



CUSP Personal, Social, Health & Economic Handbook



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This handbook should be reviewed in conjunction with the CUSP Essential CPD Implementation Suite and the subject specific materials that are available on the CUSP website.

1. Curriculum architecture

CUSP PSHE has been deliberately built around the principles of evidence-led practice. This is to ensure that pupils are equipped to successfully navigate situations and events throughout their lives. Unapologetically ambitious, our PSHE curriculum focuses on enabling children to be ready for life, through responding to the national landscape, including:

- a greater emphasis on online safety and wellbeing
- personal safety content
- increasing emphasis on skills, not knowledge
- accurate terminology for body parts
- change and loss including bereavement

Our intention is to enable exceptional teacher instruction that inspires pupils to acquire, discuss and use knowledge and skills that are relevant to the context in which they live.

CUSP PSHE is built around six core ideas that all year groups will study at the same time. The contents of each module will be different, depending on the age and stage of pupils but all modules will explore the same central idea.

This allows the school community to connect learning across year groups and supports schools in shaping assembly sequences, whole school events and ongoing monitoring.

Term Year group	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Reception	Ready to Learn	Friends and family	My life	Respectful relationships	Being safe	Keeping healthy
1	- Conduct in PSHE lessons - Introducing the Ready to Learn strategy - Introducing the Oracy strategy - The science of learning - Habits for learning	- Families of all shapes and sizes - The rights of a child - Experiences with family and friends - Roles and responsibilities - Belonging and community	- Identity, skills and talent - Independence and resilience - Money management - Democracy and the rule of law - Careers and aspirations - Peer pressure	- Manners, courtesy and friendship - Empathy and trust - Bullying - Healthy, safe relationships - Managing conflict - Establishing boundaries - Needs and wishes	- Safety in the digital world - Safety in the physical world - Managing risk - Sources of support - Being a critical consumer of information - Secrets	- Healthy eating - Personal hygiene - Mental and emotional wellbeing - Substances - First Aid - Body changes - Transition and preparing for change
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Key concepts have been positioned across the curriculum in multiple places to ensure that pupils have time to embed their understanding and develop their thinking as they mature. Some fundamental concepts will be revisited in all year groups due to their significance to young people living in the modern world.

While **CUSP PSHE** reflects all the statutory content, including that which is set out in the DfE Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education guidance, some of these concepts also appear in other areas of the curriculum, for example, Science. Schools should consider how connections can be made between what pupils study in **CUSP PSHE** and concepts that they will meet elsewhere in the curriculum. Many of these links are made explicit in this handbook.

The content for each year group is coherently mapped to ensure progression of knowledge and skills. Key concepts are outlined and built on through a cumulative lesson sequence shaped around learning questions.

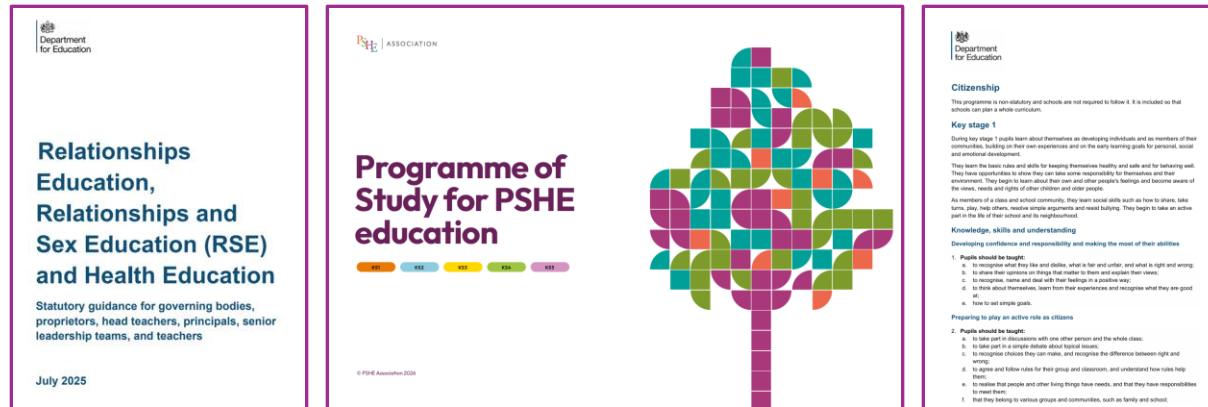
Year 4	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Central theme	Ready to Learn	Friends and family	My life	Respectful relationships	Being safe	Keeping healthy
Key concepts		Change in families Sharing our lives Racism Community and responsibility Role models	Body image Personal responsibility - environmental Gender Developing skills and talents Budgeting	Boundaries Why people bully (stereotypes) Online relationships Loneliness Manners and courtesy Empathy	Fire safety Online safety - gaming, gambling and scams Antisocial behaviour inc. impact and pressure groups Managing risk (online) - critically evaluate relationships and sources	First Aid Recognising how we change Transition and preparing for change Substances - smoking and vaping Feelings of anxiety
Lesson 1	What is special about PSHE?	How families are different?	What is a healthy body image?	How are stereotypes can affect behaviour and attitudes?	What is fire safety? How do we keep ourselves safe?	What are some basic first aid techniques?
Lesson 2	How can we prepare to learn?	How families can change? (bereavement, loss, fostering, adoption, divorce)	What are our shared responsibilities for our environment?	Why are manners and courtesy important?	How do I recognise if a relationship is harmful?	How can bacteria and viruses affect health?
Lesson 3	How does oracy support our learning?	What are our shared responsibilities for our community?	How to manage feelings for things outside our control?	How can we communicate our boundaries?	What is anti-social behaviour and how should I respond?	What is a menstrual cycle?
Lesson 4	How do we learn? (processing)	Who are role models?	What is gender?	How to cope with feelings that negatively impact our wellbeing?	How does the internet target specific individuals or groups?	How can we manage our feelings when approaching change?
Lesson 5	How can I regulate my learning?	What is racism?	How to recognise and build on my personal strengths?	How does empathy support respectful relationships?	How to make reliable choices about search results and content?	How to manage feelings that can affect daily wellbeing?
Lesson 6		How do we recognise and respond to behaviours that discriminate against others?	What is a budget? Why is it important?	What are the similarities and difference between on online and an in-person relationship?	How do I protect myself from online gaming, gambling and scams?	What are the facts, myths and risks of smoking and vaping?

A **CUSP PHSE** tracker is provided to support with the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum provision.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2
	Ready to Learn	Friends and family	My life	Respectful relationships
Year 3 PSHE Units				
Objective				
Pupils should be taught to:				
Families and people who care for me				
That families are important for children growing up safe and happy because they can provide love, security and stability.				
The characteristics of safe and happy family life, such as commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.		X		
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.				
That stable, caring relationships are at the heart of safe and happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up.				
That marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.		X		
How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.				
Caring friendships				
How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.		X		X
That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. Pupils should learn skills for developing caring, kind friendships.		X		X
That not every child will have the friends they would like at all times, that most people feel lonely sometimes, and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it.				
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.				X
That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened.		X		X
How to manage conflict, and that resorting to violence is never right.				X
How to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to get support when needed.				

2. Contextualising CUSP PSHE

CUSP PSHE reflects the national landscape and is built from RSHE, PSHE and Citizenship guidance.



This also means that the school has the local community and context to bring into the PSHE curriculum. It's vital to plan and amplify the needs of the local area through:

Community needs
and contextual
safeguarding needs

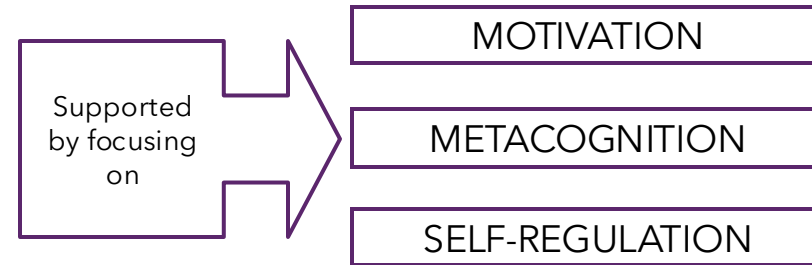
**Geography-specific
considerations**, e.g.
water, railways etc

**Known sensitivities
or challenges**

3. CUSP Ready to Learn Strategy

CUSP Ready to Learn is an integral component of **CUSP PSHE** because:

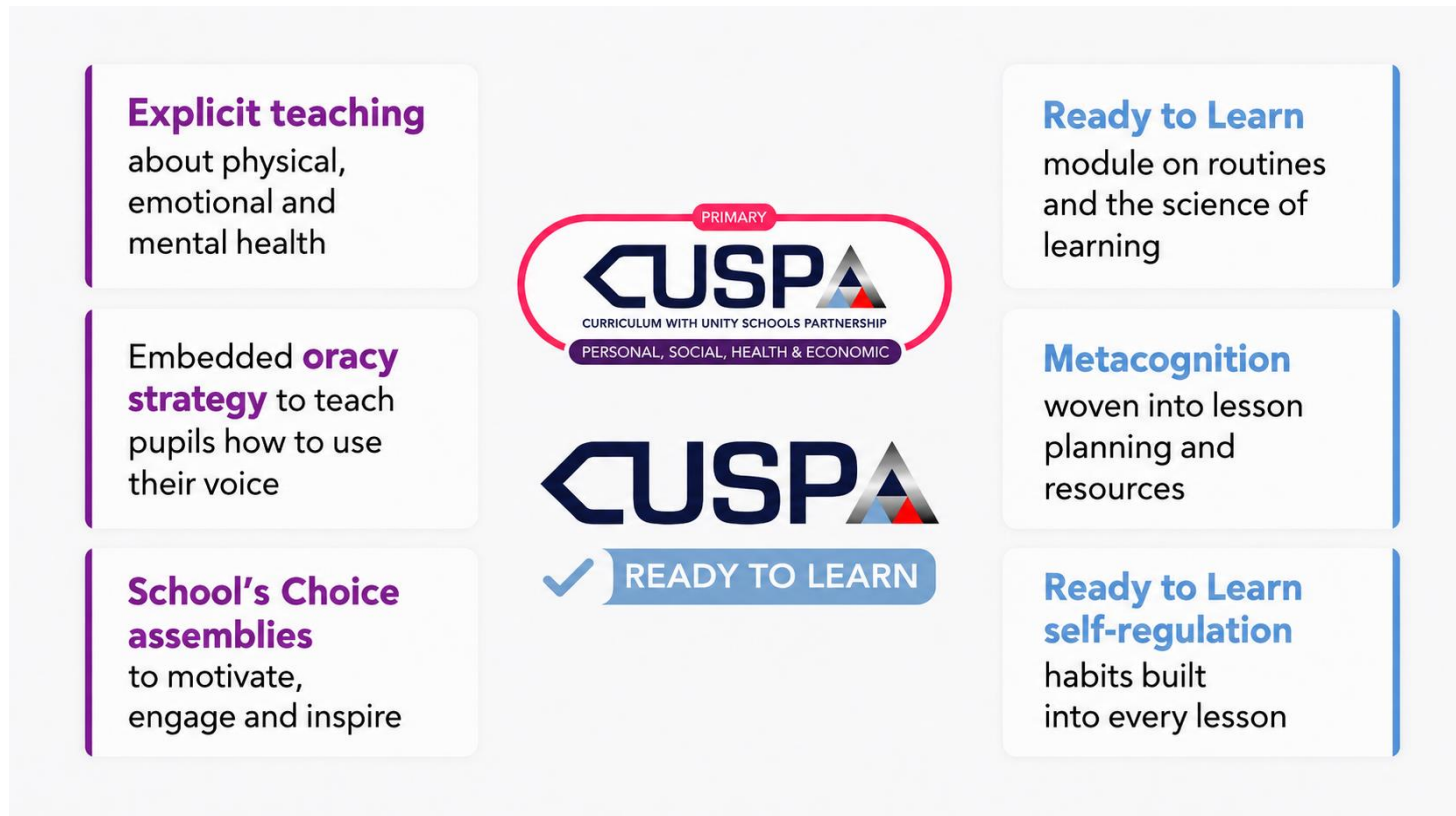
- Some pupils do not want to come to school. Their engagement with education is reluctant at best.
- Some pupils want to come to school but when they get there, they don't know how to learn effectively.
- Some pupils want to come to school and understand how to learn but struggle to regulate themselves when there are competing demands for their attention.



Within the **CUSP Ready to Learn** approach, schools benefit from:

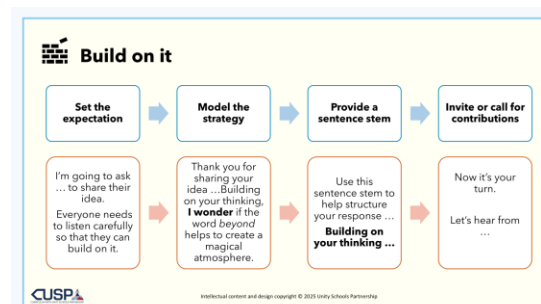
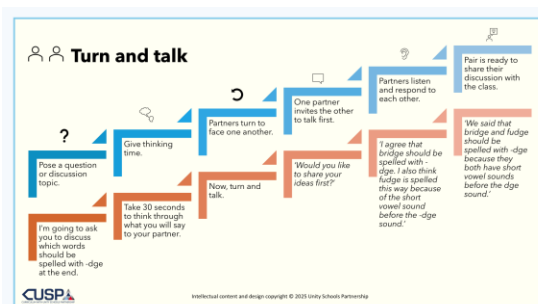
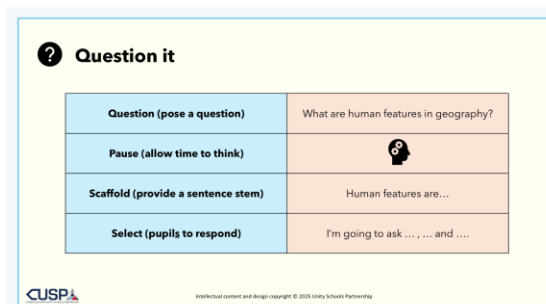
1. **Resources and Pedagogy:** **CUSP Ready to Learn** strategies are explicitly taught. Pupils will not learn these important lessons by accident. **CUSP PSHE** has them embedded into the curriculum.
2. **Knowledge and skills:** Staff in education access current research and practical solutions as an investment in the physical, sensory and emotional development of our learners. This means helping children to understand why we do what we do in schools and bringing families alongside this important work.
3. **Professional development:** Access high-quality input to develop understanding of the science and evidence behind the Ready to Learn strategy. **CUSP PSHE** draws on the wisdom of experts and specialists to guide our thinking and distils this into quality PD programmes that are backed by excellent resources.
4. **Coherence and continuity:** To embed this strategy in school and across the CUSP partnership, we have created a shared language and a common mental model for how this will be enacted.

The alignment of **CUSP PSHE** and **CUSP Ready to Learn** ensures all children are immersed in high-quality resources built around the science of learning and regulation. This will increase the opportunities to focus attention and participate, giving all children the chance to get a little better with the knowledge and routines so it becomes a learnt habit.



Oracy is foundation of all that we do to help pupils process thinking, express ideas and engage with the world.

In order for children to think hard, CUSP PSHE has inbuilt and deliberate opportunities for them to talk.



Challenge

Someone took the seat you were going to sit in.

How could you approach this scenario **respectfully**?

Build on it

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4. Pedagogy

The 6 phases of a CUSP lesson have been distilled directly from Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction. First born in the context of the CUSP Reading curriculum, we have adopted these successfully across the whole CUSP offer, including **CUSP PSHE**. Further guidance about the origins of this structure can be found within the Essential Implementation CPD suite.

This is not a linear structure and teachers may need to move backwards and forwards between the lesson phases to break concepts into manageable chunks for pupils or to provide additional modelling or guided practice. Checking for understanding should be built into each phase of instruction so that misconceptions can be addressed and resolved quickly.

Connect 	Explain 	Example 	Attempt 	Apply 	Challenge 
Activate prior learning	Instruct vocabulary Explain core concepts	High-quality modelling Explicit direct instruction (My turn)	Guided practice Gradually reduce scaffold (Our turn)	Independent practice Application of new concept (Your turn)	Deepen understanding Sophisticate thinking

1. Connect: teachers connect what pupils already know with what they are about to learn, activating prior knowledge.

2. Explain: teachers explicitly instruct relevant vocabulary and explain the key concept concisely and precisely.

3. Example: teachers use the model text to provide multiple examples of the key concept. They model applying the concept.

4. Attempt: through guided practice, pupils all achieve success in applying the target concept. Scaffolding is gradually reduced.

5. Apply: pupils achieve fluency with the target concept through deliberate practice. Some pupils may need additional instruction at this point.

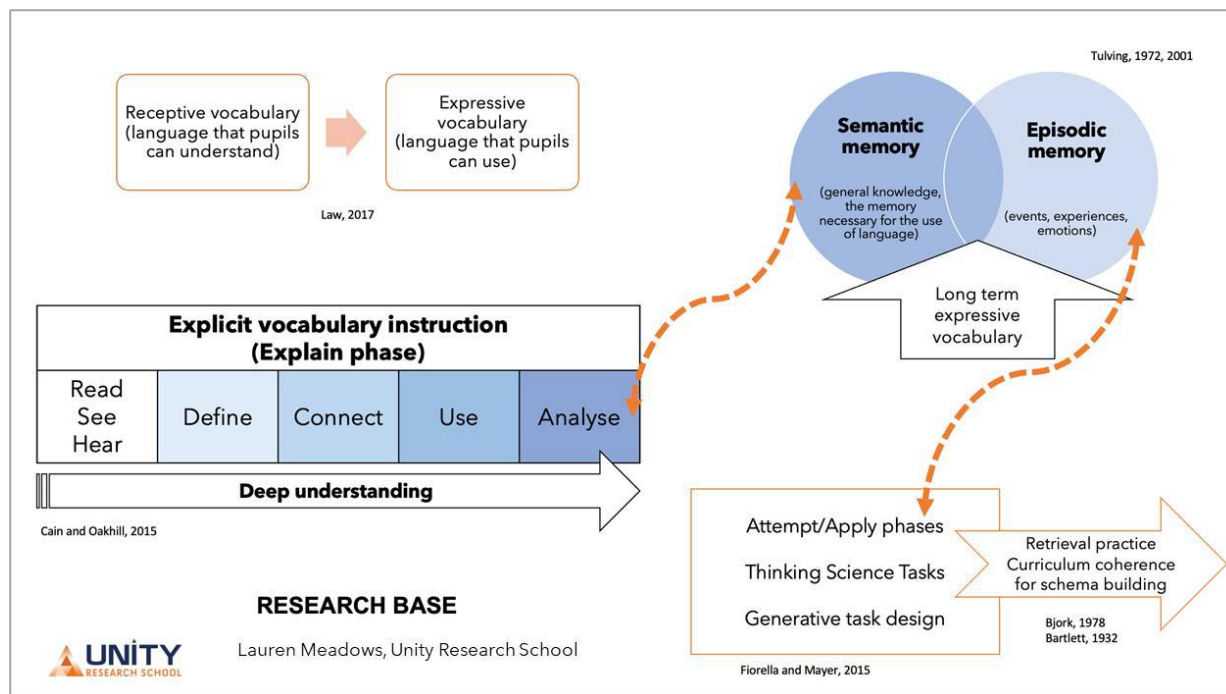
6. Challenge: all pupils are challenged to sophisticate their thinking and to think hard about the concept they have been taught. This may include exploring exceptions, identifying common errors or applying a concept in multiple contexts.

This is the mental model that underpins the approach to explicit vocabulary instruction that we deploy across the CUSP curriculum and beyond. The aim of this model is to move language from superficial receptive stores to embedded expressive stores.

The first part of this model is concerned with the explicit instruction of new language. This would happen in the Explain phase of a lesson.

Pupils should read, see, hear and say the target language. Teachers will give a precise, concise definition and then move beyond this, connecting new stores of vocabulary to existing knowledge.

Teachers will use the target language in multiple contexts to build strong schemas around new words. Finally, new language is analysed, with teachers identifying parts of words that might be useful in making sense of other words. This process builds a deep semantic understanding of target vocabulary.



The second part of this model is designed to activate or build pupils' episodic memory associated with the target language. Teachers will provide a routine or task that requires pupils to do something with - to think hard about - the language that has been instructed. This promotes deep understanding and helps to encode this into pupils' long-term memory.

The target language will then be revisited in the Attempt and Apply phases of the lesson to aid this process further. Retrieval practice of new vocabulary should be systematically planned so that teachers are clear where pupils will meet this language again. This could be within or across subject disciplines.

More detail about this approach to explicit vocabulary instruction can be found in the CUSP Essential CPD videos.

Threshold and clarification vocabulary:

It is simply not possible to explicitly instruct every word in the English language. So, as teachers, it is our responsibility to decide which words are the most important. Isabel Beck's tiered model of categorising vocabulary is a useful starting point for helping us to balance Tier 2 multiple meaning words with Tier 3 domain specific language.

Within the CUSP PSHE modules of study, we have made suggestions about the most important vocabulary to address in the context of each study. Teachers should adapt this as is appropriate to their cohorts.

Teachers should be decisive about the 1 or 2 most important words to instruct in depth for each lesson. There may also be other words that teachers clarify or give a brief explanation of to help students make sense of the curriculum content. This will help the flow and pace of your lesson and ensure that pupils can use new language in the context of their PSHE lessons.

Threshold vocabulary: the most important 1 or 2 words that you want pupils to understand.

Instruct this deeply.

Threshold (noun):

the level or point at which you start to experience something, or at which something starts to happen or change: *entrance, level, starting point.*



Clarification vocabulary: other words that pupils might need to know to access the lesson.

Clarify this briefly.

Clarification (noun):

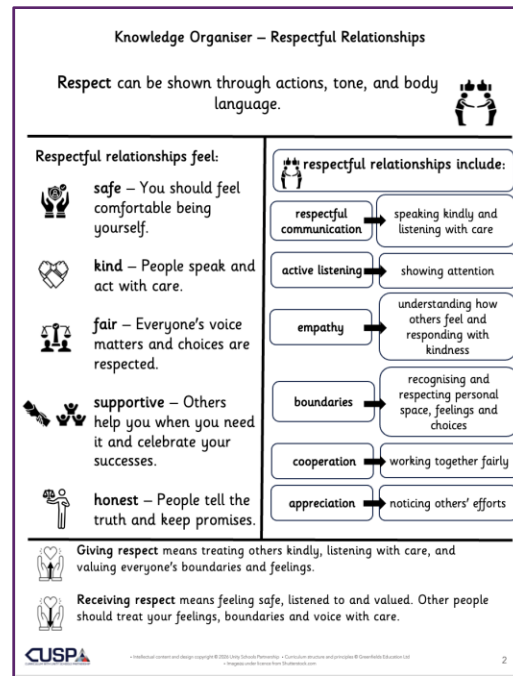
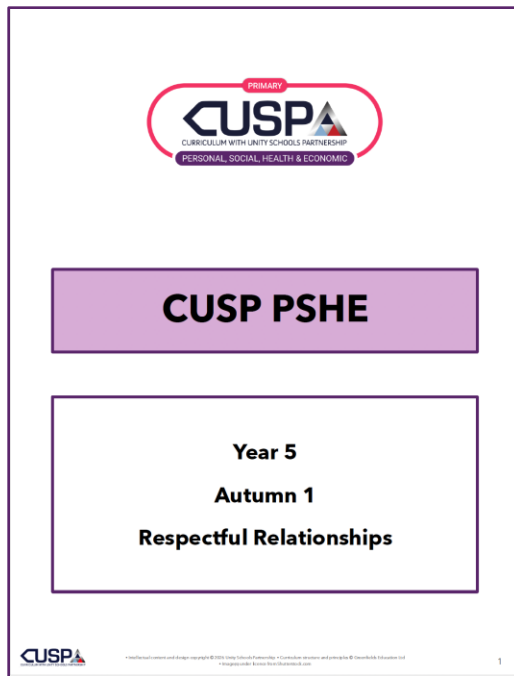
the action of making a statement or situation less confused and more comprehensible: *explanation, simplification, elucidation.*



This is an example of a teaching module from a Year 5 unit, Respectful Relationships.

Each module is made up of three key resources:

1. Knowledge Organiser that is dual coded and a clear point of reference



Use as a visual, physical, locational resource. It positions knowledge and skills within the context of the whole unit.

Use for retrieval practice and recall of previous knowledge.

Use as a metacognitive cue - a clear point of reference for pupils to enact the knowledge and skills.

2. Lesson guide, including a Ready to Learn strategy and the CUSP 6 Phases of Learning. Each lesson is planned to engage whole classes for 25 minutes.

Guided breathwork begins each session to up or down regulate children to help their attention.

Retrieval and revisiting builds on previous experiences.

Threshold words are explicitly taught and revisited in the lesson.

Clear and accessible explanations enable ALL pupils to participate.

Worked examples provide scaffolds for pupils.

Pupils engage with oracy strategies, rehearsal and deliberate practice.

Dialogic conversations draw on context, experiences and knowledge.

Strengthening deliberate practice and embedding routines helps skills become a choice and visible.



Block: pilot	Week 3	Focus: How does empathy support respectful relationships?
 BREATH WORK	Begin the lesson with the breath task following the link on the slide.	
 CONNECT	Pupils can privately consider a time where they felt they were understood by another person without having to explain everything about a situation. Pupils do not need to share their example with the rest of the class.	
 VOCABULARY	Introduce the word <i>empathy</i> , following the vocabulary script. Pupils explore how it connects to the word respect. Explain to pupils that this will be the focus of today's lesson.	
 EXPLAIN	Explain that empathy is a way of imagining how someone else might feel in a situation and responding kindly. Explain that in some scenarios it is necessary to provide an empathetic response (for instance when someone's feelings are hurt). Discuss the four points an empathetic response should include.	
 EXAMPLE	Teacher to read the scenario aloud. Model next steps and provide the following modelled response: <i>I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I can see you worked really hard on that. I'm sorry I laughed. Do you want to show me again and I'll watch properly this time?</i>	
 ATTEMPT	<i>Turn and talk:</i> pupils can create empathetic sentence starters and share with the rest of the class.	
 APPLY	Pupils consider how each person in the scenarios might be feeling. <i>Build on it:</i> pupils create an empathetic response using the steps from the <i>Explain</i> slide.	
 CHALLENGE	Challenge pupils to show empathy through their tone, phrasing and understanding of another person. Explain that practising this is a way of strengthening their ability to listen for clues, rather than relying on labelling another person's emotions. An example response might be: <i>I can tell this really mattered to you. You tried so hard, and it didn't go the way you hoped. I'm here if you want to talk about it.</i>	

3. Comprehensive slide decks

- These are fully editable to help staff prepare and contextualise to the needs of their class and to rehearse the content before delivery.
- They are built around Ready to Learn techniques and the 6 phases of a CUSP lesson to bring familiarity and embed routines.
- Vocabulary is essential - CUSP Oracy techniques are deliberately written into the Base slide decks. Example vocabulary scripts are provided but, as we recommend in Chapter 1 of The Code, teachers will decide on the threshold vocabulary that their class need.

Lesson 4

Learning focus

What makes a boundary respectful?

Vocabulary

It is up to the teacher to set the **boundary** between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Boundary: That's an interesting word. I want to understand what it means.

boundary – boundary

a limit that protects a person's privacy and choices

I set a boundary by telling my friend I needed some quiet time after school.

A boundary can help people to feel safe and respected. Different people have different boundaries around personal space, belongings, and decisions about their bodies. A boundary can also be a real or imagined line that separates other things or places.

The word boundary can relate to a real or imagined line that marks the limits of edges of something (such as boundaries between countries on a map). How does this knowledge help us to better understand the word boundary in a PSHE context?

Explain

Type of boundary	Example of personal boundary
Physical boundary	<i>I don't like being hugged. A high-five is okay.</i>
Emotional boundary	<i>I don't want to talk about that right now.</i>
Social boundary	<i>I don't want to play that game today.</i>
Learning boundary	<i>I need more time before I answer.</i>
Digital boundary	<i>I don't want my photo shared.</i>

Apply

Practise setting a boundary for the below scenarios.

Someone keeps teasing you about something you do not like.

Someone keeps sitting too close to you.

Is an optional alternative required for each scenario? Explain your reasoning.

Breath work

Vocabulary

Think of four other words connected to the word **boundary**.

Example

A friend keeps grabbing your pencil to use it without asking.

Response A

Ugh! Fine, whatever.

Response B

I don't want you to take my pencil without asking. Please ask me first.

Challenge

Sam is working on a group project. One of his friends, Ruby, keeps taking over the discussion and deciding what the group should do without asking anyone else. Sam has ideas he wants to share, but Ruby keeps talking over him every time he tries to speak.

Sam feels frustrated and left out, but he stays quiet because he does not want to upset his friend.

Where should Sam set a boundary?

What could Sam say to make his boundary clear and respectful?

Connect

Think of a time you did not want to do something but found it hard to say no.

What are some of the emotions you felt?

Explain

Boundaries are rules we set to keep ourselves comfortable and safe.

When setting boundaries, we can:

1. use an *I* statement
2. provide a clear request
3. use a calm tone
4. provide an optional alternative (if appropriate).

Attempt

Let's amend the statements to show clear, respectful boundaries:

Stop being annoying!

I don't like that. Please stop.

Leave me alone!

You're so bossy.

Give it back!

Reflection

What makes a boundary respectful?

5. Adaptive practice

CUSP PSHE is inclusive by design. The curriculum architecture is coherent and cumulative. Content is built upon and prior experiences inform entry points. The resources are built within the proven CUSP mental models, ensuring that routines are consistent with the six phases of learning and resources are dual coded, flexible and adaptable. Teacher instruction through six phases enables children to think hard whilst extraneous loads are reduced.

CUSP PSHE is unapologetically ambitious. For many pupils with SEND, successful participation in PSHE will require the teachers to draw upon the evidence-led CUSP professional development called **The Code by CUSP**.

Each chapter equips teachers with the tools they need to ensure explicit teaching, modelling, checking for understanding and rehearsal of concepts that other pupils may acquire less formally.

The Code comprises of these chapters:

1. Explicit Vocabulary instruction
2. Explanation and exposition
3. Checking for understanding
4. Quality modelling
5. Thinking hard – generative task design
6. Precision questioning
7. Prosodic reading
8. Retrieval practice

Teachers should use their knowledge of individual pupils and work with the SENDCo to identify any barriers to learning. Adaptations should support access without reducing the ambition of the curriculum content.

Appropriate adaptations could include:

- pre-teaching and revisiting essential vocabulary
- using worked examples, visuals, symbols and carefully chosen stories
- breaking explanations and scenarios into smaller steps
- reducing unnecessary language without removing the key concept
- modelling appropriate language and responses
- providing sentence stems and structured oracy frames
- using role play, rehearsal and repeated practice
- allowing additional processing and response time
- offering alternatives to speaking in front of the whole class
- checking understanding through carefully sequenced questions
- revisiting important concepts across lessons and modules
- linking new learning to familiar routines and previously taught knowledge

Some pupils with SEND could be particularly vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, coercion, bullying and unsafe online interaction. Through the CUSP architecture and 6 phases of learning, teachers can provide repeated, explicit and developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn about personal safety, consent, privacy, appropriate touch, boundaries, online communication and help-seeking.

Preparing to teach using the CUSP resources, such as deploying strategies recommended in the Reading and Writing Scaffolding Toolkits, as well as CUSP Oracy strategies, will further support teachers to engage and include children who are the most vulnerable.

6. Assessment

Assessment in **CUSP PSHE** is based on pupils' responses, reasoning and application of knowledge throughout each lesson and within the wider school community.

It draws on dialogic discussion, questioning, pupil reflection and carefully framed scenarios that connect learning to the wider contexts in which pupils live.

Assessment in **CUSP PSHE** takes place within and beyond the lessons. In lessons, teachers listen carefully to the language pupils use, the connections they make and the reasoning that underpins their responses. This is particularly evident during discussion and application. How pupils conduct themselves in structured and less structured activities, such as playtime, will also show how well pupils are learning to use their knowledge and skills.

This helps identify:

- secure knowledge and understanding
- misconceptions or unsafe assumptions
- gaps in vocabulary
- difficulty applying knowledge to a situation
- areas that require further teaching, rehearsal or revisiting

The following can be used to assess pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills:

The learning focus and intended knowledge in each module makes clear what pupils are expected to know, understand and be able to apply.

The Knowledge Organiser provides a clear point of reference for prior and current learning as well as retrieval practice and the assessment of key concepts and vocabulary.

Connect and retrieval activities enable teachers to identify what pupils remember, what they understand and where misconceptions arise.

Explicit vocabulary instruction provides opportunities to assess whether pupils understand, use and apply accurate threshold language relating to relationships, health, safety and wellbeing.

Dialogic discussion and CUSP oracy routines enable teachers to evaluate how well pupils:

- listen and respond respectfully
- explain their thinking
- consider different viewpoints
- use appropriate RSHE vocabulary
- justify a decision or suggested course of action
- build on or challenge an idea sensitively

Attempt and Apply phases allow teachers to assess how well pupils use their knowledge in age-appropriate scenarios, including recognising risk, establishing boundaries, managing relationships, seeking support and making safe, respectful choices.

Challenge phase provides information about how well pupils can transfer their knowledge to less familiar situations whilst considering possible consequences and explain how context may influence an appropriate response.

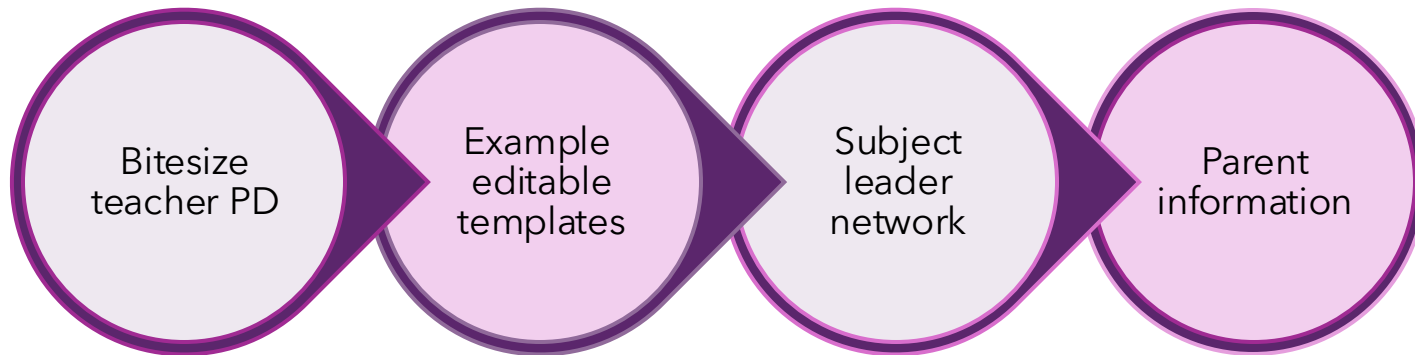
Pupil Book Study, oracy routines, floor books and teacher observations can be used alongside lesson outcomes to support a wider evaluation of pupils' knowledge and understanding.

7. Additional support

CUSP is a partnership.

We will provide the following supporting resources, networks and updates throughout the year.

These will include:



We have provided example editable templates for:

- **Parent Consultation Letter (statutory before 1st Sept 2026)**

Use this template to construct a letter inviting parents to contribute to the consultation.

- **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): A Guide for Parents and Carers**

Use this template to compose a school-focused guide to CUSP PSHE and the changes from Sept '26.

- **Draft school policy**

Use this template to build your school policy and practice.

Important note: The letters, parent guides and policy are **examples** and schools **must** go through their own process to consult on and agree any new policy or communication to families, including governance.