**Harassment and Abuse**

**2. What is online harassment? How should you give and obtain consent?**

**Pre-class preparation**

• Photocopy and cut up sets of the ‘harassment cards’ (one set per group of 3-4 students). These should be double sided, with the scenario on the face and the answer on the reverse.

• Outline how the purpose of this PSHCE lesson is to consider how to protect ourselves not only from being harassed, but also how to protect ourselves from accusations of harassment. Ask for a definition of ‘**harassment’** before proceeding any further (e.g. unwanted attention, pressure or intimidation).

• It may be worth at this point bringing in the issue of ‘**consent’**: i.e. to avoid accusations of harassment, it is important to ensure that you have shown respect by seeking **permission**.

**Starter activity 1 (c. 5 minutes) – Online activities compared**

• Ask students to add up how many online accounts they have that they use regularly (e.g. different social media accounts, gaming accounts, email accounts).

• Next, instruct students to arrange themselves in a line in order of least to most online accounts. Discuss with students what they use their accounts for, and what they like to do online (alternate between students at different ends of the spectrum).

**Starter activity 2 (c. 15m) – What is consent?**

Ask young people to stand in two parallel lines opposite each other. The people in one of the lines [indicate which] will slowly take small steps forward, asking the person opposite “can I take another step?” before each step. They should only take a step forward if they have been given consent to do so, and the person giving consent should say no when they feel close to being uncomfortable with the proximity of the person opposite them. When they no longer have consent to step forward, they should stay standing where they are.

Consent can be given verbally or non-verbally during this exercise.

Continue until everyone has stopped. It is likely that pupils will have asked each other to stop at different points.

Keep the pupils in their lines for a discussion of the following questions:

1. Why do you think people asked the other person to stop at different distances away? (answers might include ‘because everyone has different personal space requirements’, ‘depends on the relationship between the pairs’, ‘friends may get closer than people who don’t know each other so well’).
2. How did it feel to be able to say ‘stop’ and have that respected? How does it feel when people don’t respect your boundaries?
3. How would it have felt if the opposite person had kept taking a step forward even when you asked them to stop?
4. What were some of the different ways that consent was communicated? (was it always verbal?)

**Task 1: Group Work (c. 20 minutes)**

• Organise the class into small groups of 3-4 students.

• Provide each group with a set of the ‘harassment cards’, making it very clear that they should ONLY look at the ‘scenario’ side of each card when instructed and refrain from looking EITHER at the reverse OR at any of the remaining scenario cards (i.e. they should NOT spread the cards out all over their tables).

• As a **class**, read through the first three scenario cards. Each group should then organise these on the desk with what they consider to be the least concerning scenario to the left and the most concerning to the right, with the third event placed somewhere between them to indicate where along the scale it belongs.

• Working as **individual groups**, Students then read through the next card, and then add it to their diagram, adjusting the other cards as necessary. Repeat the process for the other scenarios.

**Note:**

Some groups might ‘race’ through the activity and finish well ahead of others. To avoid this, use a classroom timer (e.g. [www.classtools.net/timer](http://www.classtools.net/timer)) to give students 30 seconds on each scenario before they are allowed to move on to the next one.

**Task 2: Comparing findings (c. 5 minutes)**

• Give each group a number (e.g. 1 through to 7). Instruct students that they will now have a further 30 seconds looking in turn at each of the other groups’ diagrams. As they do so they should try to identify in particular any groups whose layout of cards was notably different to their own. To prepare effectively for this, each group should start by memorising the two or three scenarios at either end of the diagram.

• Group 1 should move to the Group 2 table, Group 2 to Group 3, and so on, with the final group moving to the Group 1 table. Give them 30 seconds to examine (but not touch / rearrange) the diagram. After 30 seconds tell them to move on to the next table and repeat the process until they are back at their own original table.

**Task 3: Classroom discussion (c. 10-15 minutes)**

• The teacher should now lead a discussion around the following sorts of questions:

1. Did all the groups agree which was the most serious cases(s) of harassment? (identify the most serious ones, discuss why they are clearly inappropriate, and discuss what the guilty party / parties should have done instead – with a focus on the word ‘consent’).

2. Did all the groups agree which was not a case of harassment? (similar discussion)

3. Did all groups agree which examples were more difficult to judge? Why might different people have different opinions on whether each scenario is harassment or not?

• What could the characters have done to check for **consent** in each scenario? It’s important to acknowledge how complicated and personalised these issues can be. Conclude the discussion around some of the most concerning scenarios with a comment on how the character could have checked they had consent beforehand – this might have been through a direct question, or through knowing the boundaries of the relationship. Once the group has thought of several examples, show them the following list to compare their answers to (And for each, make sure they understand what these words and terms mean).

Online harassment can make a person feel:

* Threatened
* Exploited
* Coerced
* That their dignity is lost
* Humiliated or degraded
* Upset
* Sexualised
* Discriminated against (because of their gender or sexual orientation)
* Feel guilty or like they are to blame

Work through the list of emotions to check the students understand what they mean. You could provide, or ask for, examples for each one. Use this opportunity to stress that to make a person feel any of those emotions is never acceptable, offline or online, and depending on the situation, can break the law. Online sexual harassment does not have to be accepted as a normal part of growing up.

**Plenary (c.5-10m)**

Ask the students to turn each card over to see how far their judgements are backed up by the statement on the reverse. Did they find any of these results surprising? Why?

**Extension Task (5m)**

The following two videos reinforce the notion of ‘consent’ very effectively: <https://vimeo.com/128105683>

<https://vimeo.com/562744511>

**Credits**

Harassment cards from <https://www.childnet.com>.

Starter activities from <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk>