullying

Bullying someone for online behaviour that is outside of common gender stereotypes e.g. bullying a boy for watching a make-up tutorial video, or a girl for using a profile picture showing her short haircut.

Body shaming

Embarrassing someone for the way their body looks e.g. mean comments on a photo about someone's body shape, particularly if it seems to target or criticise perceived attractiveness.

Pornography

Sharing online pornography, whether as a link or image, because it was seen by the sender as 'funny'.

'Upskirting'

Taking photos underneath someone's clothes, without their knowledge e.g. taking a photo up someone's shorts on the school bus, or of someone getting changed at a sleepover.

Homophobic language

Using offensive homophobic language e.g. calling someone 'gay' to mark them out as 'other' in some way.

Photo editing

Editing photos to make them sexual or gendered e.g. adding emojis on a photo that are meant to represent sexual body parts.

'Sexting'

Sending a nude or nearly nude image of a peer to others.

Why?

A joke

Revenge

'Sticking up' for a friend

Popularity

It can...

- happen on any digital platform (social media, games, messaging apps, public or private);
- use a range of digital content (images, videos, posts, messages, pages);
- happen publicly, privately, or both at the same time;
- include a variety of different behaviours, possibly happening at the same time;
- overlap with offline experiences of sexual harassment; and
- make a person feel threatened, exploited, coerced, humiliated, upset, sexualised or discriminated against.

And...

- Gender. Both boys and girls can be targeted, but our research tells us that for some forms of online sexual harassment girls are more likely to be targeted. They are often judged more harshly than boys for becoming a victim.
- Discrimination. When combined with other identity characteristics that might be targeted, online sexual harassment can impact children in unique ways. These might include actual or perceived gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, special educational needs or disabilities.
- Offline behaviours. Experiences of sexual harassment can overlap between children's offline and online lives.

4. Why should 9-12s be taught about online sexual harassment?

It's happening amongst this age group

Many social media sites have an age restriction of 13, but many children under 13 are using them. Social media can be one of many online spaces where online sexual harassment can occur, as well as games, messaging apps and other online services.

In our research, children spoke about this type of behaviour as if it was a normal part of being online, but were also confused by it, and unsure on what to do if they saw it. For many, the fear of getting in trouble would stop them from telling an adult at all.

It can help prevent unhealthy behaviour in the future

Teaching children to recognise unhealthy and abusive behaviours can help to prevent them from both experiencing it and copying it as they grow older.

Supporting children to recognise and challenge online sexual harassment helps them to understand it should not be accepted as a normal part of growing up – either online or offline.

Discussing this issue appropriately with 9-12s helps this age group to:

- make sense of what they already know and feel safe to ask questions;
- understand their right to be respected by others online;
- understand their responsibility to respect others online;
- form healthy relationships in whatever form they take; and
- recognise if a relationship is unhealthy and know how to seek help.

It's not being recognised or reported enough

Children are witnessing or experiencing a wide range of unwanted sexual behaviours online. Many do not recognise they are unacceptable and so, do not report them.

Some children may understand this behaviour is not okay, but face several challenges to reporting it, such as not knowing how, being scared of getting in trouble, or worries about their device getting taken away. This means children can end up dealing with online problems by themselves, with no support from adults.

It impacts on children's wellbeing

There is no single way that a child may experience online sexual harassment. It can also affect others who witness it.

It can have significant short-term and long-term emotional impacts, which may affect their school life, family life and self-esteem. The fear of content being re-shared online can stay with children for a long time, and slow down the healing process.

5. Before using the toolkit – A How To... Guide

Before delivering any activities, think about your approach and what you want to achieve, both with your pupils but also your wider school community. Thinking about how you want the activities to go before you run them will help you feel prepared and confident.

☑ How to keep your pupils interested

In general, children really enjoy talking about the internet and what they do online. Pupils will be more open to discussion if they feel they are speaking to an adult who has a genuine interest in their online lives.

You could show an interest in your pupils' online lives by:

- asking questions about what they like to do online and why;
- becoming a 'pupil' for a short question and answer session, and ask them to teach you about their favourite app or game; and
- encouraging your pupils to bring their own knowledge, experience and viewpoints to the discussions.

"I want you all to keep enjoying your time online, so to do that we need to talk about how we can handle things that upset us or worry us online."

☑ How to create a non-judgemental environment

Pupils may 'switch off' if they feel like they are being judged or shamed for being online, either by other pupils or by their teacher/educator.

This judgement may not be on purpose – as adults, it can be easy to blame the internet when things go wrong, or question why children are online at all. There is a risk that taking this view can shut down open conversations with children, stop them from asking questions, and undermine the main objective – for children to seek adult support if anything worries or upsets them online.

All children have a right to be online, and make the most of the amazing opportunities it can offer. Educators can help challenge inappropriate behaviour so that all children can use the internet safely and respectfully. Once given the time, space and non-judgemental environment, children are usually very willing to talk about their online lives and their learning can thrive.

Find time to reflect on your own opinions about children's internet use. You could:

- Share your knowledge about this topic with your colleagues, and seek out different viewpoints and experiences.
- Talk through this toolkit with your colleagues and support each other to challenge any pre-conceptions you have.
- 'Buddy up' with another colleague to ensure you take a balanced approach to the topic.

☑ How to pitch the activities appropriately

At first online sexual harassment may seem a difficult topic to discuss with 9-12 year olds, but it can be taught in an age and developmentally appropriate way.

Consider what other lessons your pupils have received about consent, healthy relationships, online safety and other relevant work in PSHE/PSE and relationships education. What language was used? What concepts have they learnt? How do you want to build on this learning in the future? See page 14 for pre and post-activity checklists to help guide this thought process.

Consider the maturity of your pupils. This can vary year to year, with different classes. Each time you plan to deliver the activities in this toolkit, you will probably need to pitch the learning slightly differently.

Meet pupils where they are at in terms of their knowledge. Find out what they already know about this behaviour and their attitude towards to it. You could:

- run a pupil survey;
- ask pupils to post questions or concerns in an anonymous 'worry box'; or
- create a working wall with what pupils want to know displayed on it.

Doing some preparation can help you to pitch your discussions appropriately, and prepare for any difficult questions that come up. You are welcome to adapt the Toolkit to suit the needs of your pupils. You could:

- Add, remove or change some scenarios.
- Add, remove or change the discussion questions.
- Split the activities up and deliver them over a longer period of time.

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☑ How to be sensitive to any previous or current incidents

During these activities, pupils may recognise that they have witnessed, experienced or carried out online sexual harassment, either on purpose or without realising. They could also realise something currently happening online is online sexual harassment.

You may already know some pupils have been affected by this issue, and it's one of the reasons why you are delivering this toolkit. Be careful not to draw attention to those affected in front of their peers or use them as an example; it could harm their recovery and trust in the adults supporting them.

To support your pupils, you could:

- Speak to any pupils who may be affected beforehand about what the activity will involve and remind them where they can go for help, e.g. a teacher, a learning assistant, parents or carers, a helpline.
- Regularly remind all pupils where they can go for help with any concern, including things happening online e.g. a teacher, a learning assistent, parents or carers, a helpline.
- Remind all pupils at the start of any activity about the ground rules (See Lesson #1). Reinforce positive use of the ground rules, as well referring to them if pupils do not follow them.
- Apply your school's behaviour policy consistently and follow up as you would do in any other lesson or situation in school.
- Inform other colleagues (e.g. pastoral staff) when you plan to deliver any activities from this Toolkit, in case you need additional support to help pupils who may be upset. You may also like to have a named member of staff who pupils can go to if they feel they need to leave the room.

☑ How to deliver the activities confidently

Before delivering any activity from this toolkit, you could:

- Read through this Guidance and all the accompanying resources.
- Run a survey amongst your pupils to find out more about the online apps or sites they use most, and their attitudes towards different behaviours or risks online.
- Test out some of the apps, sites or games your pupils use.
- Run a small focus group and ask pupils what words or ideas they associate with certain key words from the toolkit.
- Speak to colleagues for their support, experience or ideas.

Whilst children may know a lot about the internet and technology, it does not always mean they know how to behave appropriately while using them. Other factors such as friendships, peer group dynamics, wider societal influences, developmental changes, and risk-taking all play a role in how children behave online.

The messages educators can deliver to children about bullying, how to be a good friend, peer pressure, gender stereotypes, and consent can also be applied to children's online lives. Many situations children face are neither solely online or offline, but a combination of both.

Children often have to make quick decisions on how to handle difficult online situations. Educators can talk them through their options and the consequences their actions may have, to guide them in the right direction.

☑ How to engage parents and carers positively

In general, parents and carers want their child to know how to use the internet safely and respectfully, and they understand why this topic is important. However, there may be some parents and carers who have worries or doubts over this subject, particularly if they hear about it without explanation, for example, if their child tells them about what they did at school that day.

To help all parents and carers understand and welcome the activities in this toolkit, you can:

- Send a letter home with pupils that explain the resource and why it is being used (See page 17 for a letter template.)
- Invite parents and carers to speak to you or your Senior Management about their concerns.
- Invite parents and carers to view the resources, ideally during a drop-in session at school so that school staff can talk them through.
- Run a survey with your pupils to find out what worries them online or what they want to learn about, and use the results to explain to parents and carers why this topic needs to be addressed.

The DfE has produced guidance specifically to support primary schools in England with parental engagement on relationships education, but which all settings may find useful.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/engaging-parents-with-relationships-education-policy

6. In the classroom

This chapter includes some tips for creating a safe learning environment in which to discuss online sexual harassment with 9-12 year olds.

1. Create a set of ground rules

Agree on a set of ground rules with your pupils that clearly state the expectations from behaviour and discussions. An effective set of ground rules will be in language that is age appropriate and framed as positive behaviours, e.g. 'We will support one another.'

See Lesson #1 on setting ground rules.

2. Promote inclusivity

Remind pupils that we are all different, have different experiences and learn in different ways. Ask pupils to be respectful of everyone's opinions. This point can form part of the ground rules (see point 1).

3. Use a question box

Pupils may have questions they feel uncomfortable asking in front of a group. Set up a question box where pupils can post questions or worries they have about the topic. If they want an individual reply, you can encourage them to add their name. If they are happy for the response to be given to the whole group, they can post their question anonymously.

4. 'No real names'

To respects pupils' privacy and give them confidence to discuss their feelings, ask pupils to use 'a friend' or 'someone they know' instead of using people's real names if they want to talk about an online experience.

5. Time out

Let pupils know it's okay if they need some time out during any activity. Ensure there is a space and supervision in order for them to do so, and that they are supported to re-join the activity once they are ready.

6. Non-judgmental approach

Although some opinions can and should be challenged, it is important not to shame or judge a pupil who shares something sensitive or personal. Praise pupils who are respectful of other pupils' experiences and feelings, and appropriately question those who do not.

7. Seating plan

Consider moving pupils around or rearranging your seating layout completely to encourage discussion and involvement. Moving to a different seating arrangement can act as a physical signal that the ground rules are now in action.

8. Clarify language

Whilst educators understand terms such as safeguarding, Designated Safeguarding Lead, and disclosure, pupils probably don't. Check your pupils understanding if you introduce a new word, and explain what these words mean if they are unsure.

Pupils will have their own slang and terminology too. Let pupils use the words they are comfortable with, and check you understand their meaning when you need to.

Decide before any activities if you are comfortable with pupils referring to offensive language they may see online. If you allow it, remind them it is only being allowed in the context of the activity, and if they use it unnecessarily permission to use it will be taken away.

9. Handling questions safely and appropriately

If a pupil asks a difficult or concerning question, be aware of the message your response could give to them and the other pupils. Even if the question was asked as a joke, it means that pupils feel some degree of confidence to ask difficult questions – a sign of a good PSHE/PSE or relationships education lesson.

Take all questions seriously. If it is something that can be answered in front of other pupils, give an answer that is clear and factual and refers to pupils' existing knowledge.

If you are unsure how to answer the question in an age-appropriate way, explain that you've taken a note of their question and will get back to them after the lesson. Seek advice from colleagues on how to answer.

If it is a question that also raises a safeguarding concern, follow this up using your school safeguarding procedure.

10. Expectations around disclosures

Make sure pupils know that whilst these activities are a space to be open and honest, the school has a responsibility to protect all children.

"We will be talking about issues that might be sensitive or difficult to talk about sometimes. It's okay to feel unsure or ask questions. Because I am a teacher/youth worker/staff member it is my responsibility to make sure you are safe and help to protect you from harm. If I hear something that makes me think that someone is hurting you or another child, I will do everything I can to help you and to prevent this from happening again.

You don't have to share something very personal in the group, but if you would like to talk to me about something alone, just ask me and we will arrange a time to talk."

Explain what you would need to do if you hear anything that makes you worry that a child is at risk, for example, telling another adult (usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead) to get the best advice and support possible for that pupil. See more on pg 15 – handling disclosures.

☑ Pre-activity checklist

Aim

- ☐ The aim of this activity is:
- ☐ How does this activity fit in with previous and future activities?

Learning outcomes

- ☐ What do I want the pupils to take away from this activity?
- ☐ What should pupils be able to do as a result of this activity? (Be specific, simple, and realistic.)

Educator knowledge

- ☐ Have I read through the relevant guidance, activities and resources?
- ☐ Are there any areas I feel less confident on? If yes, how can I improve this? (See How To… on page 9.)
- ☐ Do I need to research the topic further?

Emotional wellbeing of pupils

- ☐ Are there any topics or activities I think may upset or affect any pupils?
- ☐ Are there any pupils who have been or are currently involved in an incident of online sexual harassment? What sort of reaction might these activities cause? (Think about victims, perpetrators and bystanders too.)
- ☐ How can I support any pupils who may have an emotional reaction?
- ☐ How can I approach these topics or activities sensitively?
- ☐ How will I manage any behaviours within the group that may emerge as a result of discussing these topics?
- ☐ Am I prepared for any disclosures that may arise? How will I deal with these?

☑ Post- activity evaluation

Aim:

- ☐ Was the aim of the activity met? If yes, what helped pupils to do this? If no, what could be changed in future to help pupils to do this?

Learning outcomes

- ☐ What did pupils take away from this activity?
- ☐ What can pupils now do as a result of this activity?
- ☐ Are there any areas that pupils had questions or misconceptions about? How can I address these in the future?

Educator knowledge

- ☐ Did I feel I had adequate knowledge on the topic?
- ☐ Were there any areas I would have liked to be more knowledgeable on? What were they and how can I learn more about them?

Emotional wellbeing of pupils

- ☐ How did the pupils respond to the topics covered?
- ☐ Were there any topics or activities that were distressing to any pupils? How did I adapt my practice to deliver these appropriately?
- ☐ How did I support any pupils who became distressed? What further support do they need in future?
- ☐ Were there any behaviours caused by the topics covered? How did I deal with this? Would this approach work again or is there anything I need to change?
- ☐ Were there any disclosures made? Have I dealt with these appropriately?

7. Handling disclosures around online sexual harassment

By discussing online sexual harassment, pupils may realise they have seen, experienced or carried out similar behaviours online. By giving them space and time to reflect on this issue, they may feel more comfortable to disclose these experiences, either in front of a group or to an adult they trust.

Your school may see an increase in the number of pupils making reports about online sexual harassment due to delivering these activities, at least short-term. This does not necessarily mean incidents are increasing - it's more likely that the number of pupils reporting them is going up, and evidence that the activities are helping to improve pupils' confidence in reporting.

☑ How to support a pupil if they disclose a concerning online experience

If a child discloses something that is worrying or upsetting them online, whether that is mean comments about their profile picture, rude emojis added to their photo, or rumours that a classmate is sharing links to adult content, deal with this information in the same way you would treat any other safeguarding concern.

All incidents that suggest peer-on-peer online sexual harassment should be responded to in line with school safeguarding policy. Ensure you are familiar with this policy so you know how to take the appropriate action.

When an incident involving peer-on-peer online sexual harassment comes to a school's attention:

- The incident should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible;
- a written record of the disclosure should be made as soon as possible.
- The DSL should hold an review meeting with appropriate school staff.
- Children involved should be spoken with (if appropriate.)
- Parents/carers should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe informing them would put their child at risk of harm.
- If there is ever a concern a child has been harmed or is at immediate risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social service and/or the police immediately.

If a pupil makes a disclosure to you, thank them for doing the right thing by telling you, and acknowledge their good sense and any challenges they have overcome. Explain what you have to do next to make sure they are safe (e.g. telling another adult, making notes.) Let them know they can ask you any questions. If you don't have the answers straight away, explain that you can find these out together.

After the incident has been followed up, put in place a plan to keep supporting the pupil concerned. Online content has the potential to be re-shared or reappear after the original incident. The child may also need on-going emotional support to help them process their feelings about the incident.

☑ How to remove barriers to reporting

There are many worries, challenges and situations that might stop a pupil from reporting something upsetting online. Keep this in mind if a pupil makes a disclosure to you, as it might guide the best way to handle the situation.

Pupils might not report something worrying or upsetting online for fear that:

- they will be embarrassed;
- they will get in trouble;
- they will be called a 'snitch';
- their devices or internet access will be taken away;
- it will not be taken seriously;
- adults will 'overreact'; or
- it will reveal something personal about them.

Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) may not have the words or means to tell someone they are worried about something online, or understand the behaviour they are experiencing.

Once you have considered what challenges your pupils have towards reporting, you can work on making reporting easier for them. The most important thing you can do is to create a culture of open conversation about the online world. Discussing what happens online shows pupils it is okay to talk about and that they have an adult they can go to who would understand and care about any online problems they have.

For pupils with SEND, these discussions may take a different form from a verbal conversation, for example, using communication tools they are able to access, such as visual aids or sign language.

8. Template Parents & Carers Letter

***Depending on which UK nation you are in and what statutory guidelines your school follows, this template may need further adaptation. For example, you may feel the need to provide parents and carers with opportunity to withdraw their child from some of the activities in this toolkit. Speak to your Senior Management Team for further guidance.**

Name and address of school

Date

Dear parents and carers,

As a school, we want to provide pupils with the time, space and resources to learn the skills they need for healthy and happy lives. This includes delivering relationships education.

We know that the internet plays an important role in children's lives, and so it plays an important role in our relationships education policy. As such, we are planning to deliver learning activities to your child about cyberbullying which uses harmful gender stereotypes, body shaming and nudity to upset friends and classmates online.

Although not all children will be involved in this behaviour, seeing this behaviour online may impact their understanding of healthy friendships, positive online behaviour and when they should ask for help.

We can assure you that under no circumstances will visual examples of anything explicit be shown.

Our relationships education policy is taught in line with government recommendations.*

You might want to talk to your child about these issues before the work is covered in school. If you have any questions about the content or resources used, please contact me and I would be happy to discuss further.

We are very keen to give parents and carers opportunities to find out more about our relationships education policy, and in particular how we teach this topic. All the resources we use are available for you to look through if you would find this helpful.

Should you have any further questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

(Name)

9. Further resources

Teaching resources

AGENDA and Primary AGENDA toolkits
AGENDA and Primary Agenda are free online toolkits to help explore ideas around equality and diversity with children and young people.
http://agendaonline.co.uk

Making sense of relationships
A series of lesson plans from the NSPCC on personal safety and relationships including online friendships, consent and sexualised behaviour.
https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/schools/making-sense-relationships

BBC Teach - KS2 PSHE and Social Studies
Free teacher classroom resources suitable for use in PSHE and Social Studies lessons with primary school children at Key Stage 2 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and at 1st and 2nd Level in Scotland
https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/ks2-pshe/zbrg7nb

BBC Own It
Questions, answers and tools to help chidren make the most of their time online.
https://www.bbc.com/ownit

Further information

PSHE Association
The national association for PSHE education professionals. Providing members with dedicated support, resources, training & guidance.
https://www.pshe-association.org.uk

Sex Education Forum
A group of partners working together to achieve quality relationships and sex education (RSE) for all children and young people. Hosts latest practice, research and policy information.
https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk

Help and reporting

Report Harmful Content
The UK's national reporting centre for harmful online content. Find out how to make a report on different platofrms and how to escalate any reports that need further attention.
https://reportharmfulcontent.com

Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH)
A dedicated helpline to provide all members of the children's workforce with any online safety issues they, or children and young people in their care, may face.
0344 381 4772
helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/professionals-online-safety-helpline

CEOP
Report any concerns about online grooming, online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating with a child online.
https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)
Report child sexual abuse content or non-photographic child sexual abuse images.
https://www.iwf.org.uk

Thank you for taking part in the lessons about online bullying and jokes that have gone too far online.

Please remember to respect others' privacy and not share other people's stories outside of these lessons.

In school, you can talk to:

_____

At this time:

_____

In this place:

_____

At home, you can talk to:

_____

childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

On the phone or online, you can talk to Childline.

You can get confidential help and advice about any problem that you may have.

0800 11 11
www.childline.org.uk

Childnet International

Find out how to get help and make a report on Childnet's website.

www.childnet.com/young-people

deshame.eu

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