



## What is the Jigsaw PSHE 3-16 approach to safeguarding and consent?

### September 2023 update

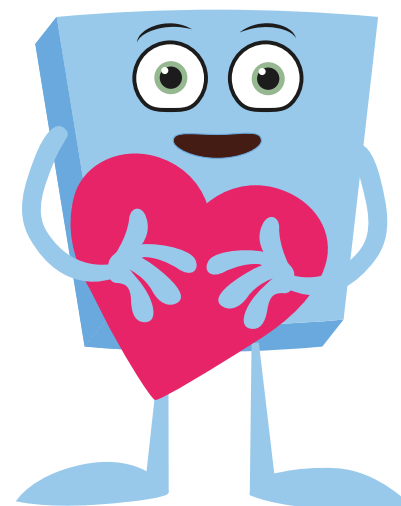
*Note: this article has been written in reference to [Keeping Children Safe in Education - September 2020](#) (revised and checked against all versions up to and including July 2025) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (June 2025).*

Jigsaw, the mindful approach to PSHE, takes children and young people's safety very seriously and aims to equip them to lead safe, happy and healthy lives, to embrace the opportunities open to them, to aim high, and to be empowered to keep themselves safe, know their rights and responsibilities and know where and how to ask for help when needed.

Our materials are currently being updated to reflect the new 2025 RSHE guidance for England, which becomes statutory in September 2026. Given the comprehensive nature of our review process, we'd recommend waiting until our updated materials are available (expected by end of December 2025) before undertaking any major policy reviews or curriculum mapping exercises.

Jigsaw, the mindful approach to PSHE, meets all the statutory Relationships and Health Education requirements for primary schools, and all the Relationships, Sex and Health Education requirements for secondary schools (England, DfE 2019). Whilst Jigsaw is thoughtfully planned by very experienced professionals to ensure the more sensitive issues of PSHE are covered in age- and stage-appropriate ways, schools using Jigsaw are of course, encouraged to make use of the materials in ways that suit their students' needs and fit their school ethos.

Jigsaw aims to equip children and young people with knowledge and skills which empower them. We believe that age-appropriate knowledge e.g. about puberty or relationships, coupled with personal skills of e.g. self-esteem, assertiveness and respect, and the understanding that their bodies belong to them and they have the right of consent in all aspects of their lives, supports students to be safe. Ignorance does not protect innocence but can leave children vulnerable. Teachers are also well-equipped with regular safeguarding training and know how to recognise the multiple signs of e.g. abuse or neglect.





The Jigsaw Programme builds the foundations of children and young people's positive relationship with themselves, self-esteem, self-respect, and assertiveness skills; and it approaches sensitive subjects in an age- and stage-appropriate way, which is particularly important when it comes to safeguarding and teaching about consent.

Jigsaw is designed as a whole-school approach which when embraced fully, enhances ethos and develops positive relationships, children experiencing support and trust.

The beauty of the spiral Jigsaw approach is that it is designed in a **progressive and developmental** way: from the age of 3, children learn about keeping themselves safe, why it is important, and how they can get help if they need it. These messages are repeated and added to across all year groups, until the final lessons for 16-year-olds. These explicit lessons are taught in the safe learning environment created by the teacher, the school ethos and the Jigsaw Charter.

Jigsaw carefully considers what to teach when, what is appropriate to teach explicitly and what messages are given implicitly. The aim is to empower pupils to understand that the world may sometimes present threats to their safety and to know how they can protect themselves from these, and to do this in a way that does not cause distress or fear. Jigsaw also builds the underlying resilience and skills needed to assertively protect oneself.

One of the guiding principles of Jigsaw 3-16 is its alignment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ([UNCRC](#)), which is the most complete statement of children's rights ever produced and is the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history (1992 in UK). The Rights Respecting Schools Award programme focuses this treaty in a more practical way for schools, by helping them to create safe and inspiring places to learn, and supports learning about their rights as under-18s. Jigsaw offers the next step here, as it teaches about rights explicitly within its unique and comprehensive PSHE lessons, most notably in the first unit of the school year called Being Me in My World.

There are numerous **themes** that are threaded through the entire Jigsaw 3-16 programme, which enable children, young people and adults to see how their learning is practical and can be life-long – and how safety underpins everything they learn, and how they are valuable unique human beings who deserve to be safe. For example, Jigsaw is the mindful approach to PSHE. This means that, in every Jigsaw lesson, children/young people (and adults) have the opportunity to practise mindfulness, most explicitly through the Calm Me time/mindfulness practice time.

Mindfulness is best described as paying attention to the present moment; and practising mindfulness helps people to become more aware of their thoughts and feelings, so that instead of being overwhelmed by them, they're better able to manage them and make choices as to their responses.

Practising mindfulness can also give more insight into emotions, boost attention and concentration, and improve relationships. This in itself is invaluable, but when applied to the safeguarding context, mindfulness offers children and young people insight into their own thoughts and feelings and, in addition, increases their resilience and ability to self-regulate and respond rather than react.

Ground rules are fundamental to creating and maintaining a safe teaching and learning environment. Establishing a safe learning environment for both pupils and teacher is important for PSHE education lessons – especially those focusing on mental health and emotional wellbeing, as it:

- protects pupils from possible distress
- offers them the choice as to whether to contribute or not
- enables them to feel comfortable exploring values and attitudes
- enables them to express their own opinions and consider the views and opinions of others, without the fear of negative feedback.



In Jigsaw 3-16, the ground rules (The Jigsaw Charter) are revisited in every single lesson. This is crucial to establishing a safe, open and positive learning environment based on trusting relationships between all members of the class, adults and students alike. To enable this, it is important that 'ground rules' are agreed and owned at the beginning of the year and are reinforced in every Piece (lesson) – by using The Jigsaw Charter. Ideally, teachers and students will devise their own Jigsaw Charter at the beginning of the year so that they have ownership of it.

One of the most important elements of the Charter is the **Right to Pass**, where children and young people understand fully that they do not have to participate in the discussion/activity if they do not wish to. This creates a space where they can feel safe and their wishes are taken seriously by adults and peers alike. This is vital when teaching about safeguarding in both an implicit and explicit way. They choose whether they speak or not and their right to pass is upheld and respected.

Teachers need to be aware that sometimes disclosures may be made during these sessions; in which case, safeguarding procedures must be followed immediately. Sometimes it is clear that certain children may need time to talk one-to-one after the circle closes. It is important to allow the time and appropriate staffing for this to happen.

The Jigsaw Charter refers to this too. Although, realistically, it is unlikely that complete confidentiality will be observed, it is important that children/young people are taught to respect the privacy of others and to do their best to keep what is said in Jigsaw Pieces (lessons) and Circles confidential. The teacher must emphasise that s/he cannot promise complete confidentiality as s/he must report any information relating to safeguarding concerns.

Throughout Jigsaw, students are encouraged by staff to ask questions, to find someone (a trusted adult) who can help them, and ultimately to help themselves by becoming more independent. Each lesson ends with **signposting**: the final slide of each lesson (11-16) features links to useful websites that are relevant to the messages of the lesson. Teachers should feel free to add local websites and/or services to the final slide of the lesson.

**Distancing techniques** ensure that pupils are better able to engage with and discuss issues relating to safeguarding and consent, and it is a technique used prolifically in Jigsaw 3-16. If pupils are asked to reflect on and share their own experiences, they may feel strong emotions that hinder the ability to learn or derive insight from the example.

It is therefore safer and more effective to help pupils to think about someone other than themselves, someone 'like them' – for example, a simple profile of a child or young person about their age, who goes to a school like theirs. Pupils will then gain more from discussing questions like 'what might they think, feel, do?' and giving advice to characters in the role of a friend, sibling, classmate, agony aunt or uncle.

Throughout Jigsaw 3-16, a range of teaching and learning methods is used in order for everyone to get the best out of the lesson. Often, owing to the nature of some of the lesson content, it may sometimes feel a little awkward to consider or discuss some topics, which is why there are numerous learning strategies in Jigsaw that encourage more open discussion whilst at the same time giving some protection to the privacy and feelings of both students and teachers. Distancing techniques depersonalise situations and can help everyone to feel more secure and safe. Being in a role, putting yourself in another's shoes or speaking in response to the actions of others (real or imaginary) allows students to explore their feelings about issues safely, because they are not speaking or acting as themselves.

Distancing also helps students learn and subsequently reflect on how something applies to their own lives. Students who struggle with written work often thrive when given the opportunity to take on roles or to respond to scenarios.



In Jigsaw 3-11, the Jigsaw Friends are used in the main as the 'talking object' in circle discussions. The children and staff pass the particular friend for their class around the circle and when you are holding the Jigsaw Friend it is your turn to talk or to offer a suggestion, experience or feeling relevant to the discussion (if you choose to). A further role for the Friends is to act as a distancing tool so that children can talk about potentially more sensitive issues without referring directly to themselves.

Additionally, the Friends can be used to talk to, to share their concerns or to ask questions through a post box technique. By using the Jigsaw Friend, children can feel more able to express themselves and to share their concerns.

At the heart of **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education** and **Health Education**, there is a focus on keeping pupils safe and the role that schools can play in preventative education. Teachers should be aware of the risks in teaching about sensitive subjects such as self-harm and suicide and give particular considerations to planning around these issues and ensuring material is focused on prevention rather than being instructional.

Good practice allows pupils an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. This in turn can lead to an increase in pupils disclosing abuse, or of teachers becoming aware of concerns about a pupil's wellbeing. Teachers should all understand how to respond to disclosures of abuse and report any concerns they may have, following the school's safeguarding procedures. Jigsaw 3-16 guides the teacher as well as the students through a clear comprehension of safeguarding, in practical PSHE-related terms, that is backed up by the school policy.

Jigsaw allows the teacher to get to know pupils better and this helps them notice when something may be bothering an individual.



So, in more detail, here is some information about some of the Jigsaw lesson content that supports safeguarding. Note that this list is not exhaustive as all aspects of Jigsaw have children and young people's safety and wellbeing at heart, but rather gives a flavour of the Jigsaw PSHE 3-16 content.

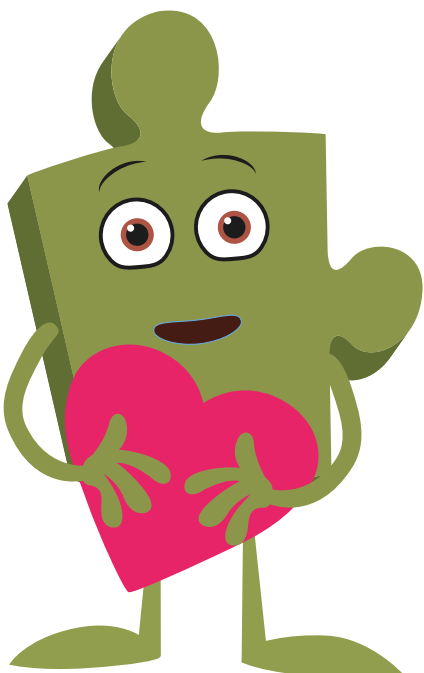
The grid below outlines a selection of lessons from each year group (F1 to Year 11/age 3 to 16) where safeguarding and/or consent are covered – implicitly or explicitly.

Year Group	Puzzle (unit)	Piece (lesson)	Content	Link to safeguarding
Ages 3-5	Celebrating Difference	6 – Standing up for yourself	Children learn how to improve things if they don't like what someone says or does to them.	Children are given the opportunity to practise the phrase, 'Please don't do that, I don't like it'; they are also reminded that if someone says that to them, they have to stop whatever they are doing to cause another child to say the phrase.
Ages 3-5	Healthy Me	6 – Stranger Danger	Using stories like 'Never Talk to Strangers', children discuss with suggestions about what they could do to keep themselves safe.	Children are encouraged to think about what they could do if they don't feel safe, and who they can go to if they feel unsafe. The message. 'Say NO and DON'T GO!' is reinforced throughout the lesson, particularly when discussing grown-ups who approach children inappropriately and ask for their help.
Ages 3-5	Relationships	4 & 5 – Falling out and bullying	Children explore how they feel if someone says something unkind to them.	These lessons encourage children to take responsibility for their words and actions and to help them know who to go to if they need help. Calm Me time is used to help children manage their feelings.
Ages 3-5	Changing Me	2 – Respecting my body	Reinforcing the concept that our bodies are our own, are precious and need looking after.	This lesson helps to reinforce how children can take responsibility for their bodies (to a point) and how to look after themselves.
Ages 5-6	Celebrating Difference	3 – What is bullying?	Children learn how to improve things if they don't like what someone says or does to them.	This lesson, and indeed the whole Puzzle, reinforces the messages about tolerance, difference and similarity, and how to be a better friend, and how to deal with bullying if it arises.
Ages 5-6	Celebrating Difference	4 – What do I do about bullying?		
Ages 5-6	Relationships	4 – People who help us	Using the scenario cards (or make up your own), children act out scenarios showing when they can ask for help and from whom they can receive help.	If children find something unsuitable on a computer, or see/hear something that they feel uncomfortable about, practise with them who they can ask for help and what they can say.
Ages 5-6	Changing Me	4 – Boys' and Girls' Bodies	Children identify the parts of the body that make boys different to girls and can use the correct, scientific names for them	By using correct terminology for part of the body, children can learn to respect their own and others' bodies and understand which parts are private (meaning 'special and important', not 'guilty' or 'not very nice').
Ages 6-7	Being Me in My World	2 – Rights and Responsibilities	Children learn about their rights, how to uphold them for themselves and others, and how rights come with responsibilities.	This lesson helps children understand that all children have the right to be safe, healthy, happy and to learn.

<b>Ages 6-7</b>	<b>Celebrating Difference</b>	<b>3 – Why does bullying happen?</b>	Identifying that bullying is sometimes about difference allows children to understand more and to decide not to bully.	This lesson, and indeed the whole Puzzle, reinforces the messages about tolerance, difference and similarity, and how to deal with bullying if it arises (where to go for help, what to say and do in a bullying situation).
<b>Ages 6-7</b>	<b>Celebrating Difference</b>	<b>4 – Standing up for myself and others</b>	Children are empowered to know what is right and wrong and to look after themselves.	
<b>Ages 6-7</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>2 – Keeping safe – exploring physical contact</b>	The lesson focuses on how there are many different forms of physical contact within a family – and some of this is acceptable and some is not.	Children can think about which types of physical contact they like, which they don't like, and they can talk about this in a safe way and know it is OK to say they don't want to be touched in that way e.g. punched or hugged if that is how they feel. Some of the lesson is taught through stories. Teachers are encouraged to be vigilant throughout this lesson. This lesson, along with others in previous year groups, highlights why teaching about consent is important from such a young age.
<b>Ages 6-7</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>4 – Secrets</b>	Children learn that sometimes secrets are good and sometimes they are not good – and how they feel if they are asked to keep a secret they don't want to keep, and who to talk to about it.	Through understanding about good secrets and 'worry' secrets, children can practise giving advice to Jigsaw Jo to help with any 'worry' secrets. Teachers can emphasise that 'worry' secrets need to be told to an adult and not kept inside.
<b>Ages 7-8</b>	<b>Celebrating Difference</b>	<b>2 – Family conflict</b>	This lesson explores how sometimes conflict occurs in families and how children can calm themselves down and use solution-based techniques to help themselves.	Children think about a possible source of family conflict and of ways to help solve it. Teachers need to be aware of all children's domestic situations (particularly any that may be violent) before teaching this lesson; notes in the lesson plan are provided to help.
<b>Ages 7-8</b>	<b>Celebrating Difference</b>	<b>3 &amp; 4 – Witness and feelings &amp; Witness and solutions</b>	Children learn that the role of witnesses in bullying situations, and that sometimes a witness can hinder rather than help.	Homophobic bullying is covered in these lessons, as well as what children can do if they see bullying taking place. The Jigsaw 'Solve It Together' technique is especially helpful for children to have a strategy to help themselves and others.
<b>Ages 7-8</b>	<b>Healthy Me</b>	<b>4 – Being safe &amp; 5 Safe or unsafe</b>	Children identify things, people and places that they need to keep safe from, and can share some strategies for keeping themselves safe, including who to go to for help.	Using the 'We are keeping safe from...' cards, children can come up with strategies for Jigsaw Jino to keep safe in different situations, including online. Children can also complete the 'Keeping Safe' templates to form their contributing chapter for the school's Healthy, Happy Me Recipe Book (assessment task). They can learn how to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe, and why this is important (and that adults do not always have to be present).
<b>Ages 7-8</b>	<b>Relationships</b>	<b>3 – Keeping myself safe online</b>	Children discuss things that they might need to keep safe from when online.	Children rank the top tips for keeping safe online and discuss their ranking decisions, while learning about the importance of trust.

<b>Ages 8-9</b>	<b>Celebrating Difference</b>	<b>3 – Understanding bullying</b>	Reinforcing the messages from previous year groups, this lesson focuses on more surreptitious bullying and how to better understand bullying behaviour.	For older children, it is timely to look at the intricacies of bullying and how sometimes it can be difficult to spot. Teachers are encouraged to know what the school's anti-bullying policy states and to ensure that this lesson adheres to the guidance.
<b>Ages 8-9</b>	<b>Healthy Me</b>	<b>5 – Healthy Friendships</b>	This Piece looks at how children can learn to recognise when people are putting them under pressure and how to resist this when they want.	Through the context of healthy friendships, children can explore their possible feelings of anxiety and fear and how this might be associated with peer pressure; it could also be applied to the pressure they might feel from other people.
<b>Ages 8-9</b>	<b>Healthy Me</b>	<b>6 – Celebrating My Inner Strength and Assertiveness</b>	Helping children learn that they can have a clear picture of what they believe is right and wrong, and to know how to be assertive when they need to be.	Children can learn to draw on their own sense of right and wrong to help make decisions that suit them. Using some simple assertiveness techniques can help children feel more empowered in their lives and can help to keep them from harm.
<b>Ages 9-10</b>	<b>Celebrating Difference</b>	<b>2 – Racism</b>	Children learn about what racism is and how their own attitudes can affect how they treat others.	The concepts of racism and discrimination are introduced to children and they are invited to share their thoughts. Particular emphasis is given to the words that people use, often without understanding them, and how they can be racist.
<b>Ages 9-10</b>	<b>Celebrating Difference</b>	<b>3 &amp; 4 – Rumours and name-calling &amp; Types of bullying</b>	Children learn about how rumours are spread and how name-calling can both be bullying behaviours. They also learn the difference between direct and indirect bullying.	Both lessons help children to learn ways that they can be empowered to help themselves, and to report anything that feels wrong to them.
<b>Ages 9-10</b>	<b>Relationships</b>	<b>2-6 – Online safety lessons x5</b>	Lessons on staying safe when using technology. Children learn to recognise and resist pressure to use technology in ways that may be risky or cause harm to others.	Rights and responsibilities are being online, staying safe, and relationships with technology all refer implicitly to safeguarding within these lessons.
<b>Ages 10-11</b>	<b>Celebrating Difference</b>	<b>3 – Power struggles</b>	Children explore power in different contexts – how sometimes it is needed, and how sometimes it is unwarranted and can feel unsafe.	This lesson focuses on power scenarios, how to identify them and how to deal with them practically in real life.
<b>Ages 10-11</b>	<b>Celebrating Difference</b>	<b>4 – Why bully?</b>	Children learn about some of the reasons why people bully, using various example scenarios.	Children are encouraged to practise and use a variety of strategies in managing their feelings in bullying scenarios – and how they can help solve problems if they are part of a bullying situation.

<p><b>Ages 10-11</b></p>	<p><b>Relationships</b></p>	<p><b>4 – Power and Control</b></p>	<p>Returning to more assertiveness training, where children learn to recognise when people are trying to gain control or power, and how they can stand up for themselves (and their friends) in situations when others try to gain control or power.</p>	<p>Power and Control headlines and scenario cards are used to facilitate discussion among the children so they can decide on whether someone is being ‘controlling’ – and then to practise some helpful assertiveness techniques, which demonstrate how to deal with some of these situations.</p>
<p><b>Ages 10-11</b></p>	<p><b>Relationships</b></p>	<p><b>5 – Being Online: real or fake? Safe or unsafe?</b></p>	<p>Linked to previous lessons, children learn how to judge whether something online is safe and helpful</p>	<p>Online scenario cards are used to give examples of what might happen if someone tried to use technology to gain power over another.</p>
<p><b>Ages 10-11</b></p>	<p><b>Relationships</b></p>	<p><b>6 – Using technology responsibly</b></p>	<p>Children learn to use technology positively and safely to communicate with friends and family, whilst taking responsibility for their own safety and well-being.</p>	<p>This lesson focuses on the SMARRT rules and how to stay safe and happy online – and what to do if you don’t feel safe.</p>



Year Group	Puzzle (unit)	Piece (lesson)	Content	Link to safeguarding
Ages 11-12	Being Me in My World	4-6	These lessons focus on how students present themselves online, what influences their behaviour, and how they can maintain positive relationships online and in real life (offline)	Keeping safe online is increasingly important for students to understand, practise and master. The lines between on- and offline life are blurred for many young people, so the messages in these lessons can be applied to either facet of life.
Ages 11-12	Relationships	1 & 5	The concept of consent is introduced here in Piece 1 and followed up in Piece 5.	The tea and consent video is used here to explain about giving and receiving consent. Additionally, assertiveness techniques are introduced to support students in saying yes and no when they choose to.
Ages 11-12	Changing Me	1 – My changing body	Puberty is recapped in this lesson, with additional information on some illegal practice (e.g. FGM) and where to get help.	Students need to know where they can access support for the changes they are experiencing in their lives, and to know where to find help if they are concerned about their safety or the safety of someone they know.
Ages 12-13	Dreams & Goals	3 – Online safety	Students explore how their online activity can be both positive and negative, and how they can maintain their safety online.	A slightly different angle for this lesson, but still with the focus on safeguarding and why discretion and discernment are so important when it comes to keeping safe, now and in the future.
Ages 12-13	Healthy Me	4 – Substance misuse and exploitation	The topic of county lines emerges in this lesson, where students explore scenarios of people involved in the drug world.	County lines continue to be a focus of concern for many school leaders, police forces and social care departments, so teaching students about it at school can help to raise awareness and signpost young people to the support they might need.
Ages 12-13	Relationships	4 – Managing control and coercion in relationships	The concepts of power, control and coercion in relationships are explored in this lesson, using a variety of scenarios.	Consent is raised implicitly in this lesson, alongside the more positive slant of how to enjoy healthier relationships.
Ages 12-13	Changing Me	4 & 5	Two lessons on important considerations for many students: pornography and alcohol. Both involve risk, exploration and safeguarding.	Students are encouraged to view different perspectives and come to their own, sensible conclusions – with the focus being on keeping themselves safe whatever they choose.
Ages 13-14	Being Me in My World	5 – Consent	Students think about the link between having a positive self-identity and healthy intimate relationships, alongside understanding what consent means to them.	There is also the opportunity in this lesson to learn about how and when to report abusive/coercive behaviour.

<b>Ages 13-14</b>	<b>Relationships</b>	<b>1-6</b>	This entire unit explores equality in relationships.	Each lesson covers a distinct topic where students are encouraged to understand themselves as well as the law, and therefore the consequences of breaking the law. Consequently, safeguarding and consent are peppered throughout.
<b>Ages 14-15</b>	<b>Being Me in My World</b>	<b>5 – Risk</b>	Potential safety threats, mitigation techniques and how to get help are taught in this lesson.	Students have another chance to understand and rehearse strategies for managing their (perhaps difficult) feelings about how things are changing for them, and why their self-esteem and self-worth are so vital.
<b>Ages 14-15</b>	<b>Celebrating Difference</b>	<b>4 – Power in relationships</b>	Coercive control, misuse of power and sources of support are the key features of this lesson, which offers students another opportunity to learn about keeping themselves safe and how to get help.	The concept of safeguarding is returned to again in this lesson, from a slightly different perspective, in order to reinforce the message that has been developed throughout all the year groups so far.
<b>Ages 14-15</b>	<b>Relationships</b>	<b>5 – Better together?</b>	Discernment, particularly about relationships, is a golden thread that weaves throughout Jigsaw 11-16, and this lesson focuses on it in detail, in the context of relationships with others.	Students learn about patterns associated with abuse, exploitation and coercion – to understand and recognise it, and to know where to go to get help. The emphasis on discernment encourages students to take responsibility for their own safety and welfare, whilst understanding they can source help whenever they need it.
<b>Ages 15-16</b>	<b>Being Me in My World</b>	<b>2 – Relationships and the law</b>	Another opportunity for students to learn about coercive control, with the additions of sexual harassment and sexual violence. The law and where to find help are naturally included.	Students learn about the legislation surrounding different types of relationship and how the law is in place to support keeping people safe, regardless of their age, gender or any other characteristic.
<b>Ages 15-16</b>	<b>Relationships</b>	<b>4 &amp; 5</b>	The final opportunity for students to review what they already know about power imbalances in relationships, the law and different cultural perspectives (e.g. FGM, honour-based violence, forced marriage, hate crimes)	The emphasis on this entire unit is on having a good relationship with yourself, while being able to enjoy relationships with others – and not lose your sense of self or your right to safety. The concept of consent runs through these lessons and students are encouraged to become more discerning and specific about to whom they give their consent and from whom they ask consent.