

Teacher guidance:
Key standards in
teaching about
body image

PSHE
Association



Government
Equalities Office

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Introduction

Body image is an area of increasing concern for children, young people, parents and teachers. Our culture is infused with messages linking individual worth with physical appearance – the growth of social media has brought celebrity culture into young people's bedrooms, and young people report feeling increasingly besieged by sexualised and unrealistic images of beauty.

These issues emerge across the school curriculum, and in all aspects of school life. The PSHE education curriculum has a valuable role to play in helping young people to improve their personal resilience to body image pressures, and so become more confident and effective learners.

This guidance offers teachers advice about the safe and confident teaching of body image as part of the PSHE curriculum. It has been developed by the PSHE Association, and funded by the Government Equalities Office.

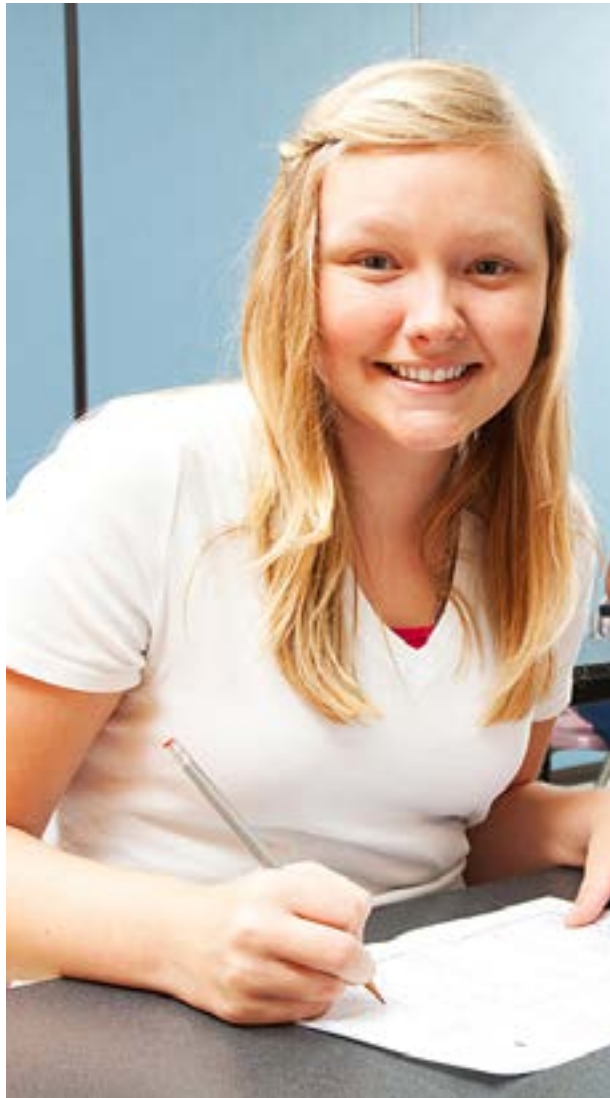
Through consultation with teachers and body image experts, we have compiled practical guidance which aims to support you in the classroom. We hope it will enable you to promote positive body image in your pupils, either by developing your own teaching materials or adapting existing resources for use with your pupils. At the end of this guidance we have highlighted a range of recommended resources which we consider excellent starting points for teaching and learning related to body image issues.

Throughout the document, we provide statistics and quotations which provide a flavour of the experience of young people (from a range of backgrounds/genders) in relation to body image. The statistics come from surveys of PSHE Association members and research undertaken by our partners in the body image field. The quotations are from young people we met during the course of developing the guidance, who took part in focus groups. We hope they provide an insight into why this work is so important.



“ Teaching about body image has to be in context. How do the children perceive themselves? I used our Health Related Behaviour Survey to identify it as an issue and spoke with staff about the issue in Y8 – the skipping breakfast, feeling that make-up is essential, worrying too much about the opinions of others – and from there tried to build a bespoke and meaningful programme.

What is body image?



Body image describes our idea of how our body looks and how we think it is perceived by others. This can include our thoughts and feelings about our height, weight, shape, skin, colour, and our appearance and attractiveness more broadly.

We can have positive or negative body image and this is determined by a contribution of different factors, including:

- biological predispositions
- influence of peers and family
- influence of media or society
- the culture in which we live
- our broader self-esteem.

Two people could appear identical but due to a combination of biology and experience, one may experience negative body image while the other has positive body image. One of the reasons that some people experience more negative body

image than others is to do with their level of self-objectification. This describes the way in which we view and critique our bodies as if we were an external observer, and is widely associated with body shame, appearance anxiety, depression, and disordered eating, especially in women.¹

Encouraging the development of positive body image in young people can have a significant impact on their wellbeing and health – young people with negative body image are more vulnerable to developing eating disorders and other mental health issues. Where negative body image exists, it can also have a significant impact on a young person's ability to enjoy and achieve, with poor self-perception and lack of confidence holding them back from engaging in day-to-day activities. A recent study from Girlguiding and Dove revealed that one in five primary school girls has been on a diet, and 47% of 11–14-year-old girls are opting out of everyday activities such as swimming and speaking up in class because they don't like how they look.²

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¹ Rachel M. Calogero, Stacey Ed Tantleff-Dunn, and J. Thompson. *Self-objectification in women: Causes, consequences, and counteractions*. American Psychological Association, 2011

² Self-esteem survey for Girlguiding and Dove self-esteem project, carried out by OnePoll for 500 UK girls (aged 11–14) in September 2013

Why is body image an important part of the curriculum?

The importance of health and wellbeing for attainment is well established.³ Poor

body image can significantly affect health and wellbeing, and is an obstacle to effective learning, participation, aspirations and attainment.

- Recent research clearly indicates that negative body image is common amongst school-aged children:
- over half of girls and a quarter of boys think their peers have body image problems⁴
- between one third and half of young girls fear becoming fat and engage in dieting or binge-eating⁵
- girls as young as 5 years old are worried about the way they look and their size⁶

- One in four 7-year-old girls has tried to lose weight at least once⁷
- one third of young boys aged 8–12 are dieting to lose weight.⁸

Schools are in an excellent position to support children and young people in the development of improved body confidence and self-esteem as part of their ongoing curriculum of PSHE education and by considering the school's ethos as a whole. By tailoring our school curriculum and environment to promote the development of positive body image, we can have a positive impact on pupil outcomes, both in terms of attainment and emotional wellbeing.

Understanding of body image will also support other areas of the curriculum: for example, it is important in effective learning about healthy lifestyles, tackling obesity and encouraging participation in physical activity.

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³ Public Health England: *The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment: A briefing for head teachers, governors and staff in education settings*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/370686/HT_briefing_layoutFINALvii.pdf

⁴ Centre for Appearance Research and Centra

⁵ Edlund, Halvarsson and Sjoden, 1996

⁶ Lohmann et al, *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*,

.....
⁷ Westerberg-Jacobson et al, *European Eating Disorders Review*, 2011

⁸ McCabe, and Ricciardelli, 2005



The current picture according to PSHE teachers

An online survey conducted by the PSHE Association in February 2015 exploring the experiences of PSHE teachers received 353 responses. The aim of the survey was to explore how important an issue PSHE teachers feel body image is for their pupils, how useful they have found resources they have used so far, and how they could be better supported in promoting positive body image as part of the PSHE curriculum.

Respondents represented a range of roles from school nurses through to headteachers. A range of settings were also represented, including primary, secondary and special schools, co-educational and single-sex schools, and state and independent schools. The largest number of responses came from PSHE leads and coordinators teaching in co-educational schools.

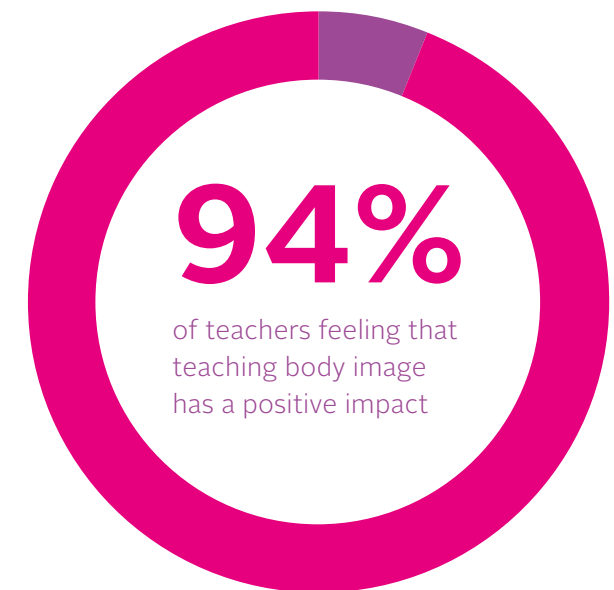
Key findings from the survey included:

- teachers felt that body image has the most impact on pupils in key stages 3 and 4, and so were more likely to teach the topic to pupils of this age
- when delivering body image lessons 83% of teachers teach all pupils together, regardless of gender

- 94% of teachers felt that the lessons on body image delivered in their school have had a positive impact
- the majority of lessons on body image were provided solely by a member of school staff (64%) as opposed to an external practitioner or a combination of both
- in 25% of cases, the teacher delivering the lessons on body image lacked confidence in delivering them.

While men and boys are undoubtedly affected by our society's intense focus on physical appearance, and both men and women experience low body satisfaction, poor body image generally affects women and girls more acutely due to their increased levels of self-objectification (viewing and critiquing themselves as if from outside of their body).

In our survey of 353 PSHE teachers, 85% of respondents felt that body image has an impact on the wellbeing of their male pupils, versus 95% of teachers who felt that body image had an impact on the wellbeing of their female pupils. And 74% felt body image had a more significant impact on the wellbeing of female pupils than male pupils. While poor body image is more likely to affect girls, boys can also have poor body image and may find it harder to access effective support (see section on 'working with body and young men' below).



Creating a school environment that supports and promotes positive body image

Start with you

Before considering your lessons for pupils, think about yourself and your colleagues. Young people pay far more attention to what we do than what we say. If we teach them about positive body image but do not embody the thoughts, feelings and behaviours we're working to encourage, then we send pupils mixed messages and contradict our own teaching. It is very easy to slip into:

- 'fat talk' (self-deprecating commentary on our own appearance)
- complimenting people on weight loss (even if it's weight they didn't need to lose)
- implying that someone's appearance is the most important thing about them
- chatter about unflattering photos of celebrities
- talking negatively about how appearance changes with age.

While none of these are necessarily problematic in moderation, the problem is that in our culture they are not discussed in moderation, so that

young people are saturated with these messages on a daily basis. We can play our part by stepping back from reinforcing them, as much as possible.

Discourage fat-shaming and equation of human worth with body shape

Young people are often intensely invested in body weight and judgemental about their own and others' bodies. Often they justify this on the grounds of the health risks of obesity. It is undeniable that obesity is a significant public health problem – and also an individual risk factor for poor body confidence. It is important that young people are supported to maximise their own health and wellbeing. But fat-shaming does not help them. Obesity is a health problem, not a moral failing or a sign of lack of worth.

Young people who are obese need help to reduce their weight. But a lesson on body image, in front of other pupils, is not the right time or place to do it. As much as possible, PSHE lessons should be a haven from bullying and stigmatisation, not a focus for it. This approach helps to tackle obesity, since people who value themselves and their bodies are more likely to achieve and sustain a healthy weight. In practice, though, it can be difficult for teachers (and

parents) to find ways of communicating about obesity in ways that do not undermine body image (and vice versa). We strongly recommend that you ensure that teaching about body image 'joins up' with lessons about healthy eating and obesity: i.e. that it is harmonious with and does not contradict teaching about obesity and healthy eating, to make sure the two support and do not undermine each other.

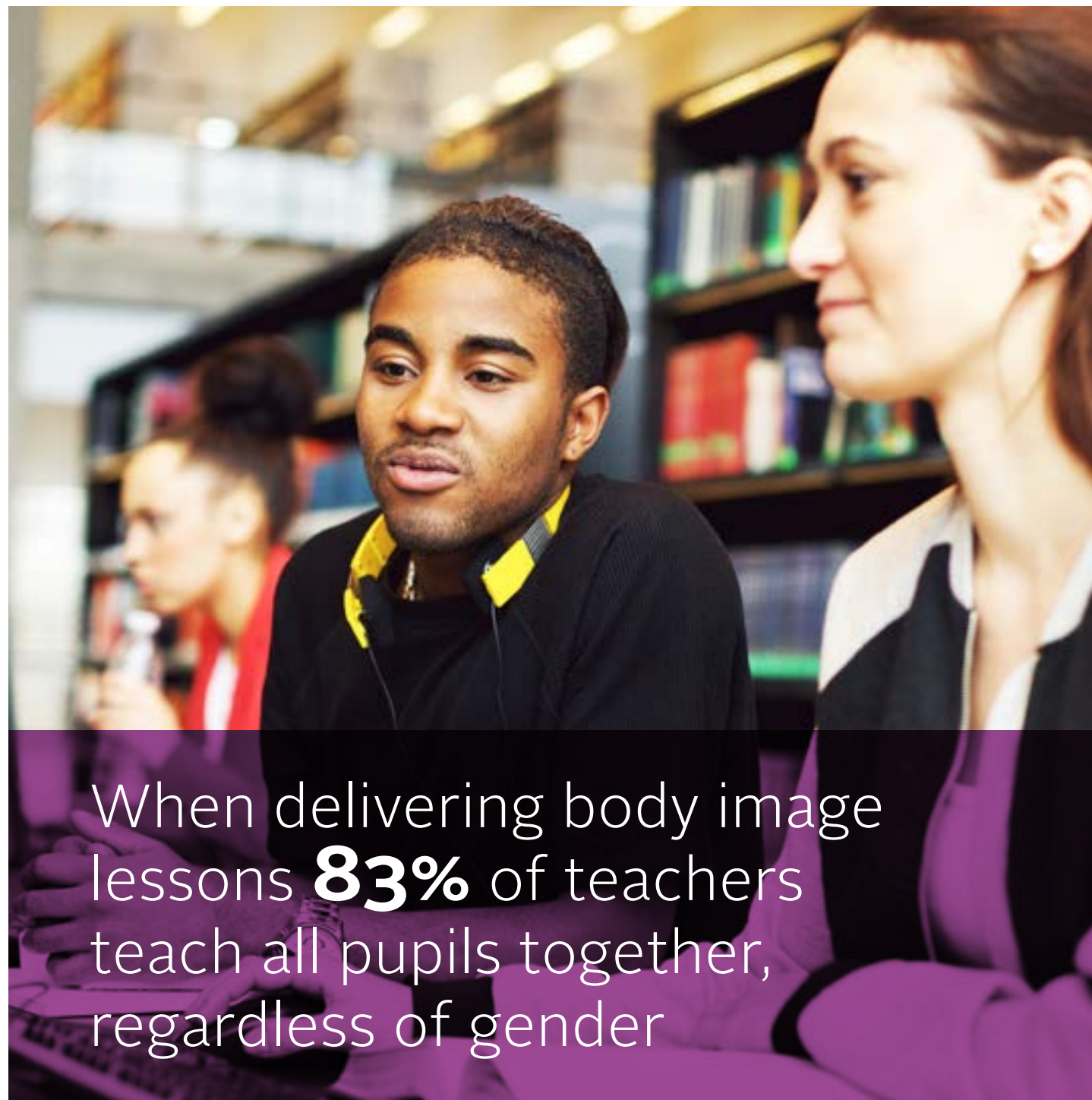
94%
84%

94% of teachers felt that the lessons on body image delivered in their schools have had a positive impact on their female pupils and 84% of teachers said the same for male pupils

In our broader PSHE curriculum, we should encourage pupils to have an open-minded and explorative approach to a range of issues. Regardless of the issue being discussed, pupils should be actively discouraged from judging others. Instead, we should encourage pupils to explore the world from a variety of perspectives and try to enable them to understand the position and point of view of others. This approach can be used equally to prevent stigmatisation and bullying of a range of vulnerable groups, including those with mental health issues, LGBT pupils and those who are significantly under or overweight.

Use inclusive images wherever possible

In our use of images in displays around the school, in general teaching resources, and in presentations and assemblies, we should aim to promote a culture of acceptance. Where possible, we should try to use, as a matter of course, images which include people of different ethnicities, genders, abilities and disabilities, body shapes and cultures.



When delivering body image lessons **83%** of teachers teach all pupils together, regardless of gender

Building teaching about body image into a planned PSHE education programme

It is important that your PSHE education programme develops the relevant knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes progressively in a way which is appropriate to pupils' age and maturity from early years onwards. This will sometimes take the form of discrete lessons with a body image or self-esteem focus but will also form part of your wider PSHE teaching.

The **PSHE Association Programme of Study**⁹, the leading curriculum framework for the subject, covers key stages 1 to 4 and is based on three core themes:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships
- Living in the Wider World

Body image and self-esteem run through all the core themes, especially Health and Wellbeing and Relationships. In your planning, it is important to consider not only where it is mentioned *explicitly*, but where there is *implicit* learning that is crucial to pupils' understanding and skills development in this area.

⁹ https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/resources_search_details.aspx?ResourceId=495



“ Body image and self-esteem run through all the core themes

When deciding where to teach specifically about body image, it is important to ensure that it builds on appropriate earlier learning. This is so that it forms part of a developmental, spiral curriculum, where learning is seen as continuous and pupils are given opportunities to revisit and extend on prior learning as appropriate for their age and maturity, rather than being taught a patchwork quilt of unrelated ‘topics’.

The table below is edited from the **PSHE Association Programme of Study** (October 2014). Although not definitive, it suggests ways in which body image and self-esteem can be explicitly addressed in the PSHE curriculum, and can be used as the basis for developing the ‘spiral curriculum’ described above.

Key stage 1

Health and Wellbeing	Relationships	Living in the Wider World
<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <p>what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, including the benefits of physical activity, rest, healthy eating and dental health</p> <p>to recognise what they like and dislike, how to make real, informed choices that improve their physical and emotional health, to recognise that choices can have good and not so good consequences</p> <p>to think about themselves, to learn from their experiences, to recognise and celebrate their strengths and set simple but challenging goals</p> <p>about the process of growing from young to old and how people’s needs change</p> <p>the names for the main parts of the body (including external genitalia), the similarities and differences between boys and girls</p>	<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <p>to share their opinions on things that matter to them and explain their views through discussions with one other person and the whole class</p> <p>to offer constructive support and feedback to others</p> <p>to identify and respect the differences and similarities between people</p> <p>that people’s bodies and feelings can be hurt (including what makes them feel comfortable and uncomfortable)</p> <p>to recognise when people are being unkind either to them or others, how to respond, who to tell and what to say</p>	<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <p>that people and other living things have needs and that they have responsibilities to meet them</p>



Key stage 2

Health and Wellbeing	Relationships	Living in the Wider World
<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <p>what positively and negatively affects their physical, mental and emotional health (including the media)</p> <p>how to make informed choices (including recognising that choices can have positive, neutral and negative consequences) and to begin to understand the concept of a 'balanced lifestyle'</p> <p>to recognise how images in the media do not always reflect reality and can affect how people feel about themselves</p> <p>to recognise opportunities to make their own choices about food, what might influence their choices and the benefits of eating a balanced diet</p> <p>to reflect on and celebrate their achievements, identify their strengths, areas for improvement, set high aspirations and goals</p> <p>that pressure to behave in an unacceptable, unhealthy or risky way can come from a variety of sources, including people they know and the media</p> <p>how their body will, and emotions may, change as they approach and move through puberty</p> <p>about human reproduction</p> <p>about taking care of their body, understanding that they have autonomy and the right to protect their body from inappropriate and unwanted contact</p>	<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <p>that their actions affect themselves and others</p> <p>to listen and respond respectfully to a wide range of people, to feel confident to raise their own concerns, to recognise and care about other people's feelings and to try to see, respect and if necessary constructively challenge their points of view</p> <p>that differences and similarities between people arise from a number of factors, including family, cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability (see 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act 2010)</p> <p>to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber bullying, use of prejudice-based language), how to respond and ask for help</p> <p>to recognise and challenge stereotypes</p>	<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <p>to research, discuss and debate topical issues, problems and events concerning health and wellbeing and offer their recommendations to appropriate people¹⁰</p> <p>to resolve differences by looking at alternatives, seeing and respecting others' points of view, making decisions and explaining choices</p> <p>to appreciate the range of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom</p> <p>to think about the lives of people living in other places, and people with different values and customs</p>

.....
¹⁰ **Note that pupils should not be encouraged to research about eating disorders and self-harm online, given the number of dangerous sites which may encourage self-harming behaviours**



Key stage 3

Health and Wellbeing	Relationships	Living in the Wider World
<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognise their personal strengths and how this affects their self-confidence and self-esteem to recognise that the way in which personal qualities, attitudes, skills and achievements are evaluated by others affects confidence and self-esteem to be able to accept helpful feedback or reject unhelpful criticism to understand that self-esteem can change with personal circumstances, such as those associated with family and friendships, achievements and employment the characteristics of mental and emotional health and strategies for managing it; to manage growth and change as normal parts of growing up (including consolidation and reinforcement of key stage 2 learning on puberty, human reproduction, pregnancy and the physical and emotional changes of adolescence) the importance of taking increased personal responsibility for their own personal hygiene the benefits of physical activity and exercise and the importance of sleep to recognise and manage what influences their choices about exercise what constitutes a balanced diet and its benefits (including the risks associated with both obesity and dieting) what might influence their decisions about eating a balanced diet how the media portrays young people, body image and health issues and that identity is affected by a range of factors, including the media and a positive sense of self about eating disorders, including recognising when they or others need help, sources of help and strategies for accessing it 	<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the qualities and behaviours they should expect and exhibit in a wide variety of positive relationships (including teams, class, friendships etc.) that the media portrayal of relationships may not reflect real life to recognise peer pressure and have strategies to manage it 	<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognise, clarify and if necessary challenge their own core values and how their values influence their choices about the similarities, differences and diversity among people of different race, culture, ability, disability, sex, gender identity, age and sexual orientation and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying and, discrimination on individuals and communities



Key stage 4

Health and Wellbeing	Relationships	Living in the Wider World
<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <p>to evaluate the extent to which their self-confidence and self-esteem are affected by the judgements of others</p> <p>to make effective use of constructive feedback and differentiating between helpful feedback and unhelpful criticism</p> <p>the characteristics of emotional and mental health and the causes, symptoms and treatments of some mental and emotional health disorders (including stress, anxiety and depression)</p> <p>strategies for managing mental health including stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide, and sources of help and support</p> <p>to recognize and manage feelings about, and influences on, their body image including the media's portrayal of idealised and artificial body shapes</p> <p>about health risks and issues related to this, including cosmetic procedures</p>	<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <p>to understand the role of sex in the media and its impact on sexuality</p> <p>about diversity in sexual attraction and developing sexuality, including sources of support and reassurance and how to access them</p> <p>the role peers play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support)</p>	<p>Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:</p> <p>to evaluate their own personal strengths and areas for development and to use this to inform goal-setting</p> <p>about the unacceptability of all forms of discrimination and the need to challenge it in the wider community including the workplace</p>

.....

Teachers felt that body image has the most impact on pupils in key stages 3 and 4, and this is reflected in when the PSHE lessons are targeted



From 'programme of study' to 'scheme of work' to 'lesson plan'

The extracts from the Programme of Study alone will not ensure effective lessons in the PSHE education classroom. When planning a scheme of work for promoting positive body image and self-esteem, it is important to select the most appropriate learning opportunities for your pupils based on their needs and the time available. While all schools will do this differently, it is important to ensure that there is always a development of learning across time within a spiral programme, revisiting themes and building on prior knowledge and understanding, and further developing skills. A balance between increasing knowledge and developing skills and personal attributes should be maintained.

Enabling pupil voice

When developing your curriculum, your pupils can be a very valuable resource. It's not possible to develop a curriculum that's completely relevant to them without engaging their opinions or drawing on their ideas and experiences. The best lessons are those which use the situations that a pupil is facing right now to develop skills and knowledge to face a range of other, similar situations in the future.

There are several ways that you can go about enabling your pupils to input into your proposed curriculum:

- carry out an anonymous survey of the entire school/class to gain an understanding of current issues
- carry out focus groups with pupils to discuss areas they would like to see incorporated into the curriculum
- ask your school council to poll their peers
- put together a proposed curriculum and consult with pupils about how it could be improved
- have an anonymous suggestion box for pupils' ideas, or questions they would like addressed as part of the curriculum.

In our recommended resources section at the end of this guidance, we reference Oak Cottage School, which Ofsted has identified as an exemplar of good practice in relation to teaching about body image. This school does excellent work in relation to pupil voice, and the case study is worth reading in this respect.





Keys to promoting positive body image safely and confidently as part of your PSHE curriculum

Taking gender into account

Much consideration has been given to whether lessons about body image and related topics are more effective when pupils are separated by gender. The Centre for Appearance Research at UWE considered this factor specifically when researching the effectiveness of the recently developed Dove Self-Esteem workshops. The research suggested that, on the whole, mixed settings provided the most effective forum for learning, but that young people sometimes found they could talk more freely about especially sensitive topics when the class was divided by gender.

Our consultation with teachers backed this opinion, though teachers felt strongly that:

- All pupils need an understanding of the factors impacting everybody. This may need special consideration by single-sex schools.
- Teachers should tailor their teaching to meet the needs of the individual cohort. Asking pupils for their preferences can be a good starting point. Some classes gel better than others.
- When working in a mixed-gender setting, it's especially important to reinforce ground rules and ensure pupils use and respect the 'right to pass' as needed.

“ I know what I want to look like, but however much I work out I never look that way. It makes me feel like a failure. **Pupil, 15**

Working with boys and young men

There is growing concern that boys and men can also suffer from detrimental effects on health, wellbeing, aspirations and confidence. More research is needed to fully understand what the particular effects of poor body image are on men and boys, but the teachers we consulted indicated that negative body image is having an increasing impact on boys in their schools. Teachers indicated that male pupils are becoming increasingly aware of their appearance and expressing increasing concerns about their bodies.

While there are few resources specifically focused on working with boys and young men, body image resources are increasingly becoming more gender inclusive and many of those we recommend at the end of this guidance can be used with boys and young men.

“If I was thin
I’d be happy.”

Pupil, 16

Providing a safe learning environment for vulnerable pupils

It is always safest to prepare and deliver lessons in the knowledge that one or more pupils in your classroom may fall into each of the following categories:

- is being or has been bullied about their weight or appearance
- is at risk of developing an eating disorder
- currently has or has recovered from an eating disorder
- exercises at excessive levels in order to lose weight or gain muscle
- is clinically overweight (and has been advised to lose weight)
- knows or is related to someone with one of the above issues
- is facing issues or questions related to their sexual orientation which has an impact on the way they feel about themselves
- has a view about their weight or appearance affected by their gender identity
- has low body confidence resulting from illness, disability or disfigurement.

Pupils falling into these categories can be more vulnerable than their peers, and extra caution needs to be taken when teaching them about healthy eating and healthy weight. You may already be aware of a pupil or pupils in your class who gives cause for concern, but often there will be others you’re unaware of, so it’s generally safest to treat all pupils as ‘at risk’ and teach very sensitively. Note: this should apply not just on specific lessons in relation to body image, but in any lesson where perception of self and others might come up (for example, PSHE education lessons on healthy eating and physical activity, sex and relationships, broader mental health questions).

Issues teachers asked for more support on:

“Gender identity issues”

“Impact of pornography”

“Body image for the disabled”

“I need guidance about working with BME pupils”

“Self-esteem is a big issue here with a lot of girls self-harming and having other mental health issues”

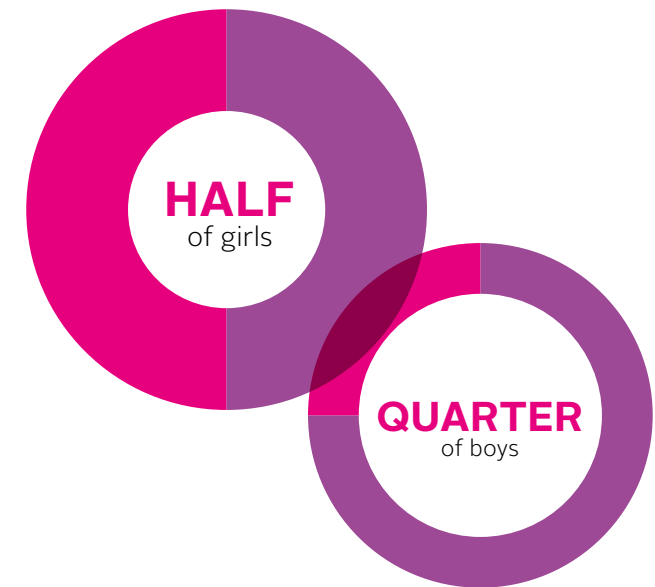
The importance of clear, consistent ground rules

When teaching areas of the curriculum such as body image or self-esteem, it is important to think carefully about the possibility of personal disclosures from pupils who, as a result of the lesson, may develop the skills, language, knowledge and understanding needed to make a disclosure about their own mental health or emotional wellbeing. Although appropriate disclosures should be seen as a positive impact of the learning, it is very important that if pupils make personal disclosures to school staff, they do so in a suitable, one-to-one setting. It is not appropriate to encourage pupils to talk about sensitive personal matters in the classroom.

Before teaching about body image, clear 'ground rules' should be established or reinforced and the concepts of confidentiality and anonymity covered at the start of the lesson. Ground rules need to be consistently adhered to, regularly revisited and, if necessary, renegotiated and reinforced. The teacher should lead the way by modelling the ground rules in their own communications with the class.

Ground rules are most effective when they have been negotiated and agreed with the pupils, rather than imposed by the teacher. Teachers tell us that the most effective ground rules are:

- written in pupils' own words
- visually displayed in the classroom
- physically signed by pupils in some cases (like an informal contract)
- monitored by pupils themselves
- kept to consistently by the teacher as well as the pupils, without exception.



Over **half of girls** and **a quarter of boys** think their peers have body image problems

Ground rules

Below are some areas to explore with your class. These may arise naturally during negotiation; if not, you may want to consider introducing them.

Seeking help and advice

Pupils should be actively encouraged to seek support or advice if they have concerns about themselves or a friend, either during or following a lesson. Sources of support should be clearly signposted throughout the lesson and made available to pupils outside of the lesson too (e.g. via posters or on the school's online learning environment) so that vulnerable pupils know where and how to share any concerns about themselves or a friend. This signposting should indicate a range of people to talk to in school as well as external websites and helplines, to maximise the chance of help-seeking behaviour from pupils.

Openness

We should aim to encourage an ethos of openness but within specific boundaries. These should be governed by your school's safeguarding policy. More difficult topics, such as eating disorders or self-harm, which might naturally arise as a result of talking about body image, should not be taboo. They should be openly and honestly discussed within the classroom setting, which should feel like a safe and supportive environment for discussions that are positive and affirming, while giving

pupils the opportunity to share their concerns. However, it needs to be agreed with pupils that lesson time is not the appropriate setting to directly discuss their own personal experiences or the private lives of others.

General situations can be used as examples, but names and identifying descriptions should be left out.

Keep the conversation in the room

Pupils should feel confident exploring their misconceptions or questions about the topic in this safe setting. It is important, however, to make it clear that if you become concerned that a child may be at risk (e.g. from depression or an eating disorder) then you will need to follow the school's safeguarding policy, and that you personally cannot completely guarantee that no other pupil will repeat what has been said outside the classroom.

Non-judgemental approach

When we tackle issues surrounding body image we often find that pupils have a lot of prior beliefs, misunderstandings and inappropriate attitudes towards the topics concerned. It is important that these can be explored in the classroom environment without fear of being judged or ridiculed. Discuss with pupils the idea that it is okay, and often healthy, to disagree with another person's point of view but it is never okay to judge, make fun of or put down other pupils.

Where pupils disagree with another's point of view, they should challenge the belief and not the person. You may choose to support this approach by incorporating learning about how to manage conflict and accept a difference of opinion in others as part of your wider PSHE curriculum.

Right to pass

Although participation in the lesson is important, every pupil has the right to choose not to answer a question, or not to take part in an activity. Pupils may choose to pass on participation if a topic touches on personal issues which they should not disclose in a classroom setting, or if the topic of the activity or discussion makes them feel uncomfortable in any way. They could be invited to discuss their concerns with the teacher individually. Teachers can prepare the class by letting them know the nature of the topic beforehand and offering pupils the opportunity to let the teacher know either anonymously or directly if they have any concerns about themselves or a friend. This will enable you to ensure that your teaching is as inclusive as possible and is matched to the pupils' needs.

✓ **Make no assumptions**

In addition to not judging the viewpoints of others, pupils must also take care not to make assumptions about the attitudes, life experiences, faith values, cultural values or feelings of their peers.

✓ **Listen to others**

Every pupil in the class has the right to feel listened to and they should respect the right of their peers to feel listened to as well. You might choose to revisit what active listening to others means. It is okay to challenge the viewpoint of another pupil, but we should always listen to their point of view, in full, before making assumptions or formulating a response.

✓ **Use of language**

Pupils should be reminded to take care in their use of language within (and beyond) lessons. They should not be using vocabulary that is inaccurate or offensive. It can be valuable to explore any slang terms used inappropriately around the school and understand exactly why they are inappropriate and should not be used either in the setting of a lesson, or in day-to-day life. You might, for example, consider with pupils how they would feel if such words were applied to them.

You might convey this to pupils by suggesting the following ground rule: 'We will use the correct terms for the things we will be discussing rather than the slang terms as they may be offensive. If we are not sure what the correct term is, we will ask our teacher.'

✓ **Ask questions**

It is important to foster an open environment where pupils feel safe asking questions and exploring their preconceptions about a topic. Pupils should understand that no question will be considered stupid, and when they are in doubt about an issue or topic, they should ask. It's also important that pupils realise it is never appropriate to ask a question in order to deliberately try to embarrass somebody else or to encourage pupils to laugh at someone.

Making an anonymous question box available to pupils can be an effective way of enabling pupils to ask questions they may feel uncomfortable posing in a classroom setting. You can make this available before, during or after the lesson. You will need to allow yourself time to go through and read the questions. Inviting questions prior to the lesson can be a good way to help you direct the lesson during its development, based on the current needs and understanding of your class, and can also give a good indicator of where safeguarding issues or pastoral issues may exist which need to be followed up.

“ You're constantly judged for how you look and I don't look how you should. **Pupil, 14**

Ground rule	What this might mean to pupils
Openness	We will be open and honest, but not discuss directly our own or others' personal/private lives. We will discuss general situations as examples but will not use names or descriptions which could identify anyone. We will not put anyone 'on the spot'.
Keep the conversation in the room	We feel safe discussing general issues relating to mental health within this space, and we know that our teacher will not repeat what is said in the classroom unless they are concerned we are at risk, in which case they will follow the school's safeguarding policy.
Non-judgemental approach	It is okay for us to disagree with another person's point of view but we will not judge, make fun of, or put anybody down. We will 'challenge the opinion, not the person'.
Right to pass	Taking part is important. However, we have the right to pass on answering a question or participating in an activity.
Make no assumptions	We will not make assumptions about people's values, attitudes, behaviours, life experiences or feelings.
Listen to others	We will listen to the other person's point of view and expect to be listened to.
Using language	We will use the correct terms for the things we will be discussing rather than the slang terms, as they can be offensive. If we are not sure what the correct term is we will ask our teacher.
Asking questions	We know that there are no stupid questions. We do not ask questions to deliberately try to embarrass anyone else. There is a question box for anonymous questions.
Seeking help and advice	If we need further help or advice, we know how and where to seek it confidentially, both in school and in the community. We will encourage friends to seek help if we think they need it.





8% of boys and **14%** of girls aged 9–10 had a negative image of their body, with **3%** of normal weight boys and **7%** of normal weight girls rating themselves as ‘too fat’. Data from 13–14-year-olds indicated that these figures increase with age, with **9%** of normal weight boys and **28%** of normal weight girls rating themselves as ‘too fat’.

11%
4.7%

.....
11% of 13-year-old girls suffer intense worry about getting fat. This compares to **4.7% of boys** the same age.

School policies and procedures

Before teaching a lesson which focuses on body image or self-esteem, it's important to familiarise yourself with your school's policies and procedures for pupils causing concern. This will both enable you to incorporate this information into your lesson and give you the information you need to respond appropriately and/or follow up with any concerns which arise as a result of the lesson.

Your school may have specific policies in place to manage concerns related to emotional wellbeing, weight and eating disorders, but if not you should find out which member of staff you should refer concerns on to and what is likely to happen next (this is something pupils may ask you).

Use of images in teaching resources

Images can be a powerful way of conveying messages to pupils, but think carefully about exactly what messages you are conveying to the class with the images you choose to accompany your lesson.

Avoid using visual images for shock value: this is not in line with best practice in PSHE education and could potentially have unintended negative consequences. For example, while you and most of your pupils may see a photo with clear depiction of protruding bones as unhealthy and unpleasant, someone with a distorted sense of body ideals may see the photo as inspiring and



.....
Two-thirds of girls and four in ten boys suffered some level of anxiety about putting on weight.

it may trigger unhealthy weight loss behaviours. Similarly, images of body builders may be seen as aspirational by some pupils and trigger unhealthy exercising behaviours.

It is fairly common practice to explore societal expectations of weight using images of celebrities and models. These images can inadvertently reinforce the message you are trying to help pupils 'unlearn', since the pictures can act to glamorise low weight and superficial beauty and reinforce the idea that to be beautiful, one must be thin.¹¹

Think also about any use of images of overweight people and the messages these may be sending to members of your class who are currently overweight or have a family member who is. Pictures of overweight people often show unfashionably dressed, unhappy, unattractive people, which can send very negative messages and reinforce any existing weight-related teasing or bullying which is already present amongst pupils.

You should also try to include a range of images: this means not depicting only one single gender, and depicting children and young people from a range of ethnicities and, where possible, images depicting common disabilities should be incorporated as part of your regular use of images, rather than treated differently or included as an aside. It should be noted that it can be difficult to access images which are

.....
¹¹ This is sometimes known as 'the thin ideal'

truly representative of a normal pupil body – this could, however, be a starting point for a discussion about representation.

Avoiding weight stigmatisation

When developing and delivering your lessons, think carefully about the types of activities that you include. There is a danger of weight stigmatisation both for pupils who are underweight and for those who are overweight, so bear this in mind when developing tasks for completion in the lesson or as homework. Avoid activities which require pupils to disclose either objective or subjective estimates of their body shape and size, including:

- weight
- body mass index (calculated from weight and height)
- measurements of the body e.g. waist
- clothes size
- comparison of 'build' or body type, e.g. slim versus heavy set or pear shaped versus round.

Activities should not encourage pupils to equate weights and measures to their inherent value as a human being. If obesity becomes a focus of discussion, it is important to locate this within the importance of the positive value of self-care and healthy behaviours at every size. You might want to discuss how self-hatred, or being unkind to

others because of their size, tends to discourage healthy behaviours. Again, it is important to ensure cross-planning of these lessons with school interventions on obesity and healthy eating. It may be worth consulting with the school nurse about any measurement programmes which are going on in school and make sure these are clearly separated from your discussions in PSHE classes.

Enabling and encouraging questions and discussion

There are some questions which pupils may wish to explore but which they feel uncomfortable asking in front of the rest of the class. You may wish to enable pupils to ask these questions via an anonymous question box. If you are planning to explore misconceptions related to appearance, weight, obesity or eating disorders you might also ask pupils to submit, ahead of the lessons, any misconceptions they've heard around school so that you can address these in the lesson.

Teachers want more guidance:

"I haven't received training but would like some as it is such a delicate area to tackle"

"I feel completely lost and don't know where to start"



Introducing the topic of body image to learners – starting points

Pupils will have some existing knowledge, skills, understanding and beliefs relating to many issues covered in PSHE and body image is no exception. They will have been exposed to parental, family, peer, school, community and media views on related issues and will be aware of a range of related attitudes and values. They will be developing – or have developed – their own ideas and responses and teachers need to be aware of this. Their existing knowledge, skills, understanding and beliefs can be used as a starting point for discussion and help ensure learning is relevant.

For this reason it is often helpful to preface your teaching about body image with starter activities that establish what is already believed or known, what misconceptions may be held and those areas where pupils can draw on real life experience within appropriate boundaries

A range of activities can work well when introducing body image, including:

- group or class mind-mapping
- 'draw and write' activities (see appendix 1 on this technique if you have not used it before)

- responding to and interpreting an incident or story
- 'graffiti' sheets
- a 'round', where each pupil contributes something they know about a topic (ensuring pupils do not give personal information: see notes on distancing above).

You may have other starter activities you have used successfully elsewhere in the curriculum which you'd like to apply when teaching about body image. In doing so your key aims should be:

- to prepare pupils for learning
- to engage and enthuse pupils about the topic in a positive way
- to understand where pupils are starting from: what do they understand about the topic?
- to understand the misconceptions held by your pupils which need to be addressed
- to introduce or reinforce ground rules
- to signpost sources of support.

It's important that you tailor your teaching to the learners who are in the room at the time and well thought out starter activities can enable you to do this well, enabling us to respond to pupils' learning needs and to keep the activities we have planned relevant and engaging for the pupils in the room.



Using 'visitors' in the classroom to support the teaching of body image



64%

.....
The majority of lessons on body image were provided solely by a member of school staff (**64%**) as opposed to by an external practitioner or a combination of both

The use of visitors is an important part of many schools' programmes. As with any piece of learning, the first question however is always, 'what am I trying to achieve?' (what are my learning objectives, the learning outcomes I expect to see demonstrated by my pupils and how will I assess these?) followed by 'is inviting a visitor the best way to organise this learning?' Then ask 'can this visitor provide something worthwhile that I cannot?'

We know that there are inherent risks with using external speakers who have had previous experience of, for example, eating disorders (who can inadvertently glamorise eating disorders or give the impression that they are not dangerous because recovery is possible; detailed accounts of their own past behaviours from external speakers can also prove 'instructive' to vulnerable young people). To avoid these risks, we would recommend using Beat Ambassadors who are trained to share their story safely and are provided with support and supervision.

For further guidance on the use of external visitors in the classroom, see appendix 4.

Working with parents

Parents are often keen to learn about how they can promote positive body image and self-esteem in their children. Where you have an existing programme of parent information evenings or workshops, a session which addresses this topic can make a helpful addition. This can also be a useful means of ensuring that consistent messages are shared with pupils at home as well as at school.

It can also be helpful to share information and sources of further support on your school website or in your regular communications with parents.



95%74%

95% of teachers felt that body image had an impact on the wellbeing of their female pupils, with 74% stating they feel it has a significant impact on their wellbeing

Parents often value the opportunity to learn more about:

- how to help their child have a positive body image
- how to respond to negative body comments ('I'm fat', 'I'm ugly')
- what the school is doing to support positive body image in pupils
- sources of further support, advice and information
- warning signs that a child may need specialist support (e.g. for an eating disorder)

The communication of such information is likely to fall beyond the regular remit of PSHE staff, but in many schools is pursued jointly by PSHE, pastoral and senior staff.

“ Puberty can be a worrying time for both parents and pupils as their bodies and moods change. This is a sensitive area which needs approaching by home and school working together. If pupils feel secure and safe at school, they're more likely to open up about their worries.

Addressing the needs of vulnerable groups

Pupils who are overweight or obese

Many teachers have expressed a concern over how to support pupils who are overweight or obese as part of both their teaching around body image and their wider PSHE, education programme which more broadly addresses healthy choices and lifestyles.

We have provided guidance on some common questions below.

Is it appropriate to promote body confidence in young people who are obese?

Yes. Promoting body confidence in overweight pupils can be very important to enabling them to reach a healthy weight. People with a poor body image are less likely to be physically active and more likely to use unhealthy weight control behaviours. Poor body image is also strongly linked with depression and low self-esteem. People who do not feel good about their bodies are less likely to look after them, so supporting people to value themselves and take care of their bodies is crucial in tackling obesity.

This does not mean that we should 'soft-soap' the very real risks of obesity. It is about being clear that everyone can and should value and protect their bodies. Valuing your body is not the same as ignoring your body's needs.

Is 'fat-shaming' an effective weight loss motivation?

Many people think that as poor body image is associated with efforts to lose weight, stigmatising people for their weight probably helps them to lose it. But the opposite is true. There is a strong relationship between poor body image, disordered eating and weight problems. People with low levels of body satisfaction are more likely to gain weight over time (regardless of starting BMI); whereas those who have higher levels of body satisfaction are less likely to put on weight.¹² Tackling obesity is most effective where it builds people's motivation to take care of themselves, rather than encouraging them to feel ashamed of themselves.

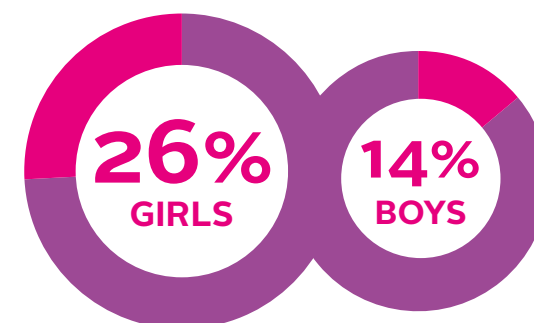
Should we encourage overweight pupils to eat less and exercise more?

All young people need to understand the basic physiology of weight management – and that exercise and healthy eating are crucial to physical wellbeing. But this information is most effectively utilised if it is communicated in a way that complements rather than contradicts our efforts

¹² In a study by Van den Berg and Neumark-Sztainer (2007), overweight girls who had a higher body satisfaction score than similar weight peers had a significantly smaller gain in BMI over five years than those who were less satisfied with their bodies

to improve self-esteem and promote positive body image in pupils of every size.

Take care to ensure that your messaging is consistent across and beyond your PSHE curriculum, especially where obesity is considered both as part of your work with pupils on body image and separately as part of your work on physical health, diet and exercise. It is easy to give pupils conflicting messages about healthy weight and obesity by addressing a patchwork of discrete topics in PSHE education and we should be mindful of this.



.....

26% of girls and one in seven boys (14%) had restricted their food intake by fasting, skipping meals or throwing away food, during the last three months

Pupils who are at risk of an eating disorder

There are associations between body image and eating disorders but there is no simple cause and effect. Eating disorders, such as anorexia, bulimia and binge eating, are serious mental health problems. Their causes are complex and often multi-factorial. While poor body image is likely to be one of these factors, it is not necessary for someone to experience poor body image for them to develop an eating disorder. In other cases, however, poor body image may be sufficient to kick-start or trigger an eating disorder.

Lessons and discussions related to body image will often lead on to pupils questioning and exploring eating disorders, even if this had not been an intended outcome of the lesson. You can safeguard the wellbeing of more vulnerable pupils in this situation by:

- sharing details of upcoming lessons with relevant pastoral or wellbeing staff who may then choose to appropriately prepare and/or follow up with more vulnerable pupils
- clearly signposting sources of support to pupils who have concerns about themselves or a friend, taking care to explain both how to seek support and what is likely to happen next

- remaining available to pupils for a few minutes after the lesson in case they have concerns they wish to follow up and continue to give opportunities to follow up after the initial session
- considering your use of resources, especially images, through the eyes of someone with an emerging eating disorder – for example, images of extreme thinness, especially when glamorised (e.g. images of models), may inadvertently push vulnerable pupils towards eating disorders.

For more guidance specifically related to addressing eating disorders in your PSHE curriculum see [Dr Pooky Knightsmith's blog on the PSHE Association website](#).

For further information about eating disorders visit www.b-eat.co.uk.



Pupils who are LGBT

Lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (LGBT) pupils may be grappling with emotional challenges relating to their emerging sexual orientation or gender identity, which may have a knock-on impact on their body image. We can work to support them through this by promoting a culture of understanding and acceptance of diverse identities. Throughout your teaching of PSHE, and especially in your teaching about body image, try to avoid assumptions and value judgements about gender or sexual orientation. For example, do not assume everyone is, or will be, heterosexual, as this can impact on how pupils engage with teaching.

You should also consider how pupils' sexual orientation or gender identity may impact upon the way they perceive their body image. There could be particular challenges, for example, for young people whose gender identity doesn't match their physical sex; they may feel unhappy or uncomfortable in their body as a result of gender dysphoria. It may be that young people in this position feel even more distant from their ideal appearance than young people who are not questioning their gender identity, and it is crucial that your lessons cater for this possibility.

All pupils, irrespective of sexual orientation or gender identity, need to be supported through a PSHE curriculum and whole school approach that:

- celebrates diversity and values all pupils
- has effective anti-bullying and equality policies which ensure the whole school community challenges bullying effectively and is confident in tackling sexist, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic prejudice
- ensures the curriculum provides opportunities to challenge stereotypes
- has positive relationships with parents, carers and pupils that respond to individual needs and preferences



Black and minority ethnic (BME) pupils


Current teachers tell us they are concerned about a rise in negative body image amongst BME populations and this concern is backed by emerging research in the field.¹³

Few existing resources directly address the issue of body image in BME pupils and there is no existing guidance on how best to support these pupils specifically. The key principles set out in this document and in our recommended resources of course apply. Some basic ideas for tailoring lessons on positive body image to BME pupils could include:

- ensure that images and role models used in lessons and throughout the school are ethnically diverse
- where BME images are used, take care to ensure these are representative of a range of shapes and body sizes
- tailor lesson content to make it specific to your pupils – consider whether there are ways into discussion which will feel especially relevant to BME pupils by becoming aware of what is being represented in the media or what you are hearing from pupils at school

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¹³ Nicola Marie Stock (2014). Culture clash: appearance concerns in black and minority ethnic groups. *Journal of Aesthetic Nursing*, (3.7), 294–295.

- ask pupils what they would like to explore before finalising lessons, enabling them to input anonymously in case they are uncomfortable
- consider BME groups at all points in your lesson development and delivery; pause to consider how activities could be made more inclusive even while the lesson is live
- consider seating arrangements and the makeup of pairs and groups to ensure an appropriate balance of inputs and to ensure that the voice of BME pupils is heard and explored
- some of the teachers involved in our consultation provided anecdotal evidence about young BME women and negative body image relating to skin tone – while much of the guidance related to body image focuses on weight, the same principles will apply, although you may wish to tailor your lessons to issues relating to skin tone if you are aware through initial assessment that pupils in your class may be affected by this particular issue.



“How do we teach body image sensitively without the suggestion to pupils that ‘this is right’ or ‘that is a wrong body shape?’

Pupils with disability or disfigurement

Pupils who look noticeably different from their peers for any reason are at heightened risk of suffering with negative body image, especially as they reach an age or stage where they become more aware of the differences between their own body and their peers' bodies.

You can help to ensure that teaching and learning about body image supports the needs of these pupils by:

- considering your use of images and examples
- using role models such as Katie Piper¹⁴ as a stimulus for discussion
- not being afraid to explore issues from the viewpoint of someone affected by disability or disfigurement
- discussing lessons with affected pupils before teaching and adapting your teaching materials to reflect any concerns, ideas or opinions they may have
- openly talking about scars and different appearances to enable pupils to ask questions and normalise the issue – this can reduce pointing, staring and whispering. Sharing videos featuring people with disability or disfigurement or giving pupils the chance to interact with someone who is affected

¹⁴ Katie Piper is a British model who was left severely disfigured following an acid attack. She is now an avid body confidence campaigner working on behalf of people with burns and scars. Her website can be found at www.katiepiperfoundation.org.uk

can also have a very positive impact as this exposure teaches them simply that 'this person is just like me' and can consequently reduce stigmatised behaviours.

The low self-esteem and negative body image frequently suffered by pupils who look noticeably different from their peers for any reason is often heightened by teasing, bullying or being ignored by other pupils. For this reason, work to support such pupils will need to go far beyond your work on body image and will form part of a cohesive curriculum which also actively addresses issues including diversity, relationships and bullying.

For support and advice about supporting pupils with disfigurement, visit www.changingfaces.org.uk

Pupils with self-harm scars

Pupils who have scars resulting from self-harm will often have a mix of emotions related to these scars and will consider carefully whether or not they are happy for them to be visible to other people. Exploring these issues is something that pupils may begin to consider as a result of your lessons and resulting discussions but this specialist support is beyond the scope of your curriculum. These conversations should be encouraged with the support of a trusted adult. For further advice, visit the In Your Hands website resource on self-harm scars¹⁵.

¹⁵ <http://www.inourhands.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/self-harm-advice-for-exposing-your-scars1.pdf>





Responding to concerns about pornography

We know from **research by the Office of the Children's Commissioner**¹⁶ and others that pornography is proliferating and is widely accessed by young people. This can pose particular challenges in relation to young people's body image, including a new aesthetic about how genitals 'should' look and greater objectification of one's own and others' bodies. A generation ago, most young people were familiar with idealised images of bodies with clothes on; now, they are increasingly exposed to images of every single body part.

All teachers know how important it is to tread – and teach – carefully. Your decision about whether to proactively include the topic of pornography in discussion of body image will be reached in consultation with your colleagues – and, of course, in consideration of a range of factors including the age of the pupils and the views of parents. But it is quite likely that pupils themselves will raise the issue.

In much the same way that we would encourage pupils to become questioning of

the images they view in other media, such as advertising, we should encourage them to question how real the images and situations commonly depicted in pornography are. They need to understand that pornography does not provide an accurate or realistic portrayal of sexual relationships or sexual activity.

Questions which might be relevant to explore with pupils include:

- How does pornography impact on our perception of what is normal?
- Does pornography accurately depict ideas of what is attractive to others?
- How do portrayals of beauty in pornography differ from portrayals elsewhere?
- Are the body types represented in pornography achievable or desirable?

Further guidance on educating pupils about pornography is provided in the PSHE Association's **frequently asked questions on pornography and sharing of sexual images in PSHE education**.

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¹⁶ Office of the Children's Commissioner. 'Basically ... Porn is everywhere' – A Rapid Evidence Assessment on the Effects that Access and Exposure to Pornography has on Children and Young People. Available at: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/press_release/content_505

PSHE Association recommended resources for the teaching of body image

We followed a three-stage process to identify resources that we can recommend for teaching body image in the classroom:

1. First, we identified a number of available resources.
2. Second, we asked teachers and experts which resources they have used and which they have found to be most effective. At this stage, a number of resources were excluded if they were persistently negatively reviewed.
3. The remaining resources were then assessed against the PSHE Association Quality Mark, to ensure the suggested resources are suitable to recommend to schools.

At the conclusion of this process, we had a small number of resources that we can confidently recommend as suitable and highly regarded by experts and practitioners.

This list is designed to be indicative of a wide range of resources which meet the needs of different cohorts of pupils, including those from specifically vulnerable groups, though we were unfortunately unable to find existing resources specifically aimed at teaching BME pupils or pupils with disabilities or disfigurement. We have included resources for use with pupils at every age from EYFS to key stage 5 in recognition of the fact that learning about body image is important for children and young people of all ages and should form part of a developmental curriculum rather than taught as a one-off topic.

Resources have been indicated which we believe are safe to use in the classroom and which will further pupils' understanding, skills and knowledge on a range of areas related to body image. In selecting resources for inclusion, we considered it important that resources were:

- readily available – this counted out many programmes being developed as part of research studies
- either free or inexpensive to purchase since schools tend to have very low PSHE budgets
- easy to pick up and use in order to reflect the limited time available to many teachers to prepare lessons
- either not too extensive or, where lengthy programmes existed, specific lessons or activities could be taught without delivering the entire course, to reflect the limited curriculum time available for the teaching of body image in many schools.

For an academic review of available programmes please see Z. Yager, P. C. Diedrichs, L. A. Ricciardelli, E. Halliwell (2013). What works in secondary schools? A systematic review of classroom-based body image programs. *Body image*, 10(3), 271–281.

“There are loads of resources but they vary in quality, I need some guidance about what to use

Resource	Key stage	Summary
Oak Cottage Primary School Body Image Curriculum	Key stage 1/2	This Ofsted report highlights Oak Cottage Primary School's effective approach to teaching about body image as part of PSHE.
Dove Self-Esteem Project Resources	Key stage 3	Teaching resources and accompanying notes to teach an interactive workshop designed to promote self-esteem and body confidence in 11–14-year-olds.
Islington Healthy Choices and Body Image scheme of work	Key stage 3	A series of four lessons and accompanying notes, activity sheets and images for use with pupils in key stage 3.
Media Smart (Australia)	Key stage 3/4	Media Smart is an evidence-based eight-lesson media literacy programme, designed for use by Australian pupils with the aim of reducing eating disorder risk factors.
Taking action on body image – An active citizenship toolkit for those working with young people	Key stage 5	A free to download 18-page PDF outlining a one-hour workshop designed for 16 to 18-year-olds aimed at promoting discussion around body image.

Additional resources on related issues which may be useful

Resource	Key stage	Summary
Your Body is Brilliant – by Sigrun Danielsdottir	Key stage 1	This is a colourful book aimed at children from the age of 4 which aims to instil body respect and an appreciation of diversity.
This Girl Can	Key stage 3/4/5	This Girl Can is a media campaign launched in early 2015 to encourage girls and women to take up sports.
Always #Like a Girl	Key stage 3/4/5	A three-minute video where children and young people are asked to carry out actions 'like a girl' in an attempt to challenge gender stereotypes.
Caring for gender non-conforming young people	Key stage 3/4	An interactive online resource aimed at raising awareness about gender variance in young people.

PSHE Association recommended resources for the teaching of body image

Oak Cottage Primary School Body Image Curriculum

What is it?

Oak Cottage Primary School was recently highlighted by Ofsted as a good practice case study for teaching about body image as part of PSHE education. This report highlights the school's approach and links to detailed lesson plans aimed at Years 1 to 5.

Who developed it?

The good practice report has been produced by Ofsted and it relates to the work carried out by staff at Oak Cottage Primary School, an average-sized primary school in Solihull, West Midlands. Most pupils come from a White British background and the percentage of pupils with EAL, SEN or eligible for pupil premium is low.

Who is it suitable for?

The report links to detailed lesson plans for use with pupils in Years 1–5. There is one lesson plan per year group and they could be adapted for use as part of a developmental curriculum.

What's covered?

In Years 1 and 2, pupils begin to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others. By encouraging positive self-esteem, they develop an appreciation of these differences. Pupils are taken on a journey through the support of a robot. They are asked to identify individual features

about themselves and their peers and how to celebrate their originality. The robot supports the pupils by guiding them to recognise the importance of differences. They enjoy discussing what makes them 'special' and sharing this with others.

In Year 3, pupils discuss positive role models and the influence they have on them. This introduces the topic of the media.

In Year 4, pupils begin to look more closely at how images of celebrities are changed using digital enhancement and airbrushing. They also begin to define what beauty means to them and how this may differ according to culture, race or religion.

In Year 5, pupils begin to recognise the importance of physical appearance and become more aware of the differences between themselves and those around them. They openly discuss the influence the media has on them and identify celebrities that they would like to look like.

How could it be used in PSHE education?

PSHE teachers could use the case study as inspiration for developing their own body image curriculum using a similar approach to Oak Cottage Primary who developed their lessons in response to feedback from a survey of pupils. Alternatively, the lessons shared in the best practice case study could be used as the basis for developing lessons tailored to the needs of pupils at their own school.

How to access a copy

The report can be downloaded for free from the [PSHE Association website](#). The lesson plans are linked to from within the report and can be downloaded in Word format.

Dove Self-Esteem Project Resources

What is it?

Teaching resources and accompanying notes to teach an interactive workshop of 45 minutes to one hour designed to promote self-esteem and body confidence in 11–14-year-olds.

Who developed it?

The resource has been developed by Dove in consultation with leading body image experts and has been evaluated by the Centre for Appearance Research, UWE.

Who is it suitable for?

The teaching resources are created especially for 11–14-year-olds and are designed to enable teachers to run their own in-class workshops, helping pupils to understand more about self-esteem and body confidence. The resources are not gender-specific and the images included are more ethnically diverse than other resources we reviewed. This resource could be adapted for use with pupils at key stages 2 to 4.

What's covered?

A comprehensive teaching guide, full presentation including video resources and pupil activity sheets are all included in this downloadable resource. The aims of the workshop are to enable pupils to:

- understand the concept of appearance ideals and where pressure to achieve them comes from
- build media literacy, exploring how images and messages, from advertising to cinema and social media, are often manipulations of the truth
- develop strategies to resist appearance pressures, avoid comparing themselves, challenge appearance ideals and build body confidence.

How could it be used in PSHE education?

This resource is especially useful for schools who recognise the need to promote positive body image and self-esteem but who have very limited curriculum time to do so. This resource has been empirically demonstrated to impact on pupil outcomes after just a single session lasting between 45 and 60 minutes.

How to access a copy

Downloadable copies of the resources are accessible for [free via Dove's website](#)



Islington Healthy Choices and Body Image KS3 scheme of work

What is it?

A series of four lessons and accompanying notes, activity sheets and images for use with pupils in key stage 3.

Who developed it?

This resource was developed by the Islington Healthy Schools team following consultation with school pupils and staff.

Who is it suitable for?

This resource was developed in response to concerns about the high levels of obesity among young people in Islington. In addition to exploring positive messages about body image, there is a clear focus on understanding the impact of diet and exercise on our health. This resource is, therefore, particularly suitable for school populations where there is a concern that children are overweight, not eating healthily or are not active enough.

What's covered?

The resource includes:

- background information and notes for teachers
- four lessons which are explained in depth and designed to last approximately one hour each
- resources needed to teach the lessons
- a series of diverse images of young people used to stimulate discussion in lesson one.

Lesson one focuses on body image and the media and encourages pupils to think critically about the pictures that they see each day. Lesson two

explores the wide range of conflicting messages we receive about healthy choices and considers how to navigate them. Lesson three explores different pressures to behave unhealthily and how to resist them. Lesson four aims to boost self-esteem and encourage pupils to make simple changes to their lifestyle to boost their health.

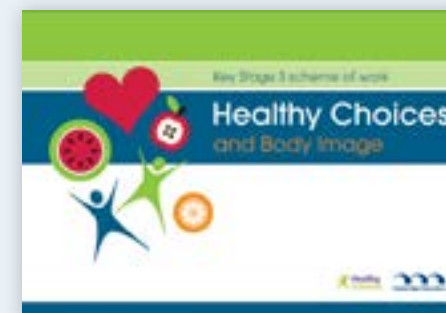
How could it be used in PSHE education?

Lesson one is especially relevant in terms of body image and the images used in the resource are more diverse than image sets we reviewed elsewhere. They include a range of weights, ethnicities and disabilities. The images are interesting in that they depict different emotions and young people are asked to consider how they would describe the young person and to consider how they feel. Later they are asked to explore what might affect how a young person feels about themselves. This activity is very strong and is likely to prove thought-provoking for pupils.

The rest of the series is also very thorough and could be incorporated as part of your PSHE curriculum where you have a focus on healthy eating. There is an optional activity where pupils are asked to record diaries of their own food intake and physical activity. The resource stands alone without this activity and there are several fictional examples included in the resource. Therefore, we would recommend that pupils are not given the diary activity to complete which could lead to undue stress in some vulnerable pupils. Where there are specific concerns about individuals, the diary activity may usefully be completed with one-to-one support, e.g. from the school nurse.

How to access a copy

This resource is provided free to Islington schools and is available to purchase elsewhere as a PDF or on an interactive CD for £25. Order from hayley.harkins@islington.gov.uk



Media Smart (Australia): An Eating Disorder Prevention Program

What is it?

Media Smart is an evidence-based eight-lesson media literacy programme suitable for pupils in key stages 3 and 4. It was designed for use by Australian pupils with the aim of reducing eating disorder risk factors. The programme includes information for teachers on the area of body image and eating disorders, detailed lesson plans and a workbook for pupils.

Who developed it?

Dr Simon Wilksch and Professor Tracey Wade, researchers at Flinders University.

Who is it suitable for?

The programme is designed for universal use by pupils of any gender across a range of ages. The authors suggest it is suitable for use across a range of curriculum subjects though it sits most naturally within PSHE education in the UK.

What's covered?

Topics covered include techniques used by the media to manipulate images (e.g. airbrushing), ideas for how to analyse and challenge media messages, tips for handling pressure placed on young people and planning for how to move through adolescence and beyond as a skilful and confident person. Media Smart targets media internalisation, which refers to when people believe they must look like the ideal images presented in the media.

How could it be used in PSHE education?

There are eight lessons. These are proven to be effective in reducing eating disorder risk factors in pupils, both in the short term and longer term. The research evaluations of the resource are based on pupils receiving the entire programme. There is no current evidence about the impact of individual lessons or activities on pupil outcomes.

How to access a copy

The materials are available in electronic format via an [online purchase](https://sparky.socsci.flinders.edu.au) from sparky.socsci.flinders.edu.au at a cost of \$450aus per school (approx. £230). Purchase of the programme entitles a school to a site licence covering all pupils.



Taking action on body image – An active citizenship toolkit for those working with young people

What is it?

A free to download 18-page PDF outlining a one-hour workshop designed for 16 to 18 year-olds aimed at promoting active citizenship around body image.

Who developed it?

This toolkit was developed by Beat, the eating disorders charity, and Dr Helen Sharpe from the Kings College London, Institute of Psychiatry, with funding from the Government Equalities Office.

Who is it suitable for?

This resource was developed for use by the National Citizen Service but is suitable for use by any professional working with young people at key stage 5. The resource could be adapted for use with pupils at key stage 4.

What's covered?

This resource includes background information for those who are going to deliver the lesson, as well six potential activities which cover:

- What is Body Image?: Understanding body image and its links with self-esteem
- Hidden messages: Critically evaluating body ideals presented in the media
- The social media trap: Exploring the challenges that social media poses for body confidence
- Combating negative body talk: Recognising and challenging negative body talk with friends
- Personal strengths: Recognising and harnessing our personal strengths

- Review and take action: Review what has been covered and plan a practical step you could take forward after the session.

How could it be used in PSHE education?

This was the only resource we reviewed that had a specific focus on working with pupils at key stage 5. While many schools do not have a specific PSHE curriculum at KS5, the fact that this resource is designed to be delivered in a one-off session of an hour would make it relatively easy for schools to build into their timetabling.

How to access a copy

The resource is a downloadable 18-page PDF which can be [freely downloaded via gov.uk](#).



Additional resources on related issues which may be useful

Your Body is Brilliant – by Sigrun Danielsdottir

What is it?

This is a colourful book aimed at children from the age of 4 which aims to instil body respect and an appreciation of diversity.

Who developed it?

It is written by Sigrun Danielsdottir, a psychologist specialising in eating disorders and body image. She currently works for the Icelandic Directorate of Health.

Who is it suitable for?

Unlike other resources we reviewed, this book is aimed at children as young as 3 or 4. It could be read with the support of either a teacher or parent.

What's covered?

The colourful illustrations encourage children to love their bodies from an early age. By learning about all the wonderful things bodies can do, and how each body is different and unique, the hope is that children will be inspired to like and respect their bodies throughout their lives. The book also promotes body diversity among children with the aim of encouraging kindness and acceptance and preventing bullying.

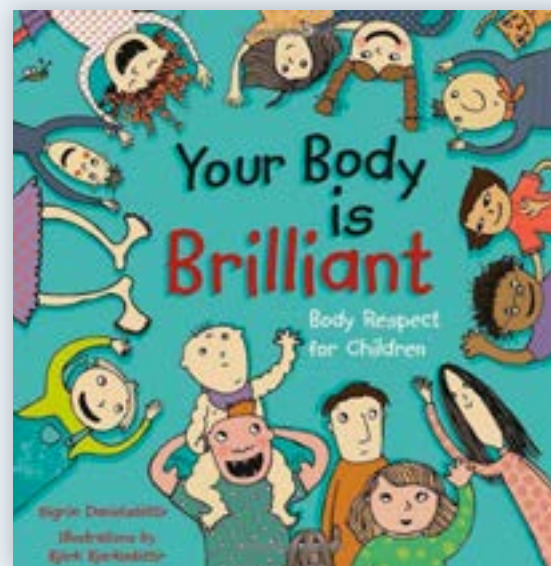
How could it be used in PSHE education?

Brief notes for adults are included but this book is not specifically designed for use as part of a lesson. However, it is easy to imagine how it could be used as the stimulus for discussions or learning challenges with children in reception or Year 1.

How to access a copy

The book is widely available via online and offline book retailers. It is published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Title: Your Body is Brilliant
Authors: Sigrun Danielsdottir
Price: RRP £10.99



This Girl Can

What is it?

This Girl Can/#ThisGirlCan is a media campaign launched in early 2015 to encourage girls and women to take up sports. The main resource is a 90-second video featuring a diverse range of girls and women participating in sports with the aim of encouraging every girl and woman to feel they can overcome common barriers and get active. On the This Girl Can website, the advert is broken down into shorts where we can learn about individual participants.

Who developed it?

This is a Lottery-funded initiative developed by Sport England.

Who is it suitable for?

This resource could be used with anyone of any age but will especially resonate with teenage girls.

What's covered?

The inclusion of Ruby, a 14-year-old swimmer with Down Syndrome, Jasmin, a 14-year-old footballer, and Skyla, a 14-year-old boxer (who always has a beautiful manicure under her boxing gloves), make this campaign feel truly inclusive and appropriate for use with teenagers.

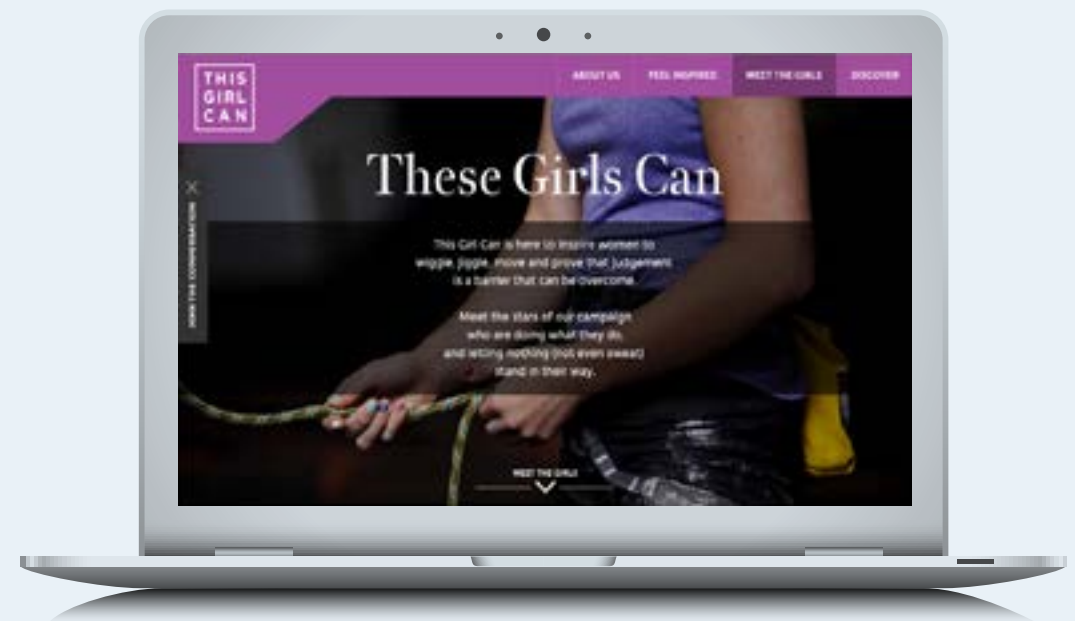
How could it be used in PSHE education?

This is not designed as a teaching resource. There are plans to develop accompanying resources but these are not available yet. However, the

90-second advert and the video shorts highlighting each participant, as well as the additional behind the scenes videos shared via the website, make fantastic discussion starters. These videos could be used both to explore body confidence and how this can act as a barrier to accessing exercise, and the issue of stereotyping (including age, gender, weight, ethnicity and disability). More broadly, the #ThisGirlCan campaign could be used as an example of the positive power of social media to effect change – this could help to balance discussions resulting from other resources which tend to be about the negative impact of social media.

How to access a copy

The full-length video and all shorts and behind the scenes video are available on the [This Girl Can website](#).



Always #LikeaGirl

What is it?

A three-minute video where children and young people are asked to carry out actions 'like a girl' in an attempt to challenge gender stereotypes.

Who developed it?

Always shot the video as part of their effort to empower young women.

Who is it suitable for?

This is a video that is aimed at starting a discussion around gender stereotypes. It is suitable for use at any age but is likely to be especially impactful with pupils who are beginning to gender stereotype – this happens at different ages in different schools.

What's covered?

This is a three-minute video which explores gender stereotyping. It is one of a series of resources from Always, whose site hosts other related resources including the '[Ban Bossy' campaign](#) which encourages girls to be seen as leaders rather than bossy.

How could it be used in PSHE education?

This is not designed as a teaching resource but could be used as a stimulus for debate about gender stereotyping and considering why girls' body confidence drops sharply as they approach and enter puberty. This video could be used to complement some of the other resources we have outlined in this guidance.

How to access a copy

The video is free to access via [Always' YouTube channel](#). For background information about the campaign and further resources, you can access [Always' Like a Girl website](#). We have not quality assured the whole site.



Caring for gender non-conforming young people

What is it?

An interactive online resource aimed at raising awareness about gender variance in young people.

Who developed it?

This resource was developed by GIRE (Gender Identity Research and Education Society) in collaboration with Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust and funded by NHS Education Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

Who is it suitable for?

This resource is targeted at teachers (and other professionals) rather than pupils, but due to the scarcity of resources available and the clear need highlighted by teachers, we felt it helpful to include this amongst our recommended resources. Some parts of the resource would be suitable for use with secondary school pupils, including the two short videos included in the resource.

What's covered?

The resource is split into three modules, the first is an introduction and overview, the second focuses on creating a supportive environment for gender variant children, and the third contains information about medical intervention and frontline support. Each module takes 15 minutes to complete. The first module will be of most interest to PSHE educators and is potentially adaptable for use with key stage 3 or 4 pupils. This module introduces terminology, considers the prevalence and includes a short video of young people talking about their gender non-conformity. Signs of gender non-conformity are considered next before a short video exploring some common misconceptions explained by trans young people.

How could it be used in PSHE education?

The videos could form a good way in for discussion about gender identity and encourage pupils to stop and think before assuming that gender is binary.

How to access a copy

The resource is free to access and is **hosted online by Health Education England.**



Appendix 1: Effective Teaching Approaches

There are a range of teaching approaches which work well across the PSHE curriculum and which can be readily applied to the teaching of body image and related topics. It can be helpful to consider a range of approaches and to be prepared to switch approaches if you think this will further engage your pupils.

Draw and write activities

In draw and write activities, pupils are asked to respond spontaneously to an open-ended question by drawing a picture about a particular issue and writing notes explaining the drawing. Ideas can be collected before and after a main activity to provide evidence of change in knowledge, views or perceptions.

Group work

The ability to work in different groups is fundamental to PSHE education and when carefully managed is an effective way to enable discussion and exploration of body image and related issues. When planning, it is important to consider the purpose of the group work for specific activities to decide whether pupils should work in:

- single-sex groups or mixed groups
- groups of mixed ability or selected by ability
- groups randomly formed or manipulated to make sure that certain pupils do or do not work together
- small groups (of no more than four or six) or larger groups.

One effective technique can be to have pupils starting in pairs then joining up to form fours, then eights, exploring the learning they've done in their smaller groups each time the group grows or changes.

When working with larger groups or using extended group work it becomes very important to agree ground rules for the group work. In addition to the ground rules you've agreed as a whole class, group work ground rules should include a willingness to work together cooperatively.

Group members can decide who will make notes, who will report back and who will make sure that everyone has had their say – though it's important to reinforce the fact that pupils have a right to pass. Effective group work gives pupils who do not normally work together opportunities to do so, which is important as always working in friendship groups can reinforce a limited or narrow set of values or beliefs. Group work also encourages pupils who may be isolated in the class to participate and provides opportunities for leadership as well as membership. This can contribute to a pupil's self-esteem, which may be a broader aim of your lessons on body image.

To help group discussion, pupils can develop prompt questions such as:

- What do we (think, feel, believe) about...?
- How can we/will we/should we...?
- What if...? What can...? What will...?
- Who can help us with...? When do we need to...?

In group discussions, pupils might decide to have a formal process for sharing ideas. For example, they agree to take turns and listen without criticising each other or not to become attached to their own suggestions. When someone puts forward a suggestion, the group takes ownership of it. The group decides whether to accept, reject or change the suggestion.

Jigsaw

A jigsaw activity is when, after a group discussion or activity, pupils number themselves from 1 to 4 if there are four in the group. Then all the number 1s from each group join together, all the number 2s do the same, and so on. Each person then becomes a spokesperson for their original or 'home' group, sharing the results of their discussion with the new group.

To help pupils feed back to the new group they can ask their home group questions – for example:

- What are our main points?
- What do we all agree on?
- Where do we differ in our views and ideas?
- Why do our viewpoints differ?
- Could we make up a rule or law to apply to the situation to make it fairer?
- What might be the best outcome for all concerned?

It can help to photocopy sheets with these questions, or other agreed prompt questions, for pupils to complete while working with their home group. This can also provide an interesting record of learning development and prompts for later discussion if the pupil adds new ideas from subsequent groups in a different colour.

Pupils then return to their home groups and bring the learning together, drawing on what they've learned from other groups. You might open the topic up to class discussion at this point, with the spokesperson elected from each group sharing their key findings and outlining what were the interesting differences between the ideas shared in their original group and the ideas shared in subsequent groups.

Circle time

Circle time approaches provide opportunities to explore pupils' concerns, develop relationships, create a sense of belonging and experience silence and reflection. Within the ground rules, pupils speak in turn in response to prompts or a previously agreed agenda. They listen to each other without comment or making judgements.

Circle time encourages pupils to talk positively about themselves and to affirm their achievements. Conducted in an atmosphere of trust, cooperation and mutual respect, and in conjunction with group work and role play, circle time develops communication skills and helps raise self-esteem in pupils.

Role play

Role play is not about performance – it is a method through which pupils are able to explore personal and social experience and practise difficult moments in a safe environment. It can be very powerful and should be planned with great care.

Role play can be used to explore:

- how different people behave, in ways that are perceived to be good or bad
- different ways of life
- different beliefs and opinions
- being of different social standing
- a range of feelings and emotions.

The real learning comes not from the role but through reflection on the actions of those whose roles they and others are playing. It is very important for the pupils to think through questions about motives, consequences

of actions and effects of circumstances, context and environment. They should consider the attitudes of those whom they are pretending to be, and challenge their own and others' attitudes. Being in role allows pupils to develop empathy and practise skills they will need in real-life situations.

The teacher's role is to help pupils to reflect on what they have learned, for example about themselves, about others and about being sensitive to the needs of others. This can include individuals or groups in the class for whom the issue explored in the role play may be personal.

The following questions can be used to support role play or drama. They should be adapted according to the pupils' age and stage of development.

- What could you say to someone in that situation to persuade him or her to act differently?
- How might that action affect other people, family, friends, school or other organisations and community?
- What should happen to people who do that?
- What would happen if everyone behaved like that?
- Who has the power and authority in this situation? Was it used wisely in your opinion?
- Who should decide about that? How? Why?
- How far should these people be treated as equal or different (for example with regard to their needs or level of responsibility)?
- How would things be different if...?
- What are the rights and wrongs of the situation?

Using photographs

Photographs are an important stimulus for classroom discussion and should be used in the context of other classroom activities. Photographs from published teacher resources may be used, or from newspapers

and magazines where the event to be considered is current. You may also choose to use your own photographs or photographs of pupils at your school if the appropriate permissions have been obtained. The photographs may be used in a variety of contexts. The teacher can either give pupils information to help them understand and interpret what might be happening, or pupils may be left to develop their own scenarios. Where possible we should use photographs that show a diverse range of people.

Pupils can develop enquiry questions to help them explore what is happening in the picture, for example:

- Who might have taken the photo?
- Why was it taken?
- What might have happened before the photo was taken?
- What could have happened afterwards?
- What is the bigger story behind the picture?

To develop empathy, pupils can explore the links between their own lives and the events and people in the photographs.

Micro-debating and 'briefings'

Full class debates can offer an opportunity for young people to develop the skills of research, analysis and creating powerful arguments. However they can also use a lot of curriculum time and some learners may be more involved than others. An alternative is a 'micro-debate' where two pupils research and debate an issue in front of two other pupils, who then have their turn. This can increase the involvement of learners.

'Briefings' can offer a more balanced approach, inviting young people to provide information to a fictitious Minister on both the pros and cons of an issue in readiness to face questioning from a fictional 'press'.

Storytelling

Storytelling will always have a place in helping pupils to consider social and moral issues and examine their own responses to situations. In so doing, they will clarify their own attitudes and values, and learn to respect the values of others where they differ from their own.

Storytelling can also be used to develop pupils' moral reasoning and to develop empathy. Sensitive questioning by the teacher allows pupils to assess the alternatives, make reasoned choices and develop problem-solving skills. Storytelling can be the basis for role play.

The stories should reflect the lesson objectives and different cultures and times, and should explore real and imaginary events. Pupils should be allowed to make their own choices for stories that cover the themes being explored.

Pupils could use the following questions to discuss fiction:

- Imagine you are X. What do you think she/he is thinking? What reason would you give for her/his actions?
- Who was affected by that situation? How? How much does it matter?
- What might it feel like to be in that situation?
- Can you think of a similar situation in real life?
- Was X right to do that?
- Why do you think that was right/wrong?
- How far do you think the character's ideas come from her/his religion, culture, family, friends, own thoughts?
- Can you think of other examples from your own experience?
- If the character could ask you for your advice, what would you say?
- How far does what we have been thinking about apply to people in general?
- What kind of community do you/we want?

Managing difficult behaviours

Sometimes, when teaching about more sensitive topics, pupils can be a little less receptive to learning as they may feel somewhat uncomfortable with the subject matter. This can come across as indifference, insolence or disruptiveness. Where you see this behaviour, switching teaching approaches can be an effective means of getting pupils back on side. Where we see low-level difficult behaviour from individuals it can often be indicative of a topic that is too close to home for them. At these moments we might think about how we can distance the learning further for the pupil. We should also consider providing the opportunity to explore any concerns they may have with ourselves or another trusted adult after the lesson.

Activity weeks/days

Suspending the timetable for a day or week and focusing the whole class or school on a single theme can be an effective approach (providing it is not the only provision). Such events can generate enthusiasm and commitment. They allow pupils to take part in visits, experience the perspective of external agencies and visitors, and work in partnership with parents and other members of the community.

Activity weeks or days require extensive planning and coordination. However they allow issues to be explored in-depth and they can bring about changes in the culture of the school, while developing and reinforcing skills in pupils.

Appendix 2: Evaluating and assessing learning

The most important principle of measuring progression in PSHE is to always establish the learners' starting points (in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills) then at the end of the piece of learning, gather evidence that shows the 'distance travelled'.

In practice, we can achieve this by carrying out a baseline activity such as a mindmap, quiz or graffiti wall, to gauge pupils' existing knowledge, understanding, skills, beliefs and attitudes. Then we need to ensure we build effective assessment for learning into our lessons with good questioning,

feedback and feed-forwards, and mini-plenaries/summaries to check understanding. At the end of the lesson or series of lessons, we can measure progress by revisiting the baseline activity. For example, if pupils constructed a mindmap in their exercise books at the beginning, ask them to return to the mindmap with a different coloured pen and add to it, correct it, write additional explanations and comments. This is a simple, but effective, means of evidencing progress. It can also help to highlight any areas in need of further exploration or consolidation when you next revisit the topic.

Appendix 3: Creating the right environment

Some schools find that a more informal environment can lend itself to the teaching of more sensitive topics in PSHE. One pupil referral unit we consulted with had a real emphasis on the teaching of PSHE to support the vulnerable cohort they were working with. They reported great success in creating a safe, supportive, informal environment for the teaching of PSHE which really facilitated the exploration of difficult topics. They achieved this by:

- teaching in a room with comfortable furniture – sofas and beanbags rather than desks and chairs
- the teacher was referred to by her first name – only for PSHE lessons
- providing tea, coffee and biscuits.

Of course this may not be possible if you're working in a more traditional

setting but it is worth considering whether a slightly less formal approach might facilitate conversations and thinking during lessons on body image. Even thinking a little about the arrangement of the furniture in the room can give the lesson a whole different feel.

Appendix 4: Using ‘visitors’ in the classroom to support the teaching of body image

It is important to think about a visitor as a classroom resource and not a substitute teacher. Some professional organisations provide comprehensive training for personnel expected to work with pupils while others will have little or no training or experience. For this reason we have used the term ‘visitor’ instead of ‘speaker’.

What can a visitor bring to the classroom?

- They can bring an expertise that you as a teacher may not have, nor should be expected to have.
- They can act as an expert witness, recounting events in their lives from a personal or professional perspective.
- They have a ‘novelty’ and we know the brain recalls novelty. (Try to remember visitors from your own classroom when you were a child. The chances are that you can recall them and have an impression of what type of person they were. The chances are also quite strong that you can’t remember much of what they actually said.)
- They can establish a ‘first contact’ to a helping agency. For example, it can be really hard for a young person to approach any source of support ‘cold’. Establishing a relationship in a classroom session can help to overcome this.

Why is it so important to consider these sessions carefully?

As the session facilitator, regardless of who is working with your young people, you are responsible for managing the learning.

Young people are always learning at a variety of levels. For example, a visitor will not only be providing their input, they will be transmitting and modelling messages about who they are and also the values of whoever they represent officially or by association.

Some essential considerations:

- Who is or are the people you are inviting into your session?
- What skills, needs, expectations, experiences or knowledge do they bring?
- How do you know?

These are absolutely essential to consider. Never confuse a leaflet, a fantastic website or the written testimonials of other teachers or headteachers (unless you can contact them in person) with the expertise needed to work with your young people.

If they bring a body of knowledge, does it come with a personal message or set of attached values? Do you know what these are and are they in harmony with your school policies? It is important not to confuse ‘passionate and well-intentioned’ with ‘appropriate and skilled’.

Is a visitor happy to act as a 'resource' with you managing the learning, or do they expect to 'run the whole session'? If they do expect to take the lead role, are you confident they have the teaching for learning and classroom management skills to achieve your learning objectives and outcomes with this particular age group, in your community, with young people they have never met before?

If they have been endorsed by another organisation, ask yourself what confidence you can have in that organisation to assess the visitor's ability to work with your young people. Does that organisation have the expertise to really make a valid assessment?

In an ideal world we should try to watch any visitor work in a similar learning environment before confirming their visit to our session, but more realistically we could ask what other local schools or settings they have worked in, and talk to professional colleagues in those schools or settings.

Negotiation

If you think there might be any professional role conflict, this needs sorting out before any session takes place and ground rules renegotiated if necessary with the young people attending the session.

- Does this visit fit into and build on my scheme of work?
- Is the input relevant?
- Does it build on, extend or enrich previous work?
- Does it offer a stimulus for future work, and if so, do I or my team have the skills and knowledge to capitalise on it?

Any visit should be part of a spiral PSHE education programme with continuity and , and never a 'one-off'.

Following up

What do you plan to do after the visit? For example if a visitor has raised an issue, what communication skills, strategies and research opportunities might young people need to manage this issue for themselves?

Do they have them already and require you to connect these to this new issue through rehearsing and applying them in this new context, or do you need to teach new skills?

If young people raise questions or express anxieties after the visit, perhaps days or even weeks later, do you have a means to answer their questions or address their concerns?

Confidentiality and school policies

Consider:

- Might any young person be upset by this input?
- What if, in spite of ground rules being set, a young person becomes upset or reveals something disturbing about their own or another's personal experience?

PSHE education, perhaps more than any other area of the curriculum, works in the young person's immediate reality and helps them explore how they feel about it. For this reason we need to be sensitive to their prior experiences and be ready for them to share their present experiences and feelings. It is wise to have a protocol in place to support any young person who becomes distressed.

No matter what polices the visitor (or any organisation they might represent) has with regard to confidentiality, your school's policies should always take priority. It is essential that safeguarding policies are adhered to.

Acknowledgements

This guidance was written by Dr Pooky Knightsmith with excellent support from Olivia Jardine and other colleagues at the PSHE Association. We are very grateful to the schools and experts listed below who attended our consultation meeting, and to the 353 PSHE teachers who shared their experiences and opinions in response to our online survey on this issue. Most importantly, we are grateful to the many young people who shared their views during focus groups conducted as we prepared the guidance.

Attendees at the body image consultation meeting

Ali Fisher – Dove UK*

Amy Franklin – Beat (eating disorders charity)

Dr Carolyn O'Connor – Policy Advisor on Body Image and Gender Representation at the Government Equalities Office

Elli Moody – Girlguiding UK*

Grace Barrett – Self-Esteem Team (regularly provides training to pupils regarding body image)

Helen Porter – Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Dr Helen Sharpe – Schools and Clinics Research Fellow at the Anna Freud Centre and UCL

Holli Rubin – Psychotherapist specialising in body image and working with Susie Orbach and Endangered Bodies*

Jade Collinge Long – PSHE lead at Cedars Pupil Referral Unit

Jane Frances – Changing Faces (charity focusing on disfigurement)*

Jenny Rowley – PSHE and safeguarding lead for the London Borough of Sutton

Josie Wells – Norfolk Healthy Schools Development Worker

Laura Berry – PSHE Coordinator at St Edwards, a maintained faith school

Martin Staniforth – Educational consultant specialising in resource development

Dr Melissa Atkinson – Research Fellow for the Centre for Appearance Research at UWE

Michele Fox – PSHE teacher at St Albans Girls' School (STAGS), an all-girls academy

Olivia Jardine – Marketing and Communications Officer – PSHE Association

Dr Pooky Knightsmith – Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Advisor – PSHE Association*

Samantha Arditti – Head of the Be Real Campaign for Body Confidence*

Sarah Griffiths – Head of Wellbeing at Dulwich College, an all-boys independent school with girls up to age 7

Sarah Martin – Educational consultant specialising in resource development

Sue Wynne – Curriculum Manager of Food and Health Studies/PSHE lead/WRL lead at St Anselm's Catholic School

Tess Boyes – Principal at White Trees independent school, a school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties

*Member of the Be Real Campaign for Body Confidence Expert Advisory Group for Body Image

Note that pupils should not be encouraged to research about eating disorders and self-harm online given the number of dangerous sites which may encourage self-harming behaviours

Graphic Design: www.eatcakedesign.co.uk

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