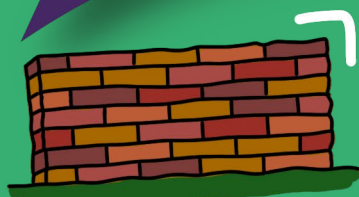
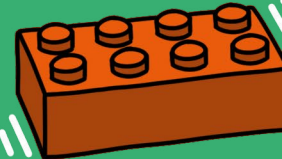
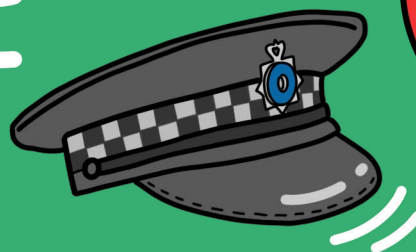




EMPOWERMENT. SAFETY AND RESPECT



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What's in the RSE Code?

This strand focuses on:

- learners' rights to safety and protection and freedom from harm and discrimination
- how and where to seek information, help and support
- how to support and advocate for the rights, fair treatment and respect of all

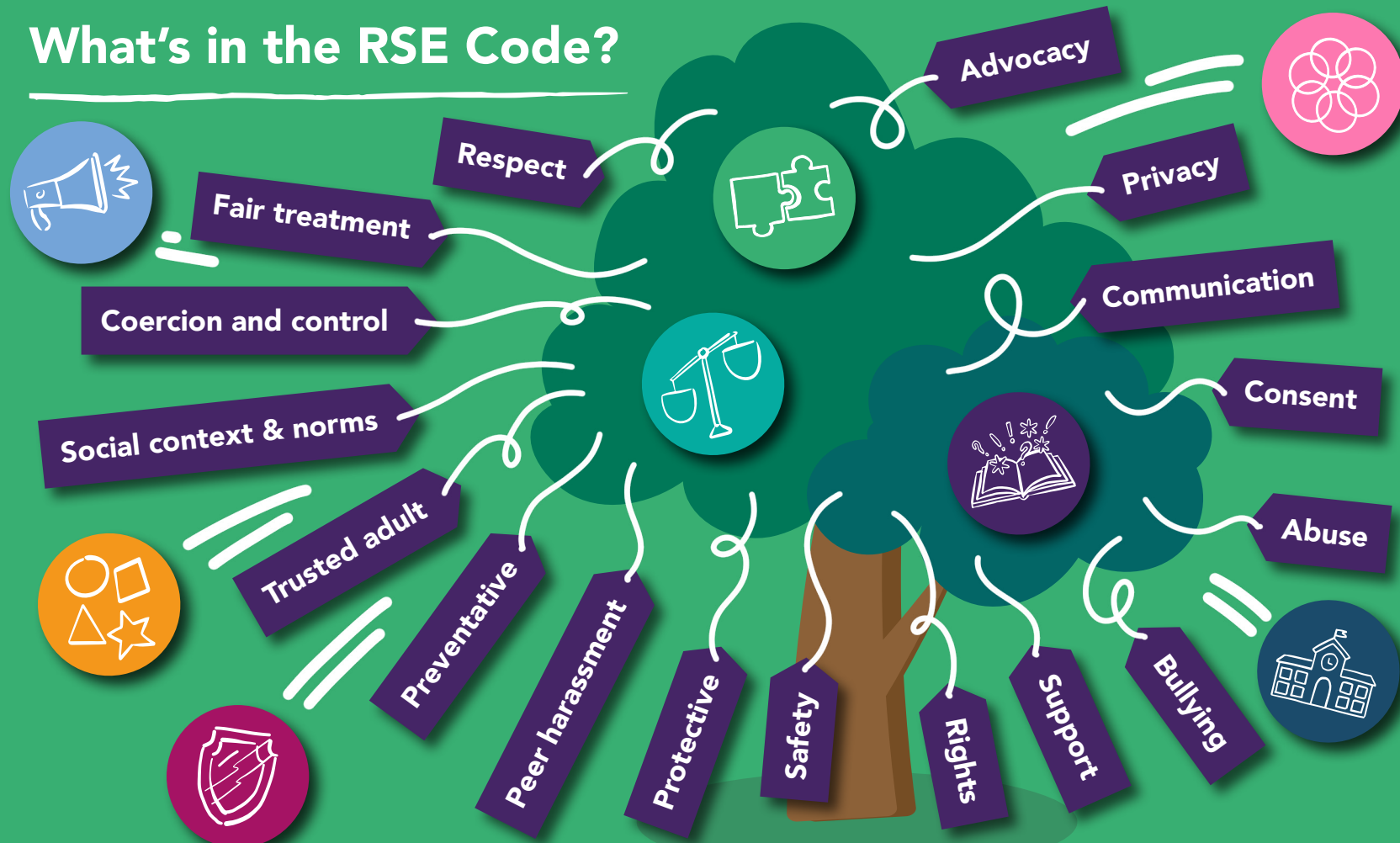
This strand builds on the positive behaviours and skills of healthy relationships. It reinforces the requirement to support learners to develop empathy, kindness and compassion towards each other and empowering them with the confidence to draw upon available support if they are concerned about their own safety or that of others.

They should be supported to understand that exercising their right to be free from all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect is enabled by trusted adults who can support their safety. This includes through a number of legal protections that exist for all. Criminal law makes such behaviours unlawful and there are criminal sanctions for those found guilty of committing such offences.

Learners need to develop an understanding of the social, emotional, physical and legal nature and impact of harmful behaviours, including all bullying, and LGBTQ+ based bullying, sexual violence and gender-based violence in a range of contexts, including online.

Welsh Government 2022

What's in the RSE Code?



Empowerment, Safety and Respect strand mandatory content

Phase 1 (from age 3)

Recognising harmful behaviour including behaviours which are discriminatory and the right to be free from discrimination. Ability to interact with others in a way that is fair.

Recognising the right to be free from harmful, abusive and bullying behaviour.

An awareness of how to recognise positive and harmful behaviours, including bullying.

Ability to share with a trusted adult when faced with harmful behaviours.

Phase 2 (from age 7)

Understanding of the importance of fair treatment for all and of respect in all interpersonal interactions offline and online.

Recognising the value of non-discriminatory behaviours and when and how to take safe action to respond to and challenge discriminatory behaviours.

Understanding of the right for everyone to be free from harm or abuse.

An awareness of different kinds of harmful or abusive behaviour including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect, including peer on peer harassment and bullying and the role technology can play.

How to seek support for oneself, and offer support to others.

How to be a good friend and advocate for others.

Phase 3 (from age 11)

Understanding the importance of inclusivity, including for LGBTQ+ people, nondiscrimination and the value of diversity in our interpersonal behaviours and relationships.

Developing a sense of individual and social responsibility to others, including consideration of how we respond to behaviours that are discriminatory, disrespectful and harmful, offline and online.

Understanding of good sexual and reproductive health, including the range of risks and outcomes from sexual experiences and the knowledge needed to support informed decisions about sexual activity and about reproductive choices.

Empowerment, Safety and Respect strand mandatory content (continued)

Phase 1 (from age 3)

(Phases 1 and 2 include pre-requisite knowledge and skills for understanding the learning on consent at phase 3)

Beginning to recognise that other people have thoughts, feelings and opinions that are different.

An awareness of the need to seek agreement in order to share, for example toys.

An awareness of everyone's right to privacy, personal boundaries and which parts of the body are private.

Ability to communicate if someone is touching them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Phase 2 (from age 7)

Understanding of the right to bodily privacy, personal boundaries including online.

Understanding how behaviours may be perceived by others offline and online.

Recognising which steps to take to keep safe from harm both in offline and online friendships.

Understanding the social and emotional norms and pressures that lead to non-consensual behaviours, friendships and relationships, for example, gender norms.

Developing the skills to build consensual behaviours and relationships and know how to safely respond, challenge and report nonconsensual behaviours and relationships offline and online.

Phase 3 (from age 11)

Understanding of the importance of consent for safe and healthy relationships and in particular sexual relationships.

Understanding of how consent can be communicated in different social contexts and relationships, including online.

A critical understanding of how consent is impacted by perception and social context and the factors that influence and impair people's ability to engage in consensual behaviour, for example, substances, violence, coercion and relationship norms.

Empowerment, Safety and Respect strand mandatory content (continued)

Phase 1 (from age 3)

Awareness of how to keep safe when using digital media, including sharing with a trusted adult when they feel uncomfortable or scared.

Phase 2 (from age 7)

Know how and when digital media can be shared safely, with permission and when it can be a source of harm.

Awareness of the benefits and dangers of the internet and social media in forming friendships online.

Exploring the motives behind fabricated and digitally-altered media.

Phase 3 (from age 11)

Understand the ethical and legal issues relating to the consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated imagery, and rights to safety, support, well-being and protection.

Understanding the impacts associated with sexual material and intimacy online, including the ethical and legal implications.

Welsh Government 2022

View the full RSE code [here](#)

How are children and young people living and learning about empowerment, safety and respect?

Closing the gap

There is a big gap between children and young people's lived experiences and the RSE they experience in school. Research shows that RSE often fails to address children and young people's questions and concerns and that many children struggle to find themselves and their experiences reflected in the RSE curriculum.

To address this gap we created the CRUSH CARDS to use with teachers in our professional learning programme. They can also be adapted by teachers for use with children and young people.

Each card contains a bold image on one side and a case study on the back. Each case study or quote is drawn from research with children and young people and offers a snapshot into their lives.

All of the stories and images on the next few pages relate to the theme of **Empowerment, safety and respect**.



Choose one of the stories on this page to read and:

Ask: Are you surprised when you turn over the card?

Consider: What norms or expectations are over-turned when you explore what or how young people are learning about RSE?

Reflect: How do you feel about what you have read? What more do you want to know?

For more ideas about how to use the CRUSH cards in professional learning workshops see the **StARTing Out** case studies in this resource.



Allan (14) and Liam (age 13) live in a predominantly white, working class ex-steel mining community which they describe as 'a shady area', 'rough' and 'laddy', 'where people walk like kings'. When the researcher asks what is 'rough' about the area they talk about burnt down houses, drug abuse and men with sledgehammers 'knocking down parking meters'. While 'usually' they say they feel 'safe' by not 'talking to anyone', they describe sexualised street harassment as commonplace and something that gets worse in school.

'People touch me a lot ... because I'm quite developed', says Allan, covering his breasts. "And I'm like, don't touch me!". Allan shares a memory in Year 8 after he had already 'come out' as gender fluid and 'gay' in school:

'This guy, Shane, um, he actually just started stroking my thigh, like literally, by here (points to upper inner thigh and crotch) and he, he told me to take off my shirt ... he was like, are they fake? and I was like, they are not fake' and he was like, all right, prove it then, take off your shirt and show me, and I was like, no and I slapped his hand away'.

Allan and Liam both describe themselves as having 'real bad anger issues' in school because of how they sometimes 'respond', 'violently' to the gender and sexual harassment they experience. Allan in particular talks about 'getting in a lot of trouble' and 'kicked someone once'. For Allan, home life is also hostile: 'my parents are really homophobic, like hate all that, so I can't be like hey guys im gender fluid'. In contrast, Liam's mum has always been supportive of his 'coming out' at 11 as 'agender', and then 'gender-fluid' and 'gay'.

Carys: There was this boy in school, and he started to pick up this girl's skirt.

Tia: That really insulted her so she started wearing trousers as like...

Carys: Protection.

Rhi: Um protection.

Tia: I, I just wear shorts under my skirt so there's no chance of that happening.

Rhi: Um, I remember, I remember hearing something on the news about um that teachers say to boys that they couldn't wear shorts at school.

Tia: Yes and then they started wearing skirts.

Carys: Yeah it was boiling hot so they started wearing skirts.

Researcher: What did you think about that?

Rhi: I am proud.

Tia: Yeah.
(age 10)





Jodi is 13 years old and she is asked repeatedly to send a nude photo. Jodi says she can't win because just by being known to be asked for images some people will call her a 'slut', and if she does send an image she doesn't know what will happen. Responding, Jodi sends an image of a cat.

"Matilda (age 5, white Welsh) talks about how boys 'annoy me and Isabel all the time... they always get us and they try to kiss us and, and, they're just trying to chase us and get a kiss and then they annoy us'. She continues: "It's OK, 'cause sometimes they chase us really funny, sometimes they don't' and 'sometimes we chase them ... sometimes we scare them ... we just use superpowers!' Matilda laughs and shows off her superpower, stretching out her arms"



Sharman (age 13, white Welsh) describes her life as 'weird', 'not normal', explaining how "many things have happened to me and it's just not safe for me". She talks about how she and her mum had to move away from her violent father when she was 6 and stay off the internet so he couldn't "track her down" and when she was physically attacked by a group of boys from her primary school, who 'came onto' her in a car-park, leaving her badly shaken, with scars on her shoulder and elbow.

While 'not feeling safe' is part and parcel of daily life, Sharman is a survivor, and it is in her visceral descriptions of seeking out, and playing in mud that she seems to carve out a space for experiencing moments of pure delight and pleasure:

Me and the boys try and go down the skate-park at least once a week. It's fun ... when it's wet it's the BEST. You slip ... you slip and slide down the bottom into the puddles ... Yeah ... I get my hoodie on, get my tracksuit, old trainers, not my new ones and go out in the mud. Don't bother about my hair and makeup.... we go up the park, or anywhere where it's muddy [...] we go like, 'I feel like rolling in mud', and then we go rolling! [...] We make mud slides and slide down them, get mud all down our backs and we sort of throw mud at each other, its FUN!. We are like, 'where can I find MUD'.

Starting out with empowerment, safety and respect

Support clouds

Many of the schools we have worked with have done the **'support cloud' activity** with children and young people to help create a safe working environment for RSE and explore who and what makes learners feel safe. In this activity each child or young person has a cloud.



On the cloud they write down at least 5 trusted people they could talk to if they wanted help and support on something. On the other side of the cloud they write what would make them feel safe and supported in RSE. Groups then create support cloud mobiles that can be hung in the classroom and used in every RSE lesson to remind learners of the importance of creating safe and inclusive spaces for RSE.

Recognising trusted adults who can help them and whom they can talk to and ask questions of, especially when they feel unhappy or unsafe. (RSE code 2022)

Be able to identify trustworthy sources of information and able to raise issues and questions with trusted adults. (RSE code 2022)

What is touch?

In one primary school children in the foundation phase explored the question 'what is touch?' using different sensory materials such as plasticine, slime, tin, glitter, cotton wool, sandpaper and water. Next children explored the concepts of happy touch and sad, supported touch with people they knew and didn't know. They also considered different types of touch such as the kiss and the hug. Using the NCSPCC's P.A.N.T.S. resource groups of children also explored appropriate and inappropriate touch and delivered an assembly to the whole school.



An awareness of everyone's right to privacy, personal boundaries and which parts of the body are private. (RSE code 2022)

Beginning to recognise that other people have thoughts, feelings and opinions that are different (RSE code 2022)

Ability to communicate if someone is touching them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. (RSE code 2022)

An awareness that everyone has the right to be safe and no one is allowed to harm anyone else. (RSE code 2022)

Reading dogs

Children in years 1 and 2 at one primary school learnt about consent through working with the reading dogs that came in to visit the school. As part of this project, children needed to negotiate permission to greet the dog and work out whether it was ok to touch the dog and what kind of touch might be ok. To extend the project, children learnt about different greetings around the world.

Bonjour
Namaste
Hola
Selam
Yassou
Goddag
Ciao



Ability to interact with others in a way that is fair.
(RSE code 2022)

An awareness of everyone's right to privacy, personal boundaries and which parts of the body are private.
(RSE code 2022)

Beginning to recognise that other people have thoughts, feelings and opinions that are different.
(RSE code 2022)

Ability to communicate if someone is touching them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.
(RSE code 2022)

An awareness that everyone has the right to be safe and no one is allowed to harm anyone else.
(RSE code 2022)

Signalling consent

One primary teacher has been exploring relationships and consent with their Year 2 class and talking about how personal boundaries can change depending on who we are with.

As part of their work, the teacher introduced a visual aid to help children share with staff how they are feeling and how they would like to be greeted as they enter the classroom. Children can point to a picture of a wave, handshake, 'good morning', fist bump, high five or hug to show how they would like to be greeted. They can also point to an emotion picture to share with staff how they are feeling.



"We talked about love and relationships with our family – is a hug / kiss from them ok? What about the same from a stranger or a friend? The children soon started to realise that certain actions are not appropriate from certain people around them. One child mentioned that the space around us is important as it is ours. I demonstrated invading personal space by sitting a bit too close to a child on the carpet (I asked their permission beforehand). They then explained to the rest of the class how it made them feel. We agreed that even though our families – we still have a voice and a right to say NO!" (RSE lead, Primary)

The Brook Learn platform has a free e-learning programme for professional on consent. This includes an activity called 'Meet and Greet' that uses handshakes and other greetings to learn about and experience consent. www.brook.org.uk/your-life/courses/consent

Playing it right

One primary school has set up their play area to try and help make it safe and inclusive for everyone. The school has 'play rangers' who go out and lead games for children in the playground. Children who don't have anyone to play with can join in with the games the play rangers have set up. There are also 'conflict resolution rangers' who go round and talk to children sitting on 'buddy bunches' to encourage them to come and play. The conflict resolution rangers also look for early warning signs of any bullying happening in the playground.

In the foundation phase the teacher led a session to explore children's experiences of using the playground and made changes as a result of their responses.

'I did it like a philosophy for children session so that the children had some time to think and share their views. I asked questions like 'what do you like about the playground? What don't you like? what makes you feel safe and comfortable in the playground? What do you want to change about the playground?' They were quite vocal. There were lots of things coming up and children were saying, 'I don't like it', 'I don't feel safe' and they were quite strong about these things (RSE lead, primary school).

An awareness that everyone has the right to be safe and no one is allowed to harm anyone else. (RSE code 2022)

Recognising the right to be free from harmful, abusive and bullying behaviour. (RSE code 2022)

Ability to share with a trusted adult when faced with harmful behaviours. (RSE code 2022)

Ability to speak up for each other. (RSE code 2022)

An awareness of how to recognise positive and harmful behaviours, including bullying. (RSE code 2022)

Setting up an LGBTQ group

After carrying out a large scale creative audit, one secondary school identified that homophobic bullying was a problem at the school. In response the school set up an LGBTQ group. The group started meeting once a week and got together with a similar group at another secondary school to help the new group focus their ideas and identify their priorities.



The group decided that their aim is to support the development of an RSE curriculum specifically related to LGBTQ+ relationships and to provide a space for LGBTQ+ young people to support each other, fundraise and effect whole school change. They have called themselves UNDOD and we've worked with the art department to design an UNDOD logo. The logo has been graffitied onto the school wall.

"In the summer we had a Pride day as part of the summer programme, which was a turning point for our school. The day was a celebration of diversity, inclusion and belonging and it felt like the moment at which teachers and young people understood what we are trying to achieve through RSE - loving who you are and being different" (RSE lead, secondary school)

Understanding the importance of inclusivity, including for LGBTQ+ people, nondiscrimination and the value of diversity in our interpersonal behaviours and relationships. (RSE code 2022)

Becoming resourceful



To read more about how teachers are getting started with the theme of Empowerment, safety and respect read the following CRUSH case studies:

Hearts and Minds (Key stage 3 and 4)

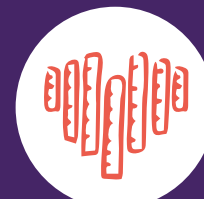
Shaking things up (Key stage 3 and 4)

For more ideas on how to get started with this theme, have a look at the following case studies from the resource **Agenda: supporting children and young people in making positive relationships matter**. This is a free bilingual resource to help children, young people and educators explore positive relationships creatively, including gender-related and sexual bullying, harassment and violence. To find out more about the resource, go to: neu.org.uk/agenda. This includes a recorded 2 hour online professional learning session for teachers.



CRAFTING EQUALITY

Stitching our rights to make a safe, fair and more equal world for all



RULER HEART

Ruling out sexual harassment using the visual arts in a school assembly



SAM'S STORY

Addressing bullying cultures in schools through art, stories, drama, helping hands and a cwtch.



DIGITAL DIVERSITY CLUB

Supporting and celebrating gender and sexual inclusivity in school and online



UNDER PRESSURE?

Using the physics curriculum to explore control and consent through sound, movement and a glitch-art app



VOICES OVER SILENCE

Creating mood boards, posters and a film to spark a conversation about girl's rights and FGM

There are many organisations and resources that can support you to get started with the theme of Empowerment, Safety and Respect. To help you assess the quality of any resource that you come across, go to the section, **"Choosing and Using Resources"**. This section hosts a toolkit that has been developed using the key principles for RSE outlined in the Welsh Government RSE Guidance (2022).

