

# A safe classroom

## Establishing a safe teaching and learning environment for PSHE education lessons

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Ground rules are the first essential element of establishing a safe learning environment. To be most effective, negotiate them together to create a shared sense of ownership, whilst ensuring safe discussion principles are covered. For more information, see our guidance on [Handling complex issues safely in the PSHE classroom](#).

Use distancing techniques to help pupils take part in the lesson regardless of personal experiences. Distancing strategies such as using case studies, stories, scenarios and characters help pupils explore an issue objectively without it being about them and their own behaviour.

Encourage questions from pupils, including anonymously, so they don't leave the lesson with uncertainty. When responding to questions; value the question, be conscious of the message you give through your body language and expression, give a factually correct, age-appropriate answer if you can, or buy time to respond/consult colleagues if unsure of how to answer.

Teach with the assumption that at least one pupil in the room is personally affected by the topic. Where there are known vulnerabilities, consider some of the following strategies: discussing the content of the lesson with specific pupils in advance, providing an exit pass or option to not attend, informing pastoral colleagues or parents/carers.

Whatever the topic, always make pupils aware of different sources of support, information and advice, at home, in school, locally and online. Tell them not just where, but when, why and how they might access support, as well as what will happen next.

Lessons should be relevant, accessible, and inclusive for all. They should reflect the backgrounds, circumstances and lived experiences of all young people, through safely distanced activities. Language, images and examples used should reflect the diversity of society, promote inclusion and where appropriate, challenge stereotypes.

Be aware of your school's safeguarding, child protection, PSHE education and Relationships and Sex Education policies. Disclosures should never be encouraged in a classroom setting, but should a pupil make a disclosure, inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead following your school's protocols. Be clear with pupils that you cannot promise confidentiality and about when you might need to pass information on. Ensure they know how and where they can make a disclosure if they choose to.