

Making Sense of Relationships

Lesson 1:
Secondary school

Key stage 2

NSPCC

In partnership with

PSHE
Association



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2

Context

As year 6 pupils transition from primary to secondary school, their friendships and relationships change – bringing about many new and sometimes difficult challenges. Empowering them to handle those challenges is the purpose of this series of three lessons.

Lesson 1 allows Year 6 pupils to explore the conflicting feelings that they may have about starting secondary school. It teaches them ways to explore and express these feelings and manage the transition in a positive and healthy way, while promoting respect for oneself and others.

While PSHE education lessons should be pacy, of course

you want to meet the needs of your pupils. Since the activities take one hour to complete, this lesson is planned as a minimum one-hour lesson. But pupils can gain more from a longer in depth exploration of an activity, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and you feel pupils are progressing towards the objectives. If you want to do this, you might want to extend the time to two lessons.

Note:

None of the lessons are designed to be taught in isolation. They should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

Learning objectives

- We are learning how to recognise, talk about and manage feelings about starting secondary school
- We are learning how to manage the challenges and recognise the opportunities of starting secondary school
- We are learning ways to make a successful start to secondary school

Intended learning outcomes

- ✓ I can describe some of the different feelings people might have about starting secondary school
- ✓ I can describe or demonstrate some positive ways to manage feelings people might have about starting secondary school, including asking for help
- ✓ I can explain some of the opportunities and challenges that secondary school can offer, and how people can make the most of these
- ✓ I can identify where and how to get reliable and positive information about starting secondary school

Resources required

- Box or envelope for anonymous questions
- Resource 1: *Starting secondary school – enlarged to A3*
- Resource 2: *Truth or Myth?*
- Resource 3: *Truth or Myth explanations (for teacher use only)*
- Resource 4: *Where can they get the answers?*
- Resource 5: *Dear Sam... emails*

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying Resource Guidance before teaching this lesson for guidance on establishing ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, communication and handling questions effectively.

Key words

Transition, change

Baseline activity

Baseline activity 10 min

On their own, ask pupils to think about starting secondary school. Ask them to record their ideas in each section of the grid *Starting secondary school* including: the feelings they might experience, challenges they might face, opportunities that might arise, questions they might have, as well as where they might seek help or advice. Tell them that spelling and grammar don't matter – it is more important for them to get down their ideas.

As this is a baseline assessment, use neutral, non-guiding language (For example, rather than “Write someone’s worries and fears about starting secondary school” say “Write down any feelings or questions you think someone may have about starting secondary school”)

Avoid giving any further information until the activity has been completed. Then collect their work in, and return to it at the end of the lesson as a way for pupils to reflect, and to measure progression in learning.

Introduction 5 min

Revisit ground rules and remind pupils of the importance of keeping personal stories private. Draw attention to the anonymous question box and remind them that they can submit questions at any time, whether during or after the lesson.

Share the lesson objectives and outcomes. Explain that transitioning to secondary school is a big life change. Even when someone is feeling positive about it, a big change can cause mixed feelings like excitement and worry. In this lesson pupils will discuss these kinds of feelings and the reasons behind them, and they'll ask and answer questions about starting secondary school.

Core activities

Truth or myth 10 min

Tell pupils that they may have heard lots about what secondary school is like. Sometimes this information is really helpful. But sometimes it's not, since it might be exaggerated, inaccurate or untrue.

In small groups or pairs, ask pupils to read the *Truth or Myth?* cards, and sort them into three piles: truth, myth, not sure. When everyone has finished, ask for feedback from different groups, and talk through the teacher's explanations (Resource 3). Make sure that everyone is clear which statements are true and which are not. Does anything surprise them? Discuss any statements that need further elaboration, particularly those they are not sure about.

Where can I get information and help? 10 min

In their groups, ask pupils to list where they can get information about secondary school. They can include anything they think of. For example, older brothers or sisters, neighbours with secondary-aged children, teachers, former pupils, online forums, school websites, school open-evenings.

Next ask groups to collate a list of sources for the whole class. If necessary, add additional sources of your own to create a good-sized list. Discuss the list and ask pupils which sources are likely to be the most reliable and helpful. Think together about the reasons why.

Finally in pairs or small groups, ask pupils to discuss the scenarios in the resource *Where can they get answers?* Who would be the best person to speak to? Which would be the best place to get information? Use the class list to help with responses. Then ask the groups to feedback and discuss their conclusions.

Assessment for and of learning

Sam... 15 min

In group or pairs, tell pupils that they are going to act as Sam, who gives advice to children starting secondary school. Give each group a Dear Sam email, and ask them to give information or reassure the writer. To help them get started, they could list all their thoughts of things they could include. Their final response will be an email from Sam, which you could collate into a display of advice for starting secondary school. (If appropriate, pupils can respond to more than one email).

For learners who need support:

Choose an email you think will suit the pupils best. Ask pupils to list things that could help the person they're responding to, while having someone work alongside them.

For learners who need a challenge:

You could choose specific, trickier problems for them to respond to. Or challenge them to think of suggestions that haven't already been discussed.

Assessing progress: revisiting the Starting secondary school grid 5 min

At this point, you could ask pupils to look again at the baseline activity they completed at the beginning of the lesson – *Starting secondary school*. In a different coloured pen or pencil, ask them to amend questions and responses that have been answered by today's lesson, or to add any additional ideas.

Reflecting on today's learning 5 min

In an arrangement that suits you, such as a circle, go round and ask each pupil for one thing they have learned today. If it helps focus their thinking, use a sentence starter like "One thing I didn't know about secondary school was X but now I know Y" or "If I need help with starting secondary school I can ask...". Their answers could help you measure progress against the learning objectives and outcomes.

At the end of the lesson, ask pupils to anonymously either write down a worry they feel better about now, or one useful piece of advice they will take from the lesson. If they have written a worry, ask them to bin it – screw it up and put it in the bin as they leave the room. If they have written down something useful, tell them to put it somewhere safe to look at again if they need it.

Remind them also about the anonymous question box/envelope if they still have questions or worries they'd like you to know about.

Extension activities and home learning

Extension activity 1:

Make a list of top ten tips for starting secondary school. These could be short sentences or phrases to read at a glance and for easy recall. For example: if you're lost, ask for directions; If you're worried, speak to a teacher; Set your alarm to wake you up earlier; Make a timetable to manage homework. (You could even include these in the display of emails from Sam.)

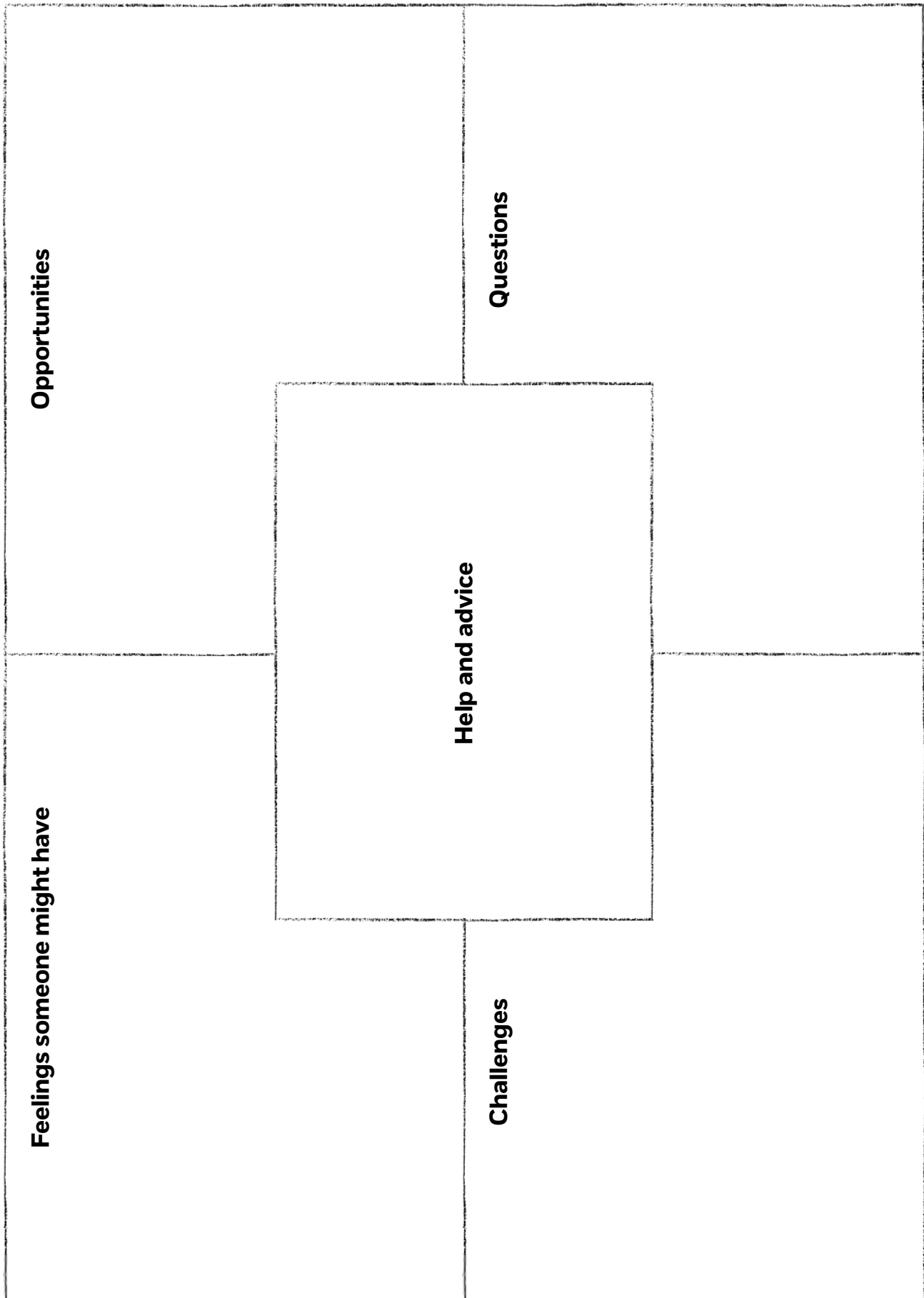
Extension activity 2:

Ask pupils to write a quiz of Dilemmas, with alternative answers to try out on one another. For example:

You have so much homework that you haven't managed to get it all done by Sunday night. Do you a) See which homework needs to be done by Monday and focus on that. b) Panic and do whatever is quickest and easiest. c) Text your friend to ask to copy their homework. d) Ask a parent to talk to your form tutor to explain the situation.

Resource 1

Starting secondary school (You can enlarge from that size to A3 by using photocopier)



Resource 2

Starting secondary school: truth or myth

Read each card then put it in a pile: truth, myth, or not sure.

The teachers at secondary school shout all the time.	Older pupils always push in front in the dinner queue.
If you don't have your bus fare, the bus driver won't let you on to the school bus.	There is a different teacher for every subject.
Older pupils and teachers will help if someone gets lost in the first few weeks of term.	If someone is worried about anything in school, there are people they can go and talk to.
If someone doesn't do their homework they always get detention.	There are tests every day.
There are lots of different clubs for people to get involved in if they want to.	There are different subjects that they don't teach at primary school.
The secondary school day starts before primary school, so pupils have to leave home earlier to get there on time.	It is fine to pop in and say hi to old teachers at primary school once someone is at secondary school.
There is so much homework that it is impossible to do anything else after school.	If someone's friend goes to a different secondary school, they never get to see one another.
Mobile phones are banned in secondary school.	Pupils can be excluded for wearing the wrong uniform.
Everyone in year 6 is excited and looking forward to going to secondary school.	



Resource 3

Starting secondary school: truth or myth statement responses

Read each card then put it in a pile: truth, myth, or not sure.

The teachers at secondary school shout all the time.	Myth Some teachers may shout, some may not shout at all.
Older pupils and teachers will help if someone gets lost in the first few weeks of term.	Truth Older pupils and teachers will help new Year 7 pupils if they are lost, or are unsure of where they have to go. Secondary schools usually give new pupils a map so they can find their way around.
If someone doesn't do their homework they always get detention.	Myth Teachers give detentions for different things, and pupils do not always get detention for not doing homework. Some schools do not have detentions, or call them something different.
There are lots of different clubs for people to get involved in if they want to.	Truth There are all kinds of clubs and teams people can choose to join, at lunchtimes or after school.
If you don't have your bus fare, the bus driver won't let you on to the school bus.	Myth If someone has left their fare at home, they must give the bus driver their name and address so the bus company can contact them at a later date for the money. A driver cannot stop a school pupil getting on the bus to their school unless the pupil refuses to give them their name and address, or is acting in a way that might be dangerous to other passengers.
There is so much homework that it is impossible to do anything else after school.	Myth There will be more homework than at primary school, but drawing up a homework schedule helps people to balance their time.
Mobile phones are banned in secondary school.	Myth Schools will have their own rules which every pupil will be told and expected to stick to. Often, phones can be brought into school but must be kept out of sight, silent and unused.
Older pupils always push in front in the dinner queue.	Myth Some pupils may push in front of queues, but it is unlikely that this will happen all the time, or be tolerated. Most schools will have a way of checking people are not joining the queue unfairly and may have different lunch times for different year groups.



<p>There is a different teacher for every subject.</p>	<p>Truth In secondary school, most teachers teach the subject in which they have training and expertise. Sometimes teachers have special training in more than one subject.</p>
<p>If someone is worried about anything in school, there are people they can go and talk to.</p>	<p>Truth There will be at least one named adult in school that pupils can go and talk to if they need to. In most cases this will be the form tutor and year head.</p>
<p>There are tests every day.</p>	<p>Myth There will be tests in school, but not every day or for every subject. If there is an important test then pupils will get advance notice.</p>
<p>There are lots of different subjects that are not taught at primary school.</p>	<p>Truth There will be new subjects in secondary school that Year 7 pupils won't have learned in primary school.</p>
<p>It is fine to pop in and say hi to old teachers at primary school once someone is at secondary school.</p>	<p>Truth Primary teachers will probably be delighted to see old pupils and find out how they are getting on at secondary school.</p>
<p>The secondary school day starts before primary school, so pupils have to leave home earlier to get there on time.</p>	<p>Truth Every school is different but this is usually correct. People may also have further to travel to secondary school, or have to travel by bus, which may mean an earlier start.</p>
<p>If someone's friend goes to a different secondary school they will never get to see one another.</p>	<p>Myth Just because two friends are going to different schools doesn't mean they can't make arrangements to talk to or see one another outside school.</p>
<p>Pupils can be excluded for wearing the wrong uniform.</p>	<p>Myth Being excluded is a very serious thing to happen. If someone wears the wrong uniform they are more likely to be spoken to by a teacher and asked to change what is wrong or receive a punishment that is not exclusion.</p>
<p>Everyone in year 6 is excited and looking forward to going to secondary school.</p>	<p>Myth Everyone will be feeling something different about starting secondary school. Sometimes people appear to be feeling a certain way, but they might be hiding how they really feel.</p>



Resource 4

Starting secondary school: where can they get answers?

In each situation, from where or whom would be the most reliable way to get advice or help?

Rosie isn't sure what time the school day starts at her new secondary school.
Jamal doesn't know if his new school allows them to take their mobile phones in with them.
Lily is wondering how much lunch costs at her new secondary school.
Connor has heard rumours that people call the teachers by their first name at secondary school.
Ravi thinks he will get lost when he is moving round to different lessons.
Savneet is worried that she won't be able to keep up with all the homework they'll be given a secondary school.
Hannah wants to know which clubs she can join when she starts her new secondary school.
Ali doesn't know which stop he has to catch the school bus from in September.

Resource 5

Starting secondary school: Dear Sam

Sam writes advice on a website about starting secondary school. If you were Sam, what advice would you give to these Year 6 children who have emailed you?

Dear Sam

People keep telling me different things about secondary school, and I don't know who's right. My friend's big brother says you get punished if you don't do your homework, but my teacher says that that doesn't always happen. Our neighbour who goes to the school says we have to get there by 8.30 but my mum says it's 8.45. Also, I'm not sure which gate I'm supposed to use to get into school because there's two of them! How do I find out the right answers?

From **Hassan**

Dear Sam

I can't wait to start secondary school! I need to ask you though: is it true that you have to wear a blazer every day and you aren't allowed to wear shorts even if it's really hot? I'm not sure where I can get information about things like that.

From **Jasmine**

Hi Sam

I have got lots of worries about Year 7. Everyone else has got a big brother or sister who can tell them what they need to know, but I don't know anyone who is at secondary school yet. What if I get put in a class without anyone I know? And will I get into trouble if I don't understand the work? My teacher says that everything will be much harder next year.

From **Ella**

Dear Sam

I am kind of looking forward to starting secondary school but I also feel nervous about it. Is that normal? Everyone else seems to be really excited and I haven't really got anyone who I can talk to about how I feel because I'm afraid they won't understand. Can you help me please?

From **Sherelle**

Hi Sam

I only moved to my area very recently so I don't know anything about my new secondary school. I don't have any good friends at my new primary school yet so I feel shy about asking people about it. How can I find out more about the school that I am going to in Year 7?

From **Finn**

Dear Sam

Can you answer these questions for me, please? When I go to secondary school, how will I know where my classrooms are? I know that you have to move around for each lesson, but what if I don't know the way? The school is really big and I don't know what will happen if I can't get to one of the classrooms because I'm lost. Will I be punished for being late to the lesson?

From **Asha**

Hello Sam

I am mostly looking forward to starting Year 7, but there's some things that I feel weird about. I really like my Year 6 teacher and I know I'm going to miss primary school a lot. Is it ok to go back and visit your old teachers, or is that silly? Also, my best friend is going to a different school and I'm worried that we'll have so much homework and no time to see one another. At the moment I see her every day and I don't want that to stop!

From **Ryan**



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