

CIOS PSHE Curriculum Module Five Teaching the Curriculum in your school

Why do we need a safe learning environment

- No matter what the topic in PSHE at least one young person may find it sensitive for some reason
- Some topics or activities can trigger emotional responses
- Some PSHE lessons will cover difficult, upsetting or controversial events or issues
- Children and young people may have questions about events or topics that they want to talk to adults about

Why do we need a safe learning environment

- It is vital that PSHE lessons are delivered in a climate of safety, co-operation support and trust within the school as a whole and within PSHE lessons specifically.
- The teacher sets the tone and the children and young people all play their part.
- It is important that creating a safe learning environment is a joint endeavor.

Creating a safe learning environment

Elements of a safe learning environment

1. Establishing safety
2. Ground rules
3. Finding out pupils starting points
4. Distancing techniques
5. Handling tricky questions
6. Signposting to support
7. Online considerations

Practicalities

- Work to establish ground rules about how to behave towards each other in discussion – use breaches of ground rules as learning opportunities
- Have small group discussions as well whole class discussions
- Be creative in exploring starting points
- Select resources with care

Practicalities

- Use distancing techniques resources and activities to de-personalise discussions
- Have an anonymous question box available where pupils can ask questions
- Provide balanced information and differing views on topics to help develop critical thinking – including assessing information available online

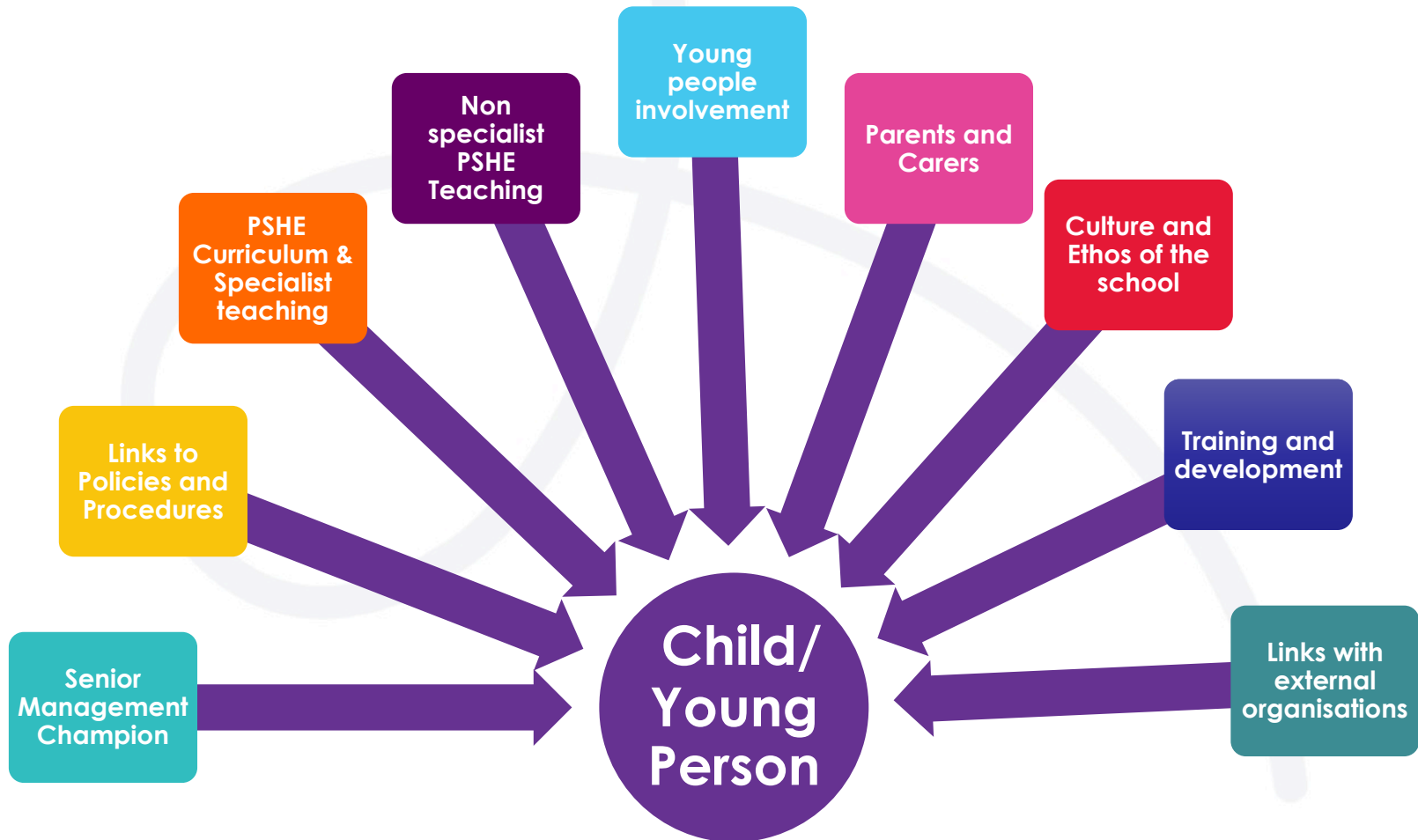
Group Agreements

- Help children and young people feel able to learn, share feelings and explore values
- Support positive expectations of behaviour towards others
- Help to set clear boundaries in relation to misogyny sexism, homophobia, racism, bullying and discrimination in any form
- Support an inclusive approach to PSHE
- Help reduce embarrassing negative and aggressive comments and banter
- Help manage discussions where young people hold strong views supporting the safe exploration of different opinions
- Help make safeguarding policies and procedures clear in practice by clearly defining teacher confidentiality

Example Group Agreement

- Be **open** but we won't talk about our own personal lives
- We will show everyone **respect** and not embarrass them or make fun of them in class or outside
- We will **not assume** we know what people think and feel or what's going on in their lives we accept that everyone is an individual
- We will all take part and get involved in the lessons but we have the **right to pass** on an activity
- We will **listen** to each other
- We can **ask** the teacher any questions
- We will use the correct **language** and not slang words, if we don't know what the right word is we can ask
- We can ask for help and support outside class if we need to

Whole School Approach to PSHE Education





Trauma informed approaches

Trauma Informed Approaches – Whole School

Ensure the school is a safe place for children and young people

- Open communication transparency and trustworthiness in teachers and adults
- Structure of pastoral/student support which enables children and young people to access help
- Safe zones and spaces in school

Trauma Informed Approaches PACE

PLAYFULNESS **A**CCEPTANCE **C**URIOSITY **E**MPATHY

- PACE is a way of thinking, feeling communicating and behaving with a traumatised child that aims to make the child feel safe.
- Focusses on the whole child not just the behaviour
- Using PACE can reduce the level of conflict defensiveness and withdrawal
- Enables adults to see strengths and positives that are underneath negative and challenging behaviors

Trauma Informed Approaches PACE

PLAYFULNESS

Create an atmosphere of lightness, as in storytelling not lecturing, helps the discovery of sense of humour
Adds elements of fun and enjoyment in day to day situations

Trauma Informed Approaches PACE

ACCEPTANCE

is about actively communicating to the child that you accept the wishes, feelings, thoughts, urges, motives and perceptions that are underneath the outward behaviour. It is about accepting, without judgment or evaluation, their inner life

Trauma Informed Approaches PACE

CURIOSITY

Curiosity is a deep interest and wish to make sense of child's inner world of thoughts, feelings behaviour and intentions. Curiosity without judgment is how we help children and young people become aware of their inner life. A quiet accepting tone to convey wanting to understand – without annoyance

Trauma Informed Approaches PACE

EMPATHY

enables us to share the emotion, pain and sensation of others, it is about trying to understand the child/young persons experience from their point of view not our own so that they know that their experiences are important to us

Emotion Coaching

- Developed in the US by psychologist John Gottman
- Use developing in the UK as an effective way to nurture mental health and wellbeing in education settings
- Main principle is that nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships provide the optimal context for positive outcomes and resilience
- Helps children and young people to understand different emotions, why they occur and how to handle them

Lessons from Emotion Coaching

The five essential steps of **Emotion Coaching**:

1. Be aware the child's emotion
2. Recognise the child's expression of emotion as an opportunity for teaching and learning
3. Listen with empathy and validate the child's feelings
4. Help the child learn to label their emotions with words
5. Set limits when you are helping the child to solve problems or deal with upsetting situations appropriately

Practical Suggestions

- Spend some time teaching children and young people what a safe environment is, how to behave and what their role is in that eg, the importance of listening and what listening involves, what they have to do. Use play and role play. Allow time for this to develop
- Group agreements or learning contracts developed by the class help reinforce learning
- Have safe zones and time out spaces for when children and young people are struggling
- Apply PACE and Emotion Coaching principles where possible before sanctions

Key Messages

- You and young people may need to adapt to a different classroom ethos in PSHE lessons
- Some PSHE topics may prompt reactions in young people that are not ‘behaviour’ issues but may be challenging
- Behaviour management needs to accommodate the complexity of PSHE topics
- Understanding adversity and trauma and applying PACE and emotion coaching can help create a safe environment for all children and young people

Useful Links

Trauma Informed Schools

<https://www.traumainformedschools.co.uk>

Emotion Coaching

<https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com>

Creating a Safe Learning Environment Coram Life

<https://www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk/scarf/creating-a-safe-learning-environment>