



PSHE Education
STOKE-ON-TRENT & STAFFORDSHIRE

Voice of Children and Young People

and PSHE Education in Staffordshire &
Stoke-on-Trent

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INTRODUCTION

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education supports children and young people to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to thrive as individuals and members of society. In order to do this successfully it is vital that we include children and young people when designing a PSHE curriculum to ensure that it is meeting their needs.

This consultation should not just be limited to PSHE, it should be part of a wider whole-organisation approach and there should be meaningful opportunities for children and young people to share their experiences, views and hopes. This enables children and young people to develop skills around sharing opinions.

Consulting with children and young people should not be a tick box exercise, if children and young people share their thoughts and opinions this needs to be valued, listened to and considered in both the planning and delivering of PSHE education.

NATIONAL PICTURE

National research shows that there is a mixed experience of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) nationally amongst children and young people.

In December 2022 a Stay Safe study showed that:

- 13% of young people believed the topic of 'coercive control' was taught well
- 61% of LGBTQ+ young people disagreed that LGBTQ+ relationships are being threaded throughout RSE. This is a requirement within the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory requirement
- Young people want 'more relevant examples' (47%), more open discussions (44%) and 'more regular classes' (42%) within their RSE curriculum.

The Sex Education Forum, in November 2022, conducted a survey of 1,002 young people aged 16-17 years in England that found:

- 1 in 5 (22%) young people rated the quality of their RSE as 'bad' or 'very bad'- this is an increase of 4% points since 2019.

The DfE's report in November 2021 (using data prior to RSE being statutory) showed that young people did not feel that RSE was useful in preparing them for adult life and their own relationships.

LOCAL FEEDBACK

In July 2021, a limited survey was carried out with 400 young people at a number of secondary schools in Stoke-on-Trent. It should be acknowledged that these responses will have been influenced by lockdown and the teaching in 'bubbles', however they do collaborate with the recent national findings. Young people stated:

- They want PSHE to have a higher profile in schools and be seen as a stand-alone subject (they felt that this would mean it was taken more seriously by both students and teachers).
- A lot of the learning is repeated and therefore boring - they wanted more variety in topics and if repeated taught using different methods
- Lessons need to be more interactive and engaging. Students commented that they wanted less PowerPoint presentations and more activities. They want engaging lessons and would benefit from external agencies being brought in to support lessons.
- They want to do less writing/copying - this is linked to the previous point about lessons being more interactive
- Some lessons were outdated in terms of knowledge, some were using outdated videos and information. Therefore students felt that this wasn't relevant to them and made it boring, uninspiring and 'cringe'
- Teachers needed training and knowledge about the topics to give them credibility. Many students suggested that specific PSHE teachers within settings with expert knowledge and training would be an asset.
- They would like to be consulted regularly on what they would like to learn



STATUTORY GUIDANCE

The DfE's Statutory Guidance states there is a requirement to consult with parents and carers and Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education and there is also strong encouragement to involve pupils



 Department
for Education

**Relationships
Education,
Relationships and
Sex Education (RSE)
and Health Education**

Statutory guidance for governing bodies,
proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior
leadership teams, teachers

“The policy should also reflect the views of teachers and pupils. Listening and responding to the views of young people will strengthen the policy, ensuring it meets the needs of all pupils” (18:pg 12)

“The curriculum should proactively address issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on children's physical, emotional and sexual development. This should be in line with pupil needs, informed by pupil voice and participation in curriculum development and in response to issues as they arise in school and wider community” (113: page 40)

UN RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



PSHE education should be rights-led and rights based.

Within the UN Convention Rights of the Child (2009) it states that a child or young person has the right to:

- be safe
- be healthy
- receive education
- access help and support.

Article 12 states:

“parties shall assure to to the child who is capable of forming his or her views to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight by the age and maturity of the child”

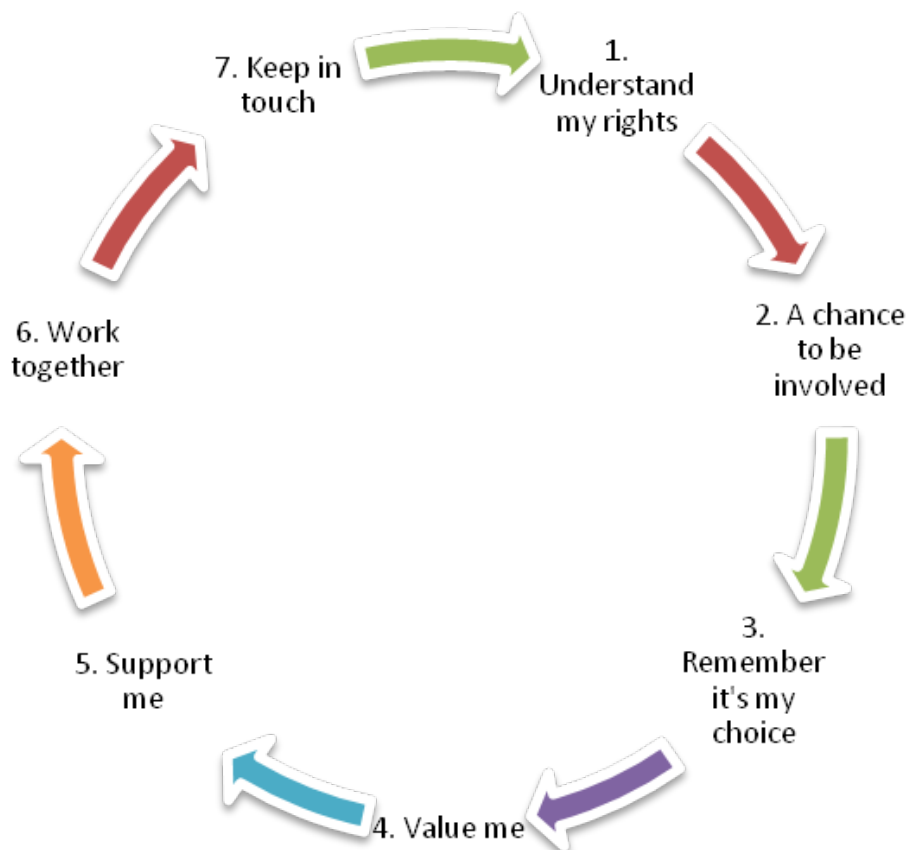
This means that children and young people have the right to be heard, to share their own opinions and for those opinions to be taken seriously.



GOLDEN RULES FOR PARTICIPATION

The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland has created a set of principles that anyone working with children or young people can use. They inform adults what children and young people's participation should feel like. You can download a resource for use with children or for use with young people and one for children and young people with SEND.

The seven principles are:



CONSIDERATIONS

Before engaging with children or young people to find out their views and opinions it is important to consider the following:

1

How do people become involved? If they are selected, by whom and what messages might selection processes convey? What other ways of getting children and young people involved might there be, what are the pros and cons of each?

2

How are differences between and among young people taken into account? Who / what might be silenced?

3

How do you ensure that the voice is reflective across each year/age group?

4

How will you engage with those who do not regularly attend school or who do not enjoy being at school?

5

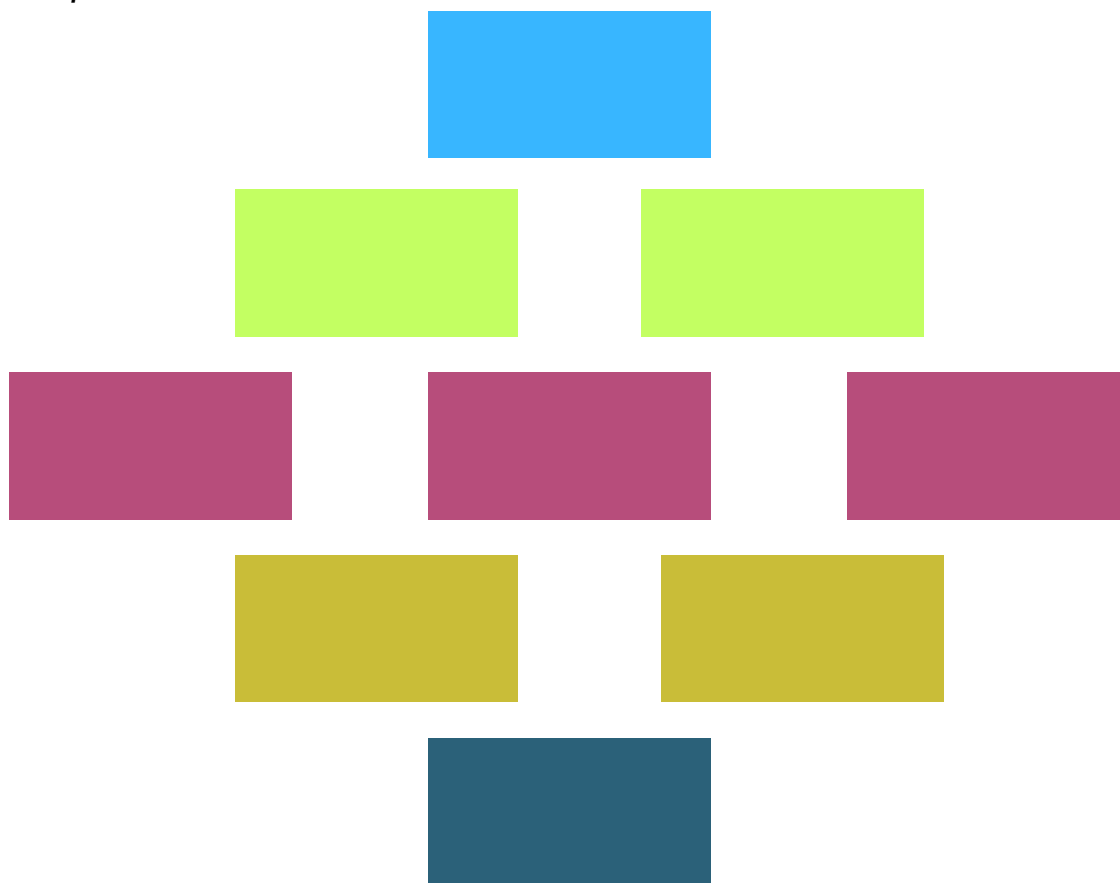
How will you feedback to the participants/wider community following the engagement?

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

Diamond Nine/Card Sort:

The Diamond Nine/Card Sort activity can be used to explore attributes or to rank particular items.

If using the Diamond Nine the cards would be sorted into a diamond hierarchy, in which the top line (only one card) is the *most important*, the *second line (two cards)* features the next most important, the *third line (three cards)* the next and then decrease through two cards to the final one to complete the diamond.



If using a card sort, the cards would be placed in a linear manner ranked from top to bottom.

manner ranked from top to bottom.

Suggestion:

Using your current scheme of work write/depict the topics of your curriculum on cards. Ask participants to rank the cards, with the most important card at the top. Have a discussion around why the top cards were the most important to them and what they would want to learn in this - were there any topics missing that they think should have been included.

Persona Dolls or Character:

Using persona dolls or characters is particularly good for younger children or those with special educational needs.

Persona Dolls are fabric dolls that are used as part of a specific approach (The Persona Doll approach). The Persona Doll approach involves telling stories using a Persona Doll, creating a lifelike persona for the doll. The doll becomes like another child, or friend of the child with real-life experiences (Personal Doll UK 2021). The dolls should be used for storytelling and not for playing with, it is important to not use a doll from the home corner.

Suggestion:

Using a persona doll or character ask children/young people what they think is important for the doll/character to learn about within the different topics e.g. keeping safe, keeping healthy, friendships, families, themselves and other people.

Post-its:

These are a great tool to capture anonymous thoughts from people to write down thoughts or questions, and if they do not have a questions to write "I do not have a question" to ensure everyone is writing. These questions can be reviewed and reflected on - are there typical questions for a particular year group? Does the curriculum address this?

Suggestion:

Hand out post-its to the group and ask they to reflect on the PSHE they have received so far:

- 1.What has been good about it?
- 2.Was there anything missing?
- 3.Is there anything they would like to be different?

These post-its can be popped into a jar or container and the contents reviewed and documented to show consideration and implementation following the consultation.

Flipchart Paper/Sugar Paper:

This is a useful tool to have in a PSHE classroom. Being low-tech and analogue they won't let you down. By allowing participants to come and write on the sheets, they become more engaged and focused and flip chart allows for more creativity and spontaneity. They are perfect for recording what people say in the room, drawing out ideas that enables better understanding and learning.

Suggestion:

Create three flip chart sheets with the following headings:

1. We should know about....
2. We should be able to....
3. We should feel confident about....

Put the flip chart paper on the walls and ask the group to add their thoughts. Compare the responses to the organisation's scheme of work and check if the needs of the children/young people are being met.

Postcards to Self:

This activity can be useful if a child/young person is transitioning to a new school or to a different key stage. The activity supports the development of reflective thinking and being able to articulate those thoughts.

Suggestion:

Ask children/young people to write a postcard to their past self about what they wished they had been taught and another to their future self asking what they hope to be taught

Focus Group:

Outside of the classroom you could invite children and young people to join a focus group, this activity should be done alongside other activities to ensure inclusivity and representation of the setting.

Suggestion:

In the focus group you could:

- Discuss the purpose of PSHE - to develop knowledge, skills and attributes that children and young people need to thrive as individuals and members of society and help them to be safe, happy and healthy now and in the future
- Ask what they have learnt so far in PSHE?
- What else do they think should be covered to ensure PSHE education is meeting its purpose?
- Explore what attitudes and behaviours are helpful and unhelpful from different people we may learn from e.g. teachers, teaching assistants, support staff, parents/carers, siblings or friends
- Ask if there are any particular PSHE lessons that stand out for them and why

Three Stars One Wish

This is a tool that enables participants to self-assess or to assess their peers. It is a good activity to develop the skills for these types of assessment

Suggestion:

Ask children/young people what three things are going well regarding PSHE education and what one wish do they have for PSHE education for the future e.g. by the time they are in Year 6/9/11/13



Using Technology:

The use of technology within the classroom is increasing and can be utilised to demonstrate the positive aspects of being online.

Suggestion:

- Software like [Mentimeter](#) is free. Responses are recorded and can be presented in a word cloud. The facilitator could explain what a value is and share some examples of different types of values e.g. honesty, kindness, courage (these could be linked to the organisation's values). Participants are asked to share the values they think are important when teaching PSHE education. The responses are populated in Mentimeter and the word cloud shared on screen. This can then be saved and used as part of a PSHE team meeting to enable staff to reflect on if/how they demonstrate this value within their own teaching.
- Using software like Google Forms or Microsoft Forms a whole year online survey can be created and distributed. This can work well to gain a 'benchmark' that enables progress to be tracked as the group moves through the school. The PSHE Association has produced a pupil questionnaire to help gauge how pupils feel about their PSHE education that is available to all:
 - [KS2 pupil questionnaire](#)
 - [KS3-5 pupil questionnaire](#)

Further Ideas:

[Unboxing RSE](#), is a creative research output as part of the "Engaging Sexual Stories" Research Enrichment Public Engagement project funded by the Wellcome Trust and shows further ideas and also responses by young people engaged in the project.

The cards referenced in the video can be found [here](#).

TOP TIPS



Our top tips for engaging with children and young people about PSHE education are:

1

The process is just as important as the outcome - you are developing a safe space for children and young people to develop lifelong skills

2

It is important to use a range of activities and formats to enable all children and young people to have a voice

3

Don't just think about the voice of children and young people at the end of the year - start at the beginning of a new academic year

4

Use the findings to influence other stakeholders - there is power in their voices

5

Don't have any preconceived ideas about the responses you'll get. Children and young people will always surprise and amaze you when given the opportunity to share their opinions.



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