

Creating a safe learning environment

Purpose of creating a safe learning environment

The 'Giving help to others' PSHE lesson and Create a campaign activity have been designed for pupils aged 7 to 11. They explore the concept of helping others in the local and global community.

Pupils learn about bone marrow, stem cell and blood donation as one way that adults can help others and how they, as children, can help by promoting an awareness of donation.

Donation can be a sensitive issue, so it is vitally important that teachers read and consider the information in this document before teaching the lesson.

Know the relevant policies and procedures

Teachers should be familiar with their school's safeguarding, child protection and equal opportunities policies and procedures, and work within them.

They should know who the safeguarding lead is, and remember that if they suspect a pupil is at risk, they are legally bound to share this information in line with their school's safeguarding policy.

Identify vulnerable pupils

Teachers should identify any pupils for whom this learning could be deemed sensitive.

- Pupils may have personal experience of donation (organ, stem cell, or blood donation), and particularly if they themselves or a family or friend has had serious health issues, or if they have experienced a bereavement.
- Some people do not support donations on religious grounds, although the major religions in the UK support the idea of blood and stem cell donation. NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) is working with churches and faith leaders to spread the message that donation can be an important part of caring for the lives of others. For more information on faith and donation, visit the NHSBT page on [Faith and donation](#).

- The focus of the lesson is on how we can help each other, and the lesson touches on how children can help adults, so it is important to be aware of any pupils who may have caring responsibilities at home.

Please note that the video shows people giving blood, so it may be advisable to warn pupils in case any have a fear of needles or dislike the sight of blood.

Develop effective ground rules

Clear ground rules help pupils express their ideas and feelings while showing respect for others.

- Ensure pupils understand that what they say in the lesson shouldn't be discussed outside of the lesson.
- Be clear that, for safeguarding reasons, there are some things you can't keep confidential and remind pupils of the safeguarding protocols that operate in school.
- Ground rules will be most effective when pupils can explain their purpose and express them in their own words.
- Ground rules are displayed on slide 9, with the slide notes providing elaboration on each rule.
- Run through the slide together at the start of the lesson, and display a printed copy in the room. If agreed boundaries are being crossed during the lesson, return to the ground rules and review them again.

The slide notes include more detail on the ground rules, and suggest that you include an opportunity to write down and submit anonymous questions at the end of the lesson (see Use an 'Ask It Basket', below).

Explain the limits of confidentiality

One of the ground rules is that the conversation should be kept in the room. However pupils must be made aware of the limits of confidentiality, and that if the teacher is worried about any child, they will need to follow their school's rules and they will need to talk to another member of staff and/or the child's parents or carers.



Use an Ask It Basket

Have an anonymous question box and make it clear at the start of each lesson that pupils can place questions in the box at any time during the lesson and that they will be addressed at a later time e.g. follow-up lesson. At the end of the lesson, you could ask everyone to write a response, even if they don't have a question, so that no-one feels embarrassed about asking a question in this way (you may want to ask students to write 'urgent' on a question that's particularly pressing, so you can identify and prioritise this).

In all cases make sure your answers are factually correct, non-judgemental and in line with school policies. They should be appropriately sensitive for the issue and the individual(s) concerned. It's important to take the questions away and reflect on them before responding, rather than answering them immediately in class.

For children who may not be able to write a question, voice recorders or similar could be made available.

Signpost ways to get help

Make sure all pupils know they can speak to an adult after the lesson. This is covered by the ground rules slide (see the slide notes). As well as encouraging them to think about trusted adults who can support them and the Ask It Basket, you may wish to remind them that they can also get help from organisations such as Childline (www.childline.org.uk) if they would prefer to talk to someone that they don't know.

If a pupil in the class has received an organ transplant and the teacher feels they would benefit from meeting others who have had a similar experience, support is available at Transplant Sport Kids.

'Distancing' the learning

Teachers should not encourage students to disclose sensitive information in the classroom, and should 'distance' the learning. Distancing means thinking and talking about sensitive issues as an observer or in the third person, rather than in the first person and using personal examples. When pupils can distance themselves from a sensitive issue, they can think more clearly about it and without their thoughts being affected by strong emotions. This can help them more easily derive meaning and insight from the example.

- When discussing examples, help students think about what someone 'like them' might experience, feel, think, say or do. 'Can you imagine a child about your age, who lives and goes to school around here and who...?' Using photos or illustrations of a scenario can help with this.
- When thinking about how best to act or respond to a scenario in a lesson, ask questions that help pupils explore how they might help a friend, younger pupil or sibling or act as an 'agony aunt' or 'uncle'.

