Social Media & Online Safety

Common social media apps students may mention they use include: TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Houseparty, Twitter, Tumblr and Snapchat. There are lots more though, and you can find a longer list and details about them and their safety considerations on Net Aware.

For more guidance on online safety, see NSPCC and the DfE guidance.

You can direct secondary students to these sites, if they need help or to find out more:
- ThinkUKnow
- Childline
- UK Safer Internet Centre
- Internet Matters

Extension activities

Lesson 1 — Social Media

Objectives and Outcomes
- I can reflect on how I and others represent ourselves on social media and the impact of this.
- I am critically evaluating how I present myself in the real world.
- I am improving my creative reflection skills.

The Skin I’m In (20mins)

About: Students will explore the fluidity of online identities.
Resources: Paper and drawing or painting materials.

Activity
Many computer games use skins to create characters so users can have different features and the opportunity to personalise or build on their online characters.

Ask students to create a skin or an avatar for themselves or for an invented character. This could be done quickly using drawing or could be further developed into a painting or a collage.

Concentrate firstly on the look of the character, what they are wearing, what additional characteristics do they have, special powers etc. Then think about adding them into a background — where are they, what will they have to face in the game? How are they prepared for this?
- How do you want other people to see you?
- When you meet someone online, are you getting a full picture of that person’s identity?
- What influences the things we choose to wear or look? Are these choices important?
- What makes you think that?

What do you see when you look at me? (10mins)

About: Students will explore how first visual impressions might affect expectations of a person.

Resources: Images of people from art or photography books, websites, or magazines.

Activity
Gather a selection of photographs or paintings of people. Taking each image individually, unpick collectively what information you can know or find out just from looking at the image.

- What factual information do you immediately know about the person in the image?
- What other things do you assume or believe based on evidence in the image?
- What things can you definitely not know about this person?
- How can the image tell truths or lies about this person?
- How often do we question the images we see around us?
- How do the images we are surrounded by in our everyday lives affect our impression of things?
- What makes you think that?

Lesson 2 – How our actions impact others

Objectives and Outcomes
- I can understand the impact of my actions on others.
- I have shown discipline in practising my communication skills.
- I am improving my creative reflection skills.

Cinematic Themes (30mins)

About: Students will create short film sequences using collage to explore themes on communicating in relationships.

Resources: Themes written onto cards, magazine pages, scissors, rulers, large background paper, glue sticks, a device to record video, e.g. tablet.

Activity
Picking at random, give each student a theme word, e.g. Change, time, space, risk, trust, respect, diversity, identity, communication.

This activity can be tailored to explore sexual relationships and to consider how sexual themes are displayed in the media and advertising by changing the themes, e.g. desire, expectation, consent, women, permission.

Students select at least eight images (more if possible) that link to their theme. Links may be obvious or more considered. They should cut their set of images so that they are all the same
height (the width of each can vary) then connect them in a line, without gaps between them, forming a long film strip.

Using a video camera, phone or tablet, move along the image strips slowly to make very short themed films. These can be individual films or a full group film of ideas collected together.

Watch the films back as a group and discuss the choices of images made.

- *How and why did you make these choices of images?*
- *Does your interpretation of the theme change after watching the films?*
- *In which films does the theme come across the most strongly?*
- *How do images in the media and advertising affect our thinking towards a subject?*
- *What makes you think that?*

### Collections of People (30mins)

**About:** Students will use visual tools and role-play to explore communication in relationships.

**Resources:** Magazines, newspaper pages etc. to give as diverse a range of images of people as possible, scissors, lolly sticks or similar, glue sticks, tape, sticky tack.

**Activity**

Students explore the images of people, cutting them out until they have a collection. They can attach them to sticks and then use tape or stick tack to stand them up.

*Can you find people like you and some unlike you? Can you create and tell their stories? Think about the relationships between your characters. Can you explore possible stories for this group and role-play them?*

- *What can you do together that you can’t do on your own?*
- *What are the different communities you belong to?*
- *Who is usually together and who isn’t?*

This could be used to explore intimate or sexual relationships too. Ask participants to consider a closer relationship between some of their characters and to explore through this the characteristics of a healthy sexual relationship, and the characteristics of an unhealthy or unbalanced relationship.

Share some groups’ stories with the class and use them as a context to discuss:

- *How do we bring together differences?*
- *How can we bring together opposites?*
- *How and when do you (or other people) appear differently?*
- *What makes you think that?*

### String Connections (15mins)

**About:** Students will make sculptures to consider the relationships in their lives.

**Resources:** Small pieces (A6 size roughly) of paper/card, string or wool, scissors and masking or electrical tape.

**Activity**
Students write or draw a representation of themselves on a card — this will act as the centre. Tape down pieces of string to this card and add another card to the end of each. On these, students write connections to that first card, e.g. family, friends, extended family, links to another country, school, clubs, places of worship, pets, social media groups, sports teams and so on.

For each card, ask students to think about the value of this connection in their own lives and its emotional links — why is it important to them and how could they describe the relationships within it. For example, a football team might be connected to respect, teamwork and trust, as well as laughter. Close family may involve lots of emotional links, for example, love, listening and respect.

It is possible there may be links that are less positive in their minds and the exploration of this should be carefully and sensitively encouraged. If appropriate this could be developed separately and may give a way in for talking about relationships which are less positive and how to act on and support changing these.

The resulting loose sculpture should be quite like a confused web of represented connections. These are not supposed to be tidy and easy to hold onto, they could instead be displayed by being hung up loosely on the wall to represent the wonderful and varied, jumbled up connections we all have that make us up into the person we are.

- How does this confusion of string represent you?
- Before you did this, had you ever considered all the links that make up you as a person? Do you think with extra time, you would find more?
- Are these links important in making up who you are?
- How does it feel when links are broken, moved or re-formed?
- How can new links be made? Do we have control over making and breaking links?
- How can we support these different links throughout our lives?
- What makes you think that?

Lesson 3 — We cannot always see what is on the inside

Objectives and Outcomes
- I can value myself and recognise the importance of my own mental wellbeing.
- I am critically evaluating how I present myself in the real world.
- I have shown discipline in practising my communication skills.
- I am improving my creative reflection skills.

Object Box (20mins)

About: Students use objects to discuss the hidden stories that make up the whole self.
Resources: A box of everyday and interesting items, e.g. a seashell or pebble, a kitchen utensil, a die, a piece of fabric, wooden blocks or shapes, a toy animal, a single Lego brick, an old key, a length of string, a piece of plastic food, a clock, an old mobile phone, a paintbrush, an old coin etc.

Activity
Use the object box as a thinking tool to explore ideas. Students take turns to select an object at random from the box. Ask them to look at it carefully and then to think about and describe the wider story of their selected object. They could start by answering questions such as:

- Where do you think this object came from?
- Why was it made?
- How was it made?
- Who could it belong to?
- What does it make you think about or remind you of?
- What does this object mean or what could it represent?
- What makes you think that?

Give everyone chance to speak by sharing out the questions.

This activity is really about interpretation and about predicting meaning in relation to something. Although there can be obvious answers to some of the questions, encourage your group to try to be a bit more imaginative, giving their objects more of a narrative and to really unpick what their object actually is.

For example:

A mug is for drinking coffee or tea, but what other stories does it tell? What about going right back to the clay it was made from being dug up from the ground, being turned, shaped and raised to incredibly high temperatures in a kiln. What does the mug represent to different people — a cup of tea in the morning, a kind moment where you are looked after, a point in your day when you press pause, a drink you don’t like the taste of? Who bought it, why did they choose it? What shop did it come from? What is the journey it has taken to get to this moment today? What will its future hold? Will it get cracked, broken or thrown away? How many times will it be washed? What stains are left inside it? What has it witnessed — tears, anger, laughter?

- If we think of ourselves like this, how much do people see of us if they only experience us in one moment in time?

**Larger than Life (1 hour 30 mins)**

**About:** Students will explore how relationships can help them overcome challenges.

**Resources:** A selection of familiar everyday household objects, for example a phone charger, a fork, a bottle of shampoo, a toothbrush. Paper for drawing which is as large as possible (could be sheets attached together), drawing materials, cardboard, newspaper, tape, scissors, glue guns, paint, brushes.

**Activity**

Split your class into small groups of three or four and give each group one of the objects. Challenge them to recreate this object on a massively enlarged scale. This can be done firstly through drawing — you could photograph the objects and project them onto paper on the wall so a large version can be traced, or make large scale observational drawings of the objects — the bigger the better.

The details of an object should really be explored — the texture of the bristles on the toothbrush, the overlapping curves of the wire on the charger.
Next, they should make a sculpture of the object, either using cardboard, with glue guns and tape, or using folded and scrunched up newspaper to create a fragile version of the object. Allow enough time for the groups to develop their objects and include all the detail before displaying them.

- Without talking about specifics - have you ever felt overwhelmed by a problem, that just seems much bigger than you can deal with?
- Think about the sculptures you have made — they are actually quite fragile and could easily be crushed or broken. They are much bigger than the real objects, but having spent lots of time working on these versions, the real, much smaller versions have been forgotten. Is this a helpful way of thinking about an issue when it feels too big to manage?
- Look back at the original objects — they are recognisable, manageable and familiar — perhaps easier to hold onto. They are less noticeable when you walk past them — maybe easier to deal with?
- What strategies can we use to help us deal with problems when they feel too large to manage?
- How did working as a team make the task easier?
- Do you think you communicated well?
- Carbon Copies (20mins)

**About:** Students will explore how people have many aspects of their personalities.

**Resources:** Carbon paper, A4 paper and biros, or drawing paper (slightly absorbent watercolour paper is best), with ink and nibs/brushes or sticks, and masking tape.

**Activity**

Students draw an image of themselves, using several layers of carbon paper to get multiple copies of the same self-portrait.

Alternatively, use a blot ink transfer technique that Andy Warhol used for drawings. To try this, make a pencil outline of the image and fold or tape two pieces of paper together so the drawing faces onto the other page. Using ink, work over the pencil drawing a small section at a time, regularly pressing the two pages together so a second copy is transferred onto the facing page. The slightly blotchy style is one that Warhol became famous for.

Develop this further by displaying the multiple copies of self-portraits — perhaps cutting them out and interlocking them or making patterns with repeats.

- How many versions of each of us do you think there are?
- What visual and other clues does a person give towards their personality?
- Do the different sides of your personality explore different emotions?
- How are you different with different people or in different situations?
- Does anyone know every different version of you?
- What makes you think that?