Together

Year: Y4

Subjects and Issues

Being yourself Diversity Homophobic bullying
Rules and laws Consent
Relationships education LGBT+ Keeping safe
Decision making Relationships Law
Forced marriage Arranged marriage
Civil partnerships Age (protected characteristic)
Marriage and civil partnership (protected characteristic)
Religion or belief (protected characteristic)
Sex (protected characteristic)
Sexual orientation (protected characteristic)

Introduction

Have you heard of the word relationship? What kinds of relationships might people have? [e.g. friendship, sibling, parent/child, husband and wife]

There are different kinds of relationships that people might share; healthy relationships should be based on love, kindness and respect. A healthy relationship should make us feel happy and safe.

We're all different and make lots of different choices in our lives. People can make different choices about how to share their lives with others, which we're going to think about today.

You might have heard of different fairy tales; who can tell us what happens at the end of these stories?

- Cinderella
- Sleeping Beauty
- Snow White and the Seven Dwarves
- Beauty and the Beast

(They get married.)

Can you think of any more well known stories which end in a marriage?

When two people love and care for each other and want to spend the rest of their lives together, do they have to get married? (No)

A marriage is when two adults decide they want to share their lives and be a family. They make a legal promise to take care for each other, support each other, and make decisions together. Marriage is a formal promise that's recognised by the law, which gives them responsibilities and rights, like looking after each other and sharing things fairly.

What else do some couples choose to do? (Live together in a committed relationship or have a civil partnership.)

A civil partnership is a union recognised in law for both same-sex and opposite-sex couples who both then have rights similar to those of a married couple. It was introduced in 2005 to provide legal recognition and protection for same sex couples. Since then, the law has developed further, to enable marriages between same-sex couples, too. This created the unusual situation whereby same-sex couples had the choice of marriage or civil partnership, but opposite-sex couples were restricted to marriage only. Since 2019 couples of the opposite sex have been able to enter into a civil partnership. Following this change, both opposite-sex and same-sex couples in England and Wales have been able to choose between a civil partnership and marriage when they formalise their relationship. This development legally recognises the multiple ways in which people choose to live their lives in today's society.

There are various reasons why couples choose to have a civil partnership rather than marry, for example, those who have been married before may have personal or religious beliefs for not repeating the process, whereas others object to the religious associations and expected gender roles of a traditional marriage and marriage ceremony, even though marriage ceremonies can be non-religious.

The main differences between the two, are that:

- A marriage is formed by vows, whereas a civil partnership is formed by signing the civil partnership document; and
- Marriages are ended by divorce, whereas civil partnerships are ended by dissolution, although the process is fundamentally the same.

By law, who can make up a couple wanting to marry? (F+M, M+M, F+F) Sometimes couples who are made up of two men or two women may say that they are gay. This is a commonly used word that people can use to identify that they are in a same-sex relationship or they are attracted to people of the same sex. A woman who is attracted to other women may also say she is a lesbian. Explain that it is ok to be gay or lesbian, and it is never ok to use these words to make someone feel bad about themselves or feel different, whether they are gay or lesbian, or not.

Sometimes people are attracted to both men and women, and they may identify as bisexual. Bi is the Latin word meaning two, as in bi-lingual, meaning being able to speak two languages equally well.

How old do you think someone has to be before they can get married? (18 with or without parental consent in England*, but 16 with or without parental consent in Scotland.)

*The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 that came into force in February 2023 extends existing forced marriage legislation, so it is now an offence to carry out any conduct causing a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion aren't used.

Why do you think people choose to get married, live together or have a civil partnership?

List the reasons for these different types of partnerships.

Can people be forced to marry someone they don't want to? (It does happen sometimes BUT it is against

the law in this country.)

No one should be forced to marry against their wishes and if they feel this is happening to them, they can get help and support. (Childline is an example of an organisation that can help someone in this situation.)

You might like to discuss different types of wedding/civil ceremony celebrations, using the IWB slides as points for discussion – including opposite-sex/same-sex couples and different cultural or religious examples.

Activity - Together

Some things we can do by ourselves but other things we can do much better if we are with someone, especially someone who loves and supports us.

Children use the *Together* Activity sheet to reflect on and record their thoughts and ideas about this.

Summing up

Review children's knowledge and understanding by asking:

- Who can explain what a marriage is?
- Who can explain what a civil partnership is?
- Who can explain what living together means?
- Is it ok for people to be forced to marry? (No. It is against the law in this country.)

Discuss with the children the different stories mentioned:

- Cinderella
- Sleeping Beauty
- Snow White and the Seven Dwarves
- Beauty and the Beast

Then ask:

- How are the stories similar?
- How are they different to real life? (Point out that there is little diversity in the fairytales in terms of how people look, who asks who to marry, how

males and females 'should' behave, no same-sex marriages or civil partnerships.)
- Do they know of other stories with marriage in them?

Ask if anyone has watched the film ‘Brave’ (a family sets up a competition to help pick the right man for their daughter’s husband-to-be, but the daughter enters and ends up winning the competition, so she doesn't have to marry).

What does this tell us about marriage or civil partnership? (That it should be about choice.)

Finally, ask what they think marriage itself involves and why some people choose not to get married or have a civil partnership.

Remember, there are different kinds of relationships; that healthy relationships should be based on love, kindness and respect. A healthy relationship can make us feel happy and safe. If ever we feel unsafe it’s important to talk to someone we trust. People make different choices about how to share their lives with others, and that’s ok.

Adapting lessons for learners with additional needs

Our additional Signposting and Support page provides further guidance on adapting SCARF lessons to meet the needs of learners with additional needs.

Version History

Tue, 24 Mar 2026

- Learning outcomes updated to include civil partnerships
- Introduction updated to include more information on different choices, families and healthy relationships
- Key vocabulary updated

- Added optional images of different weddings/civil partnerships and ceremonies

Learning Outcomes

Children will be able to:

- Understand that marriage or civil partnership is a commitment to be entered into freely and not against someone's will;
- Recognise that marriage or civil partnership includes same sex and opposite sex partners;
- Know the legal age for marriage or civil partnership in England or Scotland;
- Discuss the reasons why a person would want to be married, or live together, or have a civil ceremony.

Key Vocabulary

marriage
live together
civil partnership
forced marriage
wedding
relationships
safe
unsafe
ceremony

Together - Activity sheet - enough copies for working individually

Optional extra: Images of different kinds of weddings/civil partnership ceremonies - Teacher resource to print or show on IWB

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory requirements

- Relationships Education Families and people who care for me 3. That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.
- Relationships Education Families and people who care for me 4. That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up.

- Relationships Education Families and people who care for me 5. That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.
- Relationships Education Caring friendships 1. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
- Relationships Education Caring friendships 2. The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.
- Relationships Education Caring friendships 4. That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right.
- Relationships Education Caring friendships 5. How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
- Relationships Education Respectful relationships 1. The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory requirements (2025)

- Caring friendships 1. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
- Caring friendships 4. The characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity,

trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties.

- Caring friendships 5. That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened.
- Caring friendships 6. How to manage conflict, and that resorting to violence is never right.
- Caring friendships 7. How to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to get support when needed.
- Families and people who care for me 3. That the families of other children, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.
- Families and people who care for me 4. That stable, caring relationships are at the heart of safe and happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up.
- Families and people who care for me 5. That marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.
- Respectful, kind relationships 1. How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others, including in families and friendships. Pupils should be encouraged to discuss how we balance the needs and wishes of different people in relationships and why this can be complicated.
- Respectful, kind relationships 11. How to seek help when needed, including when they are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

PSHE Association Learning Opportunities

- R1 . To recognise that there are different types of relationships (e.g. friendships, family relationships, romantic relationships, online relationships).
- R2 . That people may be attracted to someone emotionally, romantically and sexually; that people may be attracted to someone of the same sex or different sex

to them; that gender identity and sexual orientation are different.

- R3 . About marriage and civil partnership as a legal declaration of commitment made by two adults who love and care for each other, which is intended to be lifelong.
- R4 . That forcing anyone to marry against their will is a crime; that help and support is available to people who are worried about this for themselves or others.
- R5 . That people who love and care for each other can be in a committed relationship (e.g. marriage), living together, but may also live apart.
- R7 . To recognise and respect that there are different types of family structure (including single parents, same-sex parents, step-parents, blended families, foster parents); that families of all types can give family members love, security and stability.
- R10 . About the importance of friendships; strategies for building positive friendships; how positive friendships support wellbeing.