

Key considerations when teaching potentially sensitive issues in PSHE education

By bearing these considerations in mind, teachers can foster a supportive and effective environment for discussing sensitive issues in PSHE education.

- **Know the Curriculum:** Ensure you are familiar with the scheme of learning. Have you anticipated some topics or moments that no may distress some students? In which case, what do you do?
- **Ensure that the curriculum is adapted to local needs:** Use both quantitative (e.g. anonymous surveys) and qualitative (focus group discussions) to promote 'pupil voice' and ensure relevance.
- **Adapt for Current Events:** Be prepared to thoughtfully address sensitive issues arising from current events or local community concerns.
- **Train and Support Staff:** Ensure all staff teaching PSHE receive adequate training and feel confident handling sensitive issues.
- **Take time to develop positive relationships with your pupils.** Children's capacity for learning is directly correlated to their capacity for relationships.
- **Understand Your Pupils:** To ensure sensitivity and inclusivity, be aware of your pupils' age, maturity, prior learning, SEND, cultural backgrounds, and individual needs.
- **Create a Safe Learning Environment:** Establish clear ground rules to promote respectful dialogue and ensure staff and pupils remain safe in the classroom. Veema recommends:
 - o No personal comments,
 - o We have the right 'to pass'
 - o Engage with the learning
 - o Treat others with respect,
 - o Listen to each other
- **Anticipate Potential Triggers:** Identify topics that may be challenging or emotionally triggering and provide content warnings where necessary. There may be times when it's appropriate to warn pupils collectively or individually about 'the topic next lesson' and allow them to have easy access to a safe place if necessary.
- **Use Accurate and (st)age-appropriate Resources:** Ensure materials are factual, balanced, and suited to the developmental stage of the pupils.
- **Promote Inclusivity:** Assume diversity, not heterosexuality. Ensure that language and case studies are gender-neutral wherever possible. Address diverse perspectives and experiences, ensuring all pupils feel represented and valued.
- **Balance Personal and Professional Boundaries:** Encourage discussion without sharing personal opinions or experiences to maintain neutrality. Model the use of 'distancing techniques' such as "I've seen ...", "I've heard ...", "Someone I know ..." to preserve dignity and social reputations.

- **When planning and providing learning**, please remember **ASK –Attributes** (as identified in the statutory guidance) **Skills** (such as critical thinking, empathy, and decision-making skills to navigate sensitive issues confidently) and **Knowledge** (as identified in the statutory guidance).
- **Provide Support Pathways:** Signpost pupils to appropriate support services (e.g., school counsellors, websites, helplines) and follow safeguarding policies and protocols.
- **Engage Parents and Carers:** Communicate openly about the PSHE curriculum to foster understanding and address any questions or concerns. Respect parents' rights to withdraw their child from sex education and ensure that appropriate alternative arrangements are made.
- **Address Misconceptions and Prejudice:** Constructively challenge stereotypes, misinformation, and discriminatory attitudes.
- **Assess learning:** PSHE should not be different to any other curriculum area, learning (about attributes, skills and knowledge) can be assessed (including self-assessment) and reported.
- **Evaluate and Reflect:** Regularly review topics, schemes of learning and lesson plans based on pupil feedback to improve the appropriate provision that meets local needs.



Call us for more info
[+44 \(0\) 20 3637 4232](tel:+442036374232)



Visit our website
www.veema.co.uk



Email us
cpd@veema.co.uk



VeemaEdu



@VeemaEdu



Veema

Never Stop
Learning

veemaTM
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION