

# Participating in Research

## Teacher Guidance

Key Stages 3 and 4

This guidance document accompanies the Ipsos and NHS England Participating in Research lessons on young people's rights when taking part in research and having their voices heard. These lessons have been developed to accompany the Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England (SDD) survey for 2025, with one lesson for teaching prior to the survey, and one lesson for teaching afterwards that will be available to schools who complete the survey.

These lessons are for key stages 3 to 4. The pre-survey lesson "Participating in Research" focuses on consenting to participate in research and the factors that affect someone's decision to participate. This lesson is available in an adaptable format, for schools who are completing the survey, but also for schools who wish to teach about consenting to research without completing the SDD survey. The post-survey lesson "Influences and Support" explores positive social norms and the declining use of drugs and alcohol among young people, managing influences around vaping including peer influence, and strategies for accessing support about substance use or wellbeing.

Please read this guidance before teaching the lessons.

Further information about the Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England survey for 2025 can be found on the website <https://sddsurvey.co.uk/>

# Introduction

## What is the SDD survey?

The Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England survey is the main source of information for government departments, local authorities and charities on young people's behaviours regarding smoking cigarettes, vaping, drinking alcohol and using drugs. Schools taking part in the survey help to ensure that the best possible data is available to inform policy, plan services and improve young people's lives.

## Why teaching about participating in research is important

For students to take part in the survey, it is essential that they can provide informed consent and are aware that the data they share will be kept anonymous. It is important for them to understand the benefits of participating in the survey, as it contributes to promoting the health and safety of young people. As an accompaniment to the information leaflet for students, which provides guidance to students about the SDD survey, the pre-survey lesson focuses on educating students about their rights in research studies. This lesson aligns with the Department for Education's statutory guidance for [Relationships, Sex, and Health Education](#), covering topics such as young people's expectations of being treated with respect, the collection and use of data about young people, and the concept of giving and withdrawing consent in the context of research. It is essential that schools model consent with young people in all contexts, for example when asking them to participate in research.

## Why teaching the post-survey lesson is important

After schools have participated in the survey, they will be provided with a post-survey lesson as a token of appreciation for their involvement. This lesson has been informed by the findings of the SDD survey for 2023, and uses a positive social norms approach to smoking, drinking and drug use to reduce feelings of social pressure. It also develops this further by exploring strategies to manage influences around vaping, including the role of loneliness and a desire to fit in, and how young people can find support.

The lesson addresses aspects of the Department for Education's statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex, and Health Education, such as the benefits of quitting smoking or vaping and accessing support to do so. It also considers other ways to develop a sense of belonging and connection to others, where young people may feel pressure to vape in order to 'fit in'. This addresses elements of respectful relationships, including friendships.

## Preparing to teach

While these lessons are intended to be taught before and after taking part in the SDD survey, they should also be taught in the context of an overall programme for PSHE education in your school. For example, these lessons may fit well with other lessons exploring consent in wider contexts, drug and alcohol education, and/or help-seeking. Please see the appendix for curriculum links to the PSHE Association [Programme of Study](#) and Department for Education's [Relationships, Sex and Health Education](#) statutory guidance.

The lesson plans are based on one-hour lessons. The timings given are the minimum time required to deliver the activities. Whilst it is always important for PSHE education lessons to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your students. More may be gained from spending longer on an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel students are progressing towards the lesson objectives. When this is the case, it may be more appropriate for your group to extend the lesson plan across two lessons.

## Choosing what data to discuss in the PSHE classroom

If the sample size of students in a school who participate in the SDD survey is large enough, the school will receive a data sheet about their students' responses to the survey, indicating whether levels of substance use are higher or lower than the national average. This can be valuable information for tailoring the curriculum to the needs of students. For example, by deciding whether to introduce teaching about a particular substance in younger or older years.<sup>1</sup>

However, care should be taken when judging how, when and with whom to share this data. While sharing data that promotes positive social norms can be helpful in the PSHE classroom, this would usually be distanced by being from a national data set, rather than about students in the room. Sharing data about themselves with young people who have taken part may lead to feelings of shock or shame for some students, or - depending on the results - may normalise harmful behaviours. Therefore, it is likely the data will be best used to tailor the curriculum and inform policy and safeguarding approaches, rather than sharing this directly with the students who have taken part in the survey.

1. Further information on deciding when to teach substance-specific information can be found in the [PSHE Association Drug & Alcohol education pack](#)

## Creating a safe learning environment

A safe learning environment helps students feel comfortable with sharing their ideas and opinions without attracting negative feedback and will help teachers to manage discussions on sensitive issues confidently. It is good practice for teachers to:

- work with students to establish ground rules about how they will behave in discussion, such as;
  - Everyone has the right to be heard and respected.
  - We will try not to use language that may offend or upset other people.
  - We won't judge or make assumptions about anyone, their feelings, or experiences.
  - We will comment on what was said, not the person who said it.
  - We won't share our own personal experiences, or those of anyone we know.
  - We won't put anyone on the spot, and we have a right to pass.
- offer opportunities for students to discuss issues in small groups as well as sharing views with the class.
- make a box/envelope available for students to put questions or concerns in (anonymously or with their name), to avoid having to voice them in front of the class.
- provide factually accurate, up-to-date information.
- provide balanced arguments to help students clarify their own opinions.
- be sensitive to the needs and experiences of individuals.
- use distancing strategies to discourage personal disclosures in the classroom, allow students to explore topics objectively, and to keep the learning environment safe.
- always work within the school's policies on safeguarding and confidentiality, and the drug and alcohol policy.
- link PSHE education into the whole school approach to supporting student wellbeing
- make students aware of sources of support, both in and outside the school.

Further guidance on creating a safe learning environment is available from the [PSHE Association](#).

## Safeguarding and students with additional vulnerabilities

As the survey asks about students' use and awareness of smoking, vaping, alcohol and other drugs, students may need to speak to a teacher about concerns. The post-survey lesson explores help-seeking in school and from external support services to enable students to seek help and communicate their needs.

Safeguards to put in place include:

- Alerting relevant pastoral and safeguarding staff about the topic you will be covering, and about the content of the survey, and encouraging them to discuss the lesson content with any students who are accessing support for related issues.
- Follow guidance from Ipsos regarding informing parents about the survey, and it can be helpful to inform parents about the content of the lesson too, in case students come home with questions or wish to discuss these issues further.
- Giving the student(s) a chance to withdraw from the lesson if appropriate (without being asked to justify their absence to their peers). Consider how to follow up the missed lesson with the student(s), as this learning may be especially relevant to them, especially in relation to available support.
- Signposting sources of support before, during and after the lessons and survey.

In line with your school's child protection and safeguarding policies, report any concerns raised to your Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

## Signposting support

### Support for teachers

If you have any questions about taking part in the survey please visit the [Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England survey website](#) or for further information email [SDDsurvey@ipsosresearch.com](mailto:SDDsurvey@ipsosresearch.com).

Guidance and Quality Assured resources to support planning and teaching about related topics, including drug and alcohol education and consent in relationships can be found on the [PSHE Association website](#).

### Support for students

Ensure students can access the information leaflet for students prior to the survey.

Ensure students know where they can seek help and further advice, now and in the future, if they have questions or concerns related to smoking, vaping, drinking or drug use. Remind them that they can ask for help and advice from trusted adults at home, in school or from appropriate organisations. Share the following website details:

- [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- [www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/drugs-alcohol-smoking/drugs](http://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/drugs-alcohol-smoking/drugs)
- [www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/drugs-alcohol-smoking/vaping](http://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/drugs-alcohol-smoking/vaping)
- [www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support)
- [www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree)
- [www.nacoa.org.uk](http://www.nacoa.org.uk)

# Appendix: Links to the Programme of Study and DfE's statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health education

Learning objectives and outcomes	PSHE Association Programme of Study		DfE RSHE statutory guidance
	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	
Participating in Research			
<p><i>Objective:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To learn about the benefits of young people's involvement in studies that may affect their health and wellbeing, and develop understanding of consent in relation to surveys</li></ul> <p><i>Outcomes:</i></p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>describe the rights of young people involved in research, including that they can choose whether to give their consent to participate</li><li>explain how data is gathered for research studies, how this can be kept private and how it might be used</li><li>evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of young people participating in research</li></ul>	<p><i>Students learn...</i></p> <p><b>R24.</b> that consent is freely given; that being pressurised, manipulated or coerced to agree to something is not giving consent, and how to seek help in such circumstances</p> <p><b>R26.</b> how to seek, give, not give and withdraw consent (in all contexts, including online)</p>	<p><i>Students learn...</i></p> <p><b>L25.</b> how personal data is generated, collected and shared, including by individuals, and the consequences of this</p>	<p><b>Relationships and Sex education</b></p> <p><i>Respectful relationships, including friendships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs</li></ul> <p><i>Online and media</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online</li></ul> <p><i>Being safe</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)</li></ul>
Influences and Support			
<p><i>Objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To learn about social norms and influences around substance use, strategies to manage influence, and how to find support</li></ul> <p><i>Outcomes:</i></p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>identify positive social norms in relation to smoking, drinking and drug use</li><li>describe influences around substance use and vaping, including wanting to 'fit in', and how to manage pressure</li><li>explain where and how young people might access support about substances or wellbeing</li></ul>	<p><i>Students learn...</i></p> <p><b>H25.</b> strategies to manage a range of influences on drug, alcohol and tobacco use, including peers</p> <p><b>H26.</b> information about alcohol, nicotine and other legal and illegal substances, including the short-term and long-term health risks associated with their use</p>	<p><i>Students learn...</i></p> <p><b>H18.</b> the ways in which industries and advertising can influence health and harmful behaviours</p> <p><b>H21.</b> to identify, manage and seek help for unhealthy behaviours, habits and addictions including smoking cessation</p>	<p><b>Health education</b></p> <p><i>Drugs, alcohol and tobacco</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions</li><li>the about the harm from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so</li></ul> <p><i>Mental wellbeing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>that happiness is linked to being connected to others</li><li>the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness</li></ul> <p><b>Relationships and Sex education</b></p> <p><i>Respectful relationships, including friendships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</li></ul>