

Families and committed relationships

Lesson 3: When is it right?



Note: the content of this lesson covers the non-statutory aspects of the primary Relationships education guidelines

Lesson context and overview

This is the third of three lessons exploring aspects of sex education. This lesson focuses on how age restrictions for having sex (the age of consent) are there to keep children safe.

Curriculum links

Relationships education

Sex education (primary)

Paragraph 67 of the DfE guidelines on teaching Relationships education and Health education:

It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department of Education continues to recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born.

Resources

Presentation slides

How old do you need to be? quiz

How old do you need to be? teacher answer sheet

Poster template

Anonymous question box as previous lesson

Slips or paper or post-its for questions

Key vocabulary

law, legal, age restriction, age of consent, safe

Learning objectives

We are learning about:

- *the importance of being ready to start a family in the future*
- *legal age restrictions, and why these are in place.*

Learning outcomes

We will be able to:

- *explain why age restrictions are in place for particular activities*
- *identify the age of consent for sexual intercourse and its importance in helping children stay safe from risk and harm.*

Essential teaching guidance

Please ensure you have read the guidelines on creating a safe teaching and learning environment before delivering these lessons. To create a climate of trust for safe and effective learning, ensure that ground rules are established or revisited before delivery. If pupils ask questions or share details that cause safeguarding concerns (including inappropriate sexual language, or indication of knowledge of sexual behaviour that is inappropriate for their age) please refer to your school's safeguarding policy and procedures. Questions should be encouraged and welcomed throughout this lesson. Please refer to the teacher guidance on ways to manage and respond to any tricky questions.

Starter/baseline activity

Introduce pupils to the objectives and the key vocabulary for the lesson. Recap and discuss learning from the previous sessions and check that pupils understand how a baby is made and the term 'sexual intercourse'. Remind pupils of the previous lesson's question (*Why is it important to be grown-up before having a baby?*) and the responses they gave in relation to the impact that starting a family has on people's lives.

Explain to pupils that people don't only have sex when they want to make a baby, and ask them what they think two people would need to consider before having sex. Take feedback from pupils, reminding them that it is a very big decision to make.

Core activities

1. Explain to the class that one consideration before having sex is that there is a legal age restriction for having sex. Ask pupils what they know about age restrictions and ask them to give you some examples of things that have age restrictions (e.g. social media sites, film certifications, gaming certifications, etc.). Write examples that pupils suggest on the board. Ask pupils why they think age restrictions exist and take feedback.

Organise pupils into pairs or small groups and give each pupil a copy of the *How old do you need to be?* quiz sheet. Explain that each question is about the legal age (i.e. what the law says) for doing each activity. Ask pupils to fill in what they think the answers are. (alternatively, this could be done as a whole class activity using slide 5, with pupils moving to different parts of the room where the following labels are placed: '11', '13', '16', '17', '18' 'Don't know').

Go through each question and ask for responses. Clarify the correct legal ages with the class, and share any additional information using slide 6 (and the Teacher answer sheet). Ask pupils if they find any of the answers surprising and discuss why.

Emphasise that the legal age for having sex in the UK is 16 and that this is called the age of consent. Ensure that pupils understand that people are not expected to have sexual intercourse at this age – 16 is still very young and that most people will not be ready or want to have sex at this age.

2. Ask pairs or small groups to return to their quiz sheets and look at each question and the correct answer in turn. Ask pupils to work together to consider the following questions:

- *Why do you think age limits apply and why do you think they are important?*
- *What do you think might happen if someone was to ignore these age limits?*
- *Are there any laws that don't exist that you think should be in place? Why?*

If it helps, ask pupils to think of something that could happen if an age restriction wasn't in place.

Bring the class back together and discuss pupils' responses. Explain that age restrictions are set in law mainly to keep children and young people safe from risk and harm.

Discuss the importance of the age of consent, as they already know that both having sex and starting a family are very big decisions and it is important to be sure that you are ready. Explain that most people wait until they are in a committed relationship and both people feel ready and want to have sex together – before agreeing or giving consent to having sexual intercourse.

Explain to pupils that they will learn about sexual intercourse and keeping safe in more detail at secondary school.

3. Ask pupils to design a source of information, such as a poster, leaflet or presentation, relating to any one of the laws highlighted in the quiz. Explain that the information should be aimed at children around their age or slightly older, and that pupils should consider where their information might be displayed (e.g. in a local shop, a community centre, a library, etc). They should include the following:

- the activity they are focusing on
- the age restriction
- the law and why it is important to keep this law
- what may happen if people do not abide by this law
- how the law keeps children safe.

The results could be used as a classroom or school display about how laws relate to children and young people.

Note: The question box is an essential part of the Year 6 Families and committed relationships lessons. It enables reinforcement of learning and allows time for pupils to reflect and come back with further questions following discussions at home or with friends. It enables questions to be shared in a safe place where children receive the correct answers.

4. Provide each pupil with a question slip (e.g. a post-it note or a piece of paper). Encourage them to write down any questions they may still have and place their slips in the question box provided. Emphasise to pupils that they are in a safe space and that they should not try to look at questions from peers – this is an opportunity for everyone to ask questions that they might have individually.

Remind pupils:

- No question is a silly question.
- Nobody will be in trouble for asking a question about this topic.
- If they don't have a question, they should write 'no question' and post that in the box.

All questions will be answered, either as part of the lesson, during another lesson, or, if necessary, with individuals (refer to the accompanying teacher guidance on responding to questions).

Plenary

Ask pupils to share something they have learned in this series of lessons about one of the following:

- starting a family
- the law and age restrictions.

Remind pupils that the decision to start a family is a big one, and that having a baby is a very big commitment. Emphasise the importance of both people in a relationship being ready and able to make that choice at a time that is right for them.

Assessment

Use outcomes of the *How old do you need to be?* quiz to form a baseline assessment of pupils' understanding, and outcomes of the poster activity and plenary to assess any progression in understanding, or to gauge where learning needs to be clarified and reinforced.