Dear Ash

Year: Y5

Subjects and Issues

Safeguarding Secrets Support networks

Introduction

If the children have done the *'Secret or Surprise?'* lesson in Y3 or Y4 you can review what they learned here with some key questions:

- What is a surprise?
- What is a secret?
- Are all surprises secrets?
- Are all secrets surprises?
- How might a secret make someone feel? Some secrets are safe to keep and some secrets are unsafe and we need to talk to someone about them.
- Can anyone think of an example of a safe or an unsafe secret?

Activity

Read children the story 'Chris's secret'. Ask their children for their reaction to the story.

NB: it is very important to depersonalise the discussion in this lesson - explore the scenarios in the third person as children may have sensitive issues that they may bring up in the lesson. Start by reinforcing ground rules about not talking about personal situations or mentioning anyone's name.

Follow the story with some questions for discussion by the class:

- Was Chris right to tell Scott what was worrying him?
- Who else could Chris have told?
- How do you think the situation made Chris feel?

- Do you think he felt differently after he had told Scott?
- Chris asked Scott not to tell anyone else i.e. he told him what was worrying him in confidence.
- Is it ever Ok to 'break a confidence' and tell someone else?
- What advice would you give to Chris in this situation?
- What advice would you give to Scott in this situation?

Give out the *'Dear Ash'* activity sheet.

Ask children to choose one of the scenarios and consider what advice they would give the person who wrote the letter in that situation. Children can either write their advice as Ash or they can role-play the situation as if it were a radio show where people phone in with their problems. One child can take the part of the person who phones in with the problem and the other takes the part of the radio presenter who is giving advice.

Summing up

Ask children to share their responses to the problems – either by reading their responses out loud or acting out their role play to the rest of the class. Does everyone agree with the advice given?

In the 'Dear Ash' scenarios the children had written to a fictitious person for advice. Ask the children to brainstorm together all the people that they can turn to for help and advice in difficult situations. Ideas could include:

- Parent or carer
- Other family members
- Teacher
- Teaching assistant
- Headteacher
- Midday supervisor
- Other school based staff
- Friends

- Childline 0800 1111

Discuss when it is appropriate to 'break a confidence'? For example, when someone is in an unsafe situation.

We often talk about keeping something confidential. What does this mean? Ask the children to consider what sort of information the following people might need to keep confidential (they could discuss these in pairs or threes):

- Teacher
- Doctor
- Lawyer
- School administrator
- Bank manager

Can anybody think of any other time when it is important to keep information confidential?

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.

Learning Outcomes

Children will be able to:

- Explain the difference between a safe and an unsafe secret;
- Identify situations where someone might need to break a confidence in order to keep someone safe.

Key Vocabulary

in confidence
break a confidence

confidential

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Activity sheet

Dear Ash...

Ash writes an advice column in a teen magazine. Look at the following situations that people have written to Ash about. Consider what advice Ash would give to the person.

Next, choose one situation and write a response to it, as Ash.
Alternatively your could work in pairs to create a role-play where one person takes on the role of Ash and the other takes on the role of the person with the problem who calls in to Ash's radio programme for advice.

Dear Ash,
My best friend at school keeps pinching me under the table and trying to make me laugh or call out. She thinks it's really funny but I'm getting tired of it now. She's told me not to tell the teacher as she thinks we'll both get into trouble for messing about in the lesson. What do you think I should do?

Dear Ash,
My brother is only sixteen but the other day I saw him sneak some cans of lager from his school bag and put them under his bed. He caught me watching and said I wasn't to tell mum and dad or he would tell them about the time I took a cake from the kitchen cupboard. What do you think I should do?

Dear Ash,
When we were changing in PE the other day I noticed that my friend had a really bruise on his leg. When I asked him about it he just went very quiet and said he'd hurt it on the trampoline at home. I'm sure he was lying as he looked very uncomfortable about it and quickly changed the subject. He also said not to tell anyone else that I'd seen the bruise as he didn't want a big fuss over it. I think something else might be going on but I'm not sure what. What do you think I should do?

Dear Ash,
My best friend told me she had been playing outside on her bike the other evening and had accidentally fallen onto her mum's new car and put a great big scratch on the door. Her mum hasn't mentioned it yet and she doesn't know whether to admit to it as she thinks she'll be in big trouble. She's really worried about it and has told me not to say anything to my mum and dad because they might tell her mum and dad. I feel really bad knowing what she did and feel I ought to tell someone. What do you think I should do?

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Dear Ash - Activity sheet - enough copies for working in pairs

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Story sheet

Chris's secret

Chris and Scott were best friends. They did loads of things together as they had very similar interests. They also felt they could tell each other the things that they could not tell anyone else.
One morning Chris came into school but wasn't his usual bouncy, cheerful self. Scott knew that something was up.

'What's up, mate?' he asked.
'Oh nothing,' said Chris but Scott knew that unusually Chris was keeping something to himself. He decided to leave it for the moment.
At lunchtime the two of them went on to the field to play. Chris still wasn't quite himself and Scott decided to try and find out what was up. 'Listen,' he said, 'Let's walk to the other end of the field away from everyone else and you can tell me what's on your mind.'

As soon as they got to the far end of the field Chris began to open up. 'Things are really tough at home at the moment, he said. 'Dad lost his job a couple of weeks ago and he just seems to be in a bad mood all the time. Him and mum have been arguing and he's been snapping at me and my sister. He even swore at me last night when I left all my toys out in my bedroom. I've never seen him like this before and I'm worried that he might get violent and hit one of us.'

'Thanks for telling me,' said Scott, 'it always feels better to tell someone else when something is worrying you.'

'Please don't tell anyone I've told you,' said Chris.

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Chris's secret - Story sheet - 1 copy for teacher to read out

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory requirements

- Relationships Education Being safe 2. About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.

- Relationships Education Being safe 4. How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know.
- Relationships Education Being safe 5. How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult.
- Relationships Education Being safe 6. How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.
- Relationships Education Being safe 7. How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- Relationships Education Being safe 8. Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory requirements (2025)

- Being Safe 2. The concept of privacy and its implications for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
- Being Safe 4. How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online), including those they do and do not know.
- Being Safe 5. How to recognise when a relationship is harmful or dangerous, including skills for recognising who to trust and who not to trust.
- Being Safe 6. How to report abuse, concerns about something seen online or experienced in real life, or feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- Being Safe 7. How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.
- Developing bodies 2. The correct names of body parts, including the penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples. Pupils should understand that all of these parts of

the body are private and have skills to understand and express their own boundaries around these body parts.

PSHE Association Learning Opportunities

- R8 . To recognise other shared characteristics of healthy family life, including commitment, care, spending time together; being there for each other in times of difficulty.
- R9 . How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice.
- R22 . About privacy and personal boundaries; what is appropriate in friendships and wider relationships (including online).
- R27 . About keeping something confidential or secret, when this should (e.g. a birthday surprise that others will find out about) or should not be agreed to, and when it is right to break a confidence or share a secret.
- R29 . Where to get advice and report concerns if worried about their own or someone else's personal safety (including online).

Assessment Opportunities

Take photographs of children's completed art work for your assessment records.