

Let's talk about healthy relationships: friendships and conflict (11-13) lesson plan

Lesson plan



This lesson has been split into two parts, Part 1 and Part 2, each approximately 40–50 minutes. It builds on the assembly and provides an opportunity for video and scenario-based learning to explore how conflicts arise in friendships, how emotions influence behaviour and how students can respond in a positive and respectful way. Students will also consider how conflict can affect their mental wellbeing and learn strategies to manage situations effectively.

Part 1 (slides 1–19) focuses on understanding what conflict is, how it develops online and in person, the role of boundaries and peer pressure, and how conflict can affect wellbeing.

Part 2 (slides 20–39) focuses on applying strategies to real conflict situations through video scenarios, sharing and creating advice, and knowing when and how to seek support.

Resources

- Lesson slides (single deck, covers Part 1 and Part 2)
- Statement resource (for activity on slide 6)
- What Are Boundaries? worksheet (for activity on slide 12)
- Post-it notes / whiteboards (optional)
- Pens / pencils

Key vocabulary



Conflict, disagreement, resolution, emotional regulation, boundaries, peer pressure, communication, digital communication, miscommunication, assumption, empathy, respect, escalation, de-escalation, mental health, wellbeing

Learning Outcomes (LO)

Students will understand how conflict can develop in friendships and how to manage situations in a way that supports their wellbeing.

Over both lessons, students will have the opportunity to:

- explore how conflict develops in friendships and how it can escalate
- recognise how emotions influence behaviour and responses
- compare how conflict can occur in online and face-to-face situations
- understand the role of boundaries and peer pressure in friendship situations
- learn and apply strategies to manage conflict in a positive and respectful way
- reflect on how conflict can affect their wellbeing and how to look after themselves
- consider when and how to seek support.

Ground rules

We recommend that you establish ground rules around respectful listening and confidentiality.

For further guidance, please see the PSHE Association's guide to [handling complex issues safely in the classroom](#).

If you have any concerns during the session about a student's safety or wellbeing, follow your setting's safeguarding policy and procedures.



Anna Freud

Delivery and adaptation

This lesson is designed to be flexible. Consider how students in your group may best access the learning and adapt activities where needed. Some activities already offer different ways for students to take part, including opportunities for discussion, movement and quiet reflection. If students would benefit from further adaptation or additional support, an SEND-adapted version of the lesson is also available.

Part 1 – approx. 40–50 minutes (slides 1–19)

Slide	Notes	
2	Check in This is an opportunity for you to check in with how the students are feeling after the learning so far, find out whether anyone needs any additional support and remind pupils of group agreement.	
3	Learning outcomes	
4	Match the keywords Invite students to match each term to its correct definition. Give students one minute to complete the task independently before reviewing as a class. Quickly check answers and clarify if needed.	
5	Recap: what is conflict? Briefly revisit: • disagreements are a normal part of friendships • conflict is a more serious disagreement • conflict can affect wellbeing Prompt: <i>What do you remember from the assembly about disagreement and conflict?</i>	
6	What's your opinion? (Activity) Use the statement resource to explore different viewpoints about friendships and conflict. Use the statement resource to explore different viewpoints about friendships and conflict. Students are given a statement and asked whether they agree or disagree - by moving around the room, placing statements on a scale, or discussing in pairs/small groups. Some students may have the same statement but different responses, which supports discussion about differing interpretations. Encourage respectful listening and alternative perspectives. Prompt: • <i>Why might someone see this differently?</i> • <i>How might someone feel in this situation?</i> • <i>Would your response change if this happened online or in person?</i> • <i>Would your response change if other people were watching or involved?</i> • <i>Do you think people always choose what they believe is right or what feels safest socially?</i> • <i>How might peer pressure influence what someone does here?</i>	Support: Provide sentence starters such as "I agree because..." or "Someone might disagree because...". Allow think-pair-share before whole-class discussion. Stretch: Encourage students to explain both sides of a viewpoint or consider how peer pressure may influence responses.
Conflict online vs in person		
8	Is conflict different online? Introduce the idea that while conflict can happen in both online and in-person situations, the way it develops and is experienced may be different. Ask students to think quietly about the below as initial thinking: • <i>How is communicating online different to in person?</i> • <i>What can make messages easy to misunderstand?</i> • <i>How might being in a group chat affect what you say or do?</i>	

9	Comparing the two - Students compare conflict online and in person, identifying similarities and differences (a “what is the same / what is different” table on the slide). Encourage at least three ideas for each. Prompt students to consider: tone of voice, facial expressions and body language; how people respond and how quickly; how messages might be interpreted; the influence of others (e.g. group chats, peer pressure); how people feel in each situation. Circulate and support before gathering responses as a class. Draw out key ideas, including: - Conflict in both situations can make people feel upset or misunderstood and may affect relationships. People may also react emotionally. - Online conflict can sometimes be harder to manage because messages do not include tone of voice, facial expressions or body language. - Short messages, punctuation, emojis and lack of context can also change how a message is understood. - A person's mood may affect how they read a message and group chats can increase pressure to respond or take sides. Questions to explore: <i>Why might people interpret the same message differently?</i> <i>How might someone feel in each situation?</i> <i>Which differences can make conflict harder to manage online?</i>
10	What would Jordan do? Read through Jordan's scenario and the four response options together, giving students time to decide which response would be most helpful and why. In pairs or small groups, discuss what might happen next with each choice, then bring the class together to explore why disagreements can escalate online and when it might be better to pause and talk another way.
11	What are boundaries? (intro) Introduce boundaries as what someone feels comfortable or not comfortable within a friendship. Ask: When might someone need to set a boundary? Why might someone go along with something they're not comfortable with? This sets up the scenario on the next slide.
12	What are boundaries? (Priya scenario) Read through Priya's scenario as a class, then work through the What Are Boundaries? worksheet – identifying where peer pressure is influencing their response, where a boundary could have been set and what they could have said or done differently. Discuss as a class why setting a boundary can feel difficult in the moment (e.g. fear of embarrassment, wanting to fit in).
13-15	What could you say? (three optional slides) Each of these three slides presents a short friendship scenario (e.g. an uncomfortable group chat message, a friend misunderstanding you, being caught between two arguing friends) and gives students two example replies to choose between, or the option to come up with their own. They're optional and editable, so teachers can adjust the scenario and replies to suit their group, or duplicate the slide for more examples.

16	How might conflict impact your mental wellbeing? Read the definition on the slide and gesture to the image. Explain that mental wellbeing is about how we think, feel and cope with everyday situations. It can change over time - sometimes people feel able to cope, and at other times things may feel more difficult. These changes are normal, and people can move back towards feeling more able to cope. Ask: how might conflict affect someone's mental wellbeing? Draw out: • feeling stressed, worried or upset • overthinking situations or messages • feeling left out or isolated • changes in mood or confidence • difficulty concentrating or relaxing Reinforce that recognising how we feel can help us manage situations and seek support if needed. Link forward: strategies can help manage both the situation and wellbeing.
17	Looking after yourself Talk through the six wellbeing strategies on the slide – taking a break, talking to someone trusted, setting boundaries, stepping away, giving yourself time and focusing on what you can control. Ask if students can think of any other strategies that might help their wellbeing during conflict?
18	Lesson recap (Part 1) Recap the key ideas from Part 1 e.g. what conflict is, how it can play out differently online and in person, what boundaries are and how conflict can affect wellbeing.
19	Reflection Students reflect on Part 1 by writing down what they've learned, any questions they still have and one thing they will apply. Give a few minutes to complete this, then invite a few to share if time allows.
Part 2 – approx. 40–50 minutes (slides 20–39)	
Exploring conflict in friendships	
21	Recap Ask students to use the illustrations on the slide to recall strategies for resolving conflict. Give students a short period of thinking time, then take responses.
22	Explain that students will watch a series of short videos presenting situations involving peer relationships and conflict, both online and in person. Before watching each video, give students time to read or hear the scenario and briefly discuss how they might respond. Encourage them to consider how they might feel, what they might do, and which strategies could help. Play the video. Each video shows two students discussing the same scenario and sharing their responses. After watching, facilitate a short discussion. Invite students to reflect on: • whether their ideas were similar or different • which responses seemed most helpful • which strategies were used or could be used • whether support might be needed and who they could speak to Encourage students to compare their own ideas with those shown and apply conflict resolution strategies to realistic situations.
23–34	Responding to conflict: video scenarios

Advice for handling conflict

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Advice video

Students watch a short video where other young people share advice about friendships, conflict and wellbeing. Ask students to choose one or two of the questions on the slide to focus on as they watch. They do not need to answer every question.

Give choice in how they engage:

- think quietly
- discuss with a partner
- jot down a key idea

After watching, give 30–60 seconds thinking time, then invite a few responses. Sharing is optional. Highlight useful examples and briefly link back to strategies from the lesson.

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What advice would you give?

Students create their own piece of advice for another student, drawing on strategies from the lesson, earlier discussions and the videos.

Offer the sentence starters as a support if needed:

- “My top tip is...”
- “Something that can help is...”
- “One thing I’ve learned is...”

Reflecting on our learning

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Lesson recap

Explain that this is a quick recap of the key ideas from the lesson. Briefly revisit that conflicts can happen for different reasons, including misunderstandings, that emotions can affect how people respond, and that strategies can help manage situations. Ask a few quick questions to check understanding:

- What is one reason conflict can happen?
- What might affect how we respond?
- Can you name one strategy?

Take a few responses and keep this brief. Explain that students will now reflect on what this means for them.

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Share your reflections

Explain that students will reflect on their learning and how it applies to real life.

Ask them to write:

- three things they learned
- two questions they still have
- one thing they will apply

Give a few minutes to complete (e.g. paper, sticky notes, or whiteboards). If time allows, students can share with a partner. Then invite a few to share with the class, address any common questions and link learning to online and face-to-face friendships.

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People who can help you

Teachers can edit this slide with relevant signposting information. Invite students to think about where they could go for support. Explain that in Year 7 and Year 8, friendships can sometimes change, feel confusing, or include new situations like group chats or larger friendship groups.

Reassure students that it is normal for things to feel difficult at times, and that many friendship situations can be worked through. If something is worrying them, they can talk to someone and get support.



Anna Freud