

## Teacher's Notes

These notes accompany two lesson plans which promote awareness of unhealthy relationship behaviours and stalking in order to help protect young people from the potential risks in such situations. The lessons are offered free to schools to ensure young people aged 14-16 learn essential safeguarding information and skills in an interactive yet safe and age-appropriate way.

The lessons were written in collaboration with the Alice Ruggles Trust. Alice Ruggles was killed by an ex-boyfriend who had stalked her for a series of months. In Alice's case, she had taken action against him which regrettably was not successful but the Trust, set up by Alice's family, aims to increase awareness surrounding stalking in order to create a generation who understand more about the risks associated with such behaviours. The Trust aims to educate young people about the warning signs which may be present in an unhealthy relationship or when someone initially receives unwanted attention from another, in order to reduce the risk of undesirable behaviours escalating.

We would recommend that teachers avoid focusing on the details of Alice's case as there is a risk that such information could undermine the important messages around help-seeking which are so crucial in such situations. However, further information may provide additional context for your professional understanding of the way stalking can escalate. Details of the circumstances surrounding Alice's tragic death can be found at <https://www.alicerugglestrust.org/post/alices-story> or in the Channel 5 documentary – Murdered by my Stalker.

These guidance notes should be read before teaching the sessions. It is important that teachers are well prepared to deal with any issues arising from the taught sessions.

### Locating this resource within your curriculum

These lessons are not designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental programme. Learning is best placed within a spiral programme of knowledge, skills and attribute development, where prior learning is revisited, reinforced and extended in age- and stage-appropriate contexts.

This learning is best placed alongside additional learning on intimate relationships. It is important that the focus on unhealthy relationship behaviours is balanced by other learning which looks at positive relationship behaviours so that young people have a model for good quality relationships on which to base their future experiences.

### Safeguarding young people

The topic areas covered in this resource include some sensitive issues, the delivery of which can sometimes be challenging for both young people and teachers. It is important to understand that it is likely that some members of the group/class may have witnessed or experienced some form of relationship abuse, or might know someone who has. It is

therefore important to liaise with pastoral staff to formulate a plan to manage any students known to have potential vulnerabilities to such topics, and to consider how to plan for and manage young people who may be affected by such learning but are not otherwise known to staff. This may include providing the option of an 'exit card' and a named member of pastoral staff available to speak to, ensuring that learning is distanced from individual experiences and using inclusive language when approaching topics.

Learning in PSHE education is closely connected with the concerns young people are facing in their day to day lives. Recent evidence on the effectiveness of PSHE<sup>1</sup> demonstrates that teaching about issues such as relationship abuse increase the possibility of a young person making a disclosure and seeking help from a trusted adult. If, during the course of a lesson or other interaction with students, a teacher becomes worried about an individual's safety, they have a duty to report their concerns to their Designated Safeguarding Lead, and to follow child protection policies. Further sources of help can be found by contacting social services or the police.

PSHE education is best explored in contexts which are relevant to pupils' lives. However, creating some emotional distance is important. For this reason, the lesson materials use fictional characters and scenarios which students may be able to identify with. Students are often encouraged to give advice to characters in these fictional scenarios, but this exploration of 'something happening to someone else' is very different from talking about their own experiences. Such disclosures should be discouraged in a lesson setting but, as set out below, should be supported in a safe context.

## Creating a safe learning environment

A safe learning environment helps pupils feel comfortable with sharing their ideas, values and attitudes without attracting negative feedback and will help teachers to confidently manage discussions on sensitive issues. It is good practice for teachers to:

- work with pupils to establish ground rules about how they will behave towards each other in discussion

Examples of ground rules include:

- Everyone has the right to be heard and respected.
- We will use language that won't offend or upset other people.
- We will comment on what was said, not the person who said it.
- We won't share our own, or our friends', personal experiences.
- We won't put anyone on the spot and we have a right to pass.
- We won't judge or make assumptions about anyone.
- offer opportunities for pupils to discuss issues in small groups as well as sharing views with the class
- make boxes available in which pupils can place anonymous questions or concerns, to avoid having to voice them in front of the class
- provide access to balanced information and differing views to help pupils clarify their own opinions and views. It is a key principle of PSHE education that there is a positive

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/news-and-blog/blog-entry/whole-school-approach-promoting-health-schools>

approach to learning which does not attempt to induce shock, fear or guilt but focuses on what pupils can do to keep themselves and others healthy and safe.

- be sensitive to the needs and experiences of individuals – some pupils may have direct experience of some of the issues
- distance the learning from students to discourage personal disclosures in the classroom, avoid creating an emotional response that will block learning and to allow learners to consider the content objectively. Distancing can be achieved through the use of case studies, examples and questioning which focus on the choices and actions of fictitious characters, rather than the young person themselves
- always work within the school's policies on safeguarding and confidentiality
- link PSHE education into the whole-school approach to supporting student welfare
- make pupils aware of sources of support, both inside and outside the school, and how to access it.

Appropriate sources of help and support should be signposted so young people are clear about opportunities for them to talk about personal situations in a suitable, one-to-one setting. If a disclosure is made before, during or after a PSHE education lesson, teachers should follow their school's safeguarding policy. All staff should be familiar with this policy before embarking on any PSHE education teaching.

To encourage students to participate in the lessons, teachers should ensure that the content, approach and use of inclusive language reflect the diversity of the school community.

## Baseline and end point assessment

For PSHE education to be relevant, meaningful and engaging for students and for assessment for and of learning to be possible, it is important to gauge your students' relevant prior knowledge, understanding, skills, beliefs and attitudes (assessment for learning). Baseline assessment should be used wherever possible to provide learning material that meets your students' needs. Suitable baseline assessment activities are included in the lesson materials.

It is important that students have opportunities to draw together and reflect on their learning, for teachers to feel confident that learning has taken place and for both students and teachers to identify future learning needs. Best practice is for students to revisit their baseline assessments to illustrate progression. It also allows pupils to reflect on their own learning and its relevance for their lives. Assessment in PSHE education should not simply focus on factual knowledge. It should provide opportunities to assess confidence and competence in using skills and strategies and the development of attributes such as self-confidence.

## Mapping against the PSHE Association Programme of Study

The lessons can be used to address the following learning opportunities within the PSHE Association's Programme of Study at key stage 4.

### Lesson 1: Identifying unhealthy relationships

*Core theme 2 Relationships:*

- R1: strategies to manage strong emotions and feelings

- R7: to develop an awareness of exploitation, bullying, harassment and control in relationships (including the unique challenges posed by online abuse and the unacceptability of physical, emotional, sexual abuse in all types of teenage relationships, including in group settings such as gangs) and the skills and strategies to respond appropriately or access support
- R29: the role peers can play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support)

## Lesson 2: Managing unwanted attention

### Core theme 2 Relationships:

- R6: managing changes in personal relationships including the ending of relationships
- R11: about statutory and voluntary organisations that support relationships experiencing difficulties or in crisis, such as relationship breakdown, separation, divorce, or bereavement
- R12: how to access such organisations and other sources of information, advice and support
- R19: how to manage unwanted attention in a variety of contexts (including harassment and stalking)
- R29: the role peers can play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support)

## Additional Information

- For further information on establishing a safe learning environment and on creating a spiral PSHE education curriculum, visit:

The PSHE Association: <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/>

Further materials which can help to embed these lessons within a full RSE programme are also available by searching the PSHE Association's quality assured resources.

- For further information on stalking and the risks it poses, visit:

The Alice Ruggles Trust: <https://www.alicerugglestrust.org/>

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust: <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/>

- Additional information on managing unhealthy relationships is available from:

Relate: <https://www.relate.org.uk/>

Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/>

- Students may benefit from the following suggestions if they need support:

Childline 0800 1111

24-hour National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline 0808 2000 247

Police 101, or 999 in an emergency

Respect - support those exhibiting controlling behaviours 0808 802 4040

Men's Advice Line supports men with controlling partners 0808 801 0327

Suzy Lamplugh Trust's National Stalking Helpline: 0808 802 0300