

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING

GUIDANCE ON DEALING  
WITH SENSITIVE ISSUES

TEACHER'S NOTES



**F R E E D O M**  
**A C T S** 

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Human trafficking can take many forms and may involve the sexual exploitation of its victims. Some of these victims are children<sup>1</sup>. This resource helps teachers and pupils to explore some of the difficult and sensitive issues that surround human trafficking and exploitation.

Some of the activities, scenarios and case studies in this resource may offer cross-curricular links to Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) as well as Health Education, Religious Education and Pastoral Care and can reinforce learning that pupils have experienced in these contexts in a number of ways:

- some exercises seek to help prepare pupils for adult life;
- they encourage pupils to make positive, informed and responsible choices about themselves and others;
- the resource promotes personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect;
- it challenges values and beliefs as well as promoting the dignity, uniqueness and well being of others;
- some of the activities can help empower pupils to make decisions, solve problems, and implement actions in personal, social and health contexts;
- the resource also allows pupils to develop coping strategies to protect themselves and others from abuse and exploitation and deal with threats to personal safety; and
- it seeks to enable pupils to challenge inappropriate and unwanted behaviour or attention from others.

### TEACHING SENSITIVE ISSUES

This teaching resource covers a number of challenging and sensitive issues such as grooming and sexual exploitation and we recognise that teachers may wish to access additional support and guidance in exploring some of these issues.

*This guidance draws largely on the Department of Education's (DENI) Guidance for Post-Primary Schools on Relationships and Sexuality Education.*

### TARGET AGE

The resource has been developed for use with Year 10 and Key Stage 4 pupils. However, we acknowledge that individuals do not all mature at the same rate and as such teachers will wish to judge the appropriateness of the resource and issues for the maturity of the pupils involved and may need to tailor elements of the resource to the individual needs. Teachers may also wish to adapt the content or delivery of the resource, as they feel is appropriate, where young people have special educational needs.

<sup>1</sup> The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 defines children as under 18 years of age.

## **TEACHING STYLE**

In teaching about human trafficking and some of the related issues covered by this resource, the teaching style and methods used will be crucial and it is important that the messages which are delivered to pupils are consistent and compatible with the ethos and values framework endorsed by the school. The issues covered should be presented in a way which is free from sensationalism and bias and which is sensitively pitched to the needs and situations of pupils.

Teachers will want to create a classroom environment which is supportive, where self-esteem and mutual respect is fostered and where pupils feel valued and affirmed. The classroom atmosphere should allow all pupils to feel comfortable to express opinions and feelings in a secure and safe manner. Pupils should be aware of their responsibilities towards each other in terms of showing respect and an agreed set of ground rules can help to create a safe supportive and respectful environment. The realistic scenarios, case studies, role plays and videos included in the resource can be used to help empower pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure.

The resource has been developed to involve pupils actively in their own learning and a number of familiar active learning strategies have been included.

## **CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATION**

Tips on how to challenge discrimination in a constructive manner have been included elsewhere in this resource pack. Whatever their own views, teachers should counteract prejudice and support the development of self-esteem and a sense of responsibility in every pupil.

## **GENDER APPROPRIATE**

This resource may also prompt discussion around gender roles and responsibilities and the issues covered by it are relevant both to young men and young women.

Some of the issues covered – including in particular grooming and sexual exploitation – may appear to have a more direct relevance to young women (especially given the higher levels of women and girls who are trafficked for sexual exploitation). However many of the topics and issues raised can be helpful in encouraging boys to talk about their interests, concerns and feelings and to explore attitudes, emotions, relationships, peer pressures and stereotyping from a male perspective.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY IN THE CLASSROOM**

A child's right to privacy must be respected at all times. One useful rule to agree in advance of any discussion is that "no-one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions". However, teachers should not promise confidentiality.

Teachers can provide general educational advice to all pupils as part of the curriculum. This can be given to pupils individually or within group situations. It is important that the type of advice and the manner in which it is given is supportive of the role of the parents.

There will be occasions when teachers will have to exercise their discretion and judgment about how to deal with particular issues raised by an individual or group. The teacher may judge that it is not appropriate to deal with these issues in a whole class setting; or the teacher may wish to discuss with the parents to see how they would like the matter to be handled; other colleagues may also provide useful guidance.

Where circumstances lead a teacher to believe that a pupil has embarked on, or is contemplating conduct which is likely to place him or her in moral or physical danger, or in breach of the law, the teacher has a duty to inform the pupil of the risks involved.

### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

This resource deals with issues of sexual exploitation and grooming. DENI guidance on RSE highlights that for teachers there are two dimensions relating to sexual abuse and this resource has a direct bearing on each of these:

- teaching for protection, through the promotion of self-esteem, skills of assertiveness, lack of guilt or embarrassment about sexual matters and skills of self-expression; and
- recognizing signs of abuse, physical, emotional and social.

DENI guidance makes clear that the class teacher has a significant part in the early detection of abuse and summarises correct procedures as:

- immediately informing the designated teacher;
- the designated teacher to inform/consult with social services and/or the police;
- no teacher should take on the role of investigator; this is the responsibility of social services and the police;
- teachers should give the pupil time to talk without probing; record exactly what the pupil says and not promise to keep secrets.

DENI offers further detailed guidance on issues such as child protect and confidentiality in the classroom, as well as further information on useful resources and contacts for Health/RSE advisers in each of the Education and Library Boards.