

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

Lesson series overview



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Age group: 11-13	Key words: Healthy relationships, disagreement, conflict, resolution, empathy, respect, communication, boundaries, support network, mental wellbeing, emotional regulation, digital communication, peer pressure
Timings: 1. Assembly: 20–25 minutes 2. Lesson – Part 1: 40–50 minutes 3. Lesson – Part 2: 40–50 minutes Suggested timings are provided as a guide and can be adapted to support effective delivery in your setting.	Learning outcomes: By the end of this series of learning, students will: • develop the skills to manage and repair peer conflict effectively, including knowing when and how to seek support • improve emotional literacy and the ability to regulate emotional responses in social situations • develop an understanding of safe and respectful behaviour in online spaces, particularly within peer group communication (e.g. group chats) • build confidence in setting and maintaining personal boundaries, both offline and online • strengthen their ability to navigate peer pressure and make safe, independent decisions • feel more confident in building and maintaining positive, healthy friendships during the transition into and across Year 7 and 8
Delivery guidance	
Structure and approach This learning is designed as a three-part sequence, beginning with an assembly to introduce key ideas, followed by two lessons that build understanding and give students opportunities to practise and apply their skills. This learning is designed as a three-part sequence, beginning with an assembly to introduce key ideas, followed by two lessons that build understanding and give students opportunities to practise and apply their skills. This learning series forms part of a wider curriculum around emotional literacy and how young people manage their emotions. This learning is best embedded through further lessons that build on the strategies and skills students have learned. Flexibility 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. 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. Curriculum links: See our curriculum guidance below for further information.	

Curriculum guidance

As of 1st September 2026, all education settings should now be using the revised [DfE statutory guidance](#) which replaces the 2019 framework: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

England Secondary relationships and sex education curriculum content

Relationships Education

Respectful relationships

- The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships
- How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers.
- The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others.
- The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict.
- The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.

Online safety and awareness

- That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.
- How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns.

Being Safe	• How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed. • How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault
Health and wellbeing	
Mental wellbeing	• How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary. • That happiness is linked to being connected to others. Pupils should be supported to understand what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel unhappy, while recognising that loneliness can be for most people an inevitable part of life at times and is not something of which to be ashamed • That worrying and feeling down are normal, can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal.
Wellbeing online	• How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.
Personal safety	• How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media • How to develop key social and emotional skills that will increase pupils' safety from involvement in conflict and violence. These include skills to support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making, as well as skills to recognise and manage peer pressure