

## What if we could meet all the spoken language statutory requirements for years 1 to 6, through teaching children how to have difficult conversations?

Just think how many issues in life could be solved if everybody involved in the problem intuitively knew how to have difficult conversations!

Imagine the impact on schools and society, if children were taught this crucial life skill with the same rigour that they are taught about phonemes, fronted adverbials and noun phrases!

Imagine the impact on children's lives, if from 5 years old, they had chance to learn and practice communicating effectively. How it would enrich their lives and prepare them for their future if they were able to listen and use body language and tone of voice effectively **and** could see this working for them, with real time daily feedback, at playtimes and in their classrooms.



Imagine the impact on our schools and the lives of educators if they had time to teach these skills and felt empowered to use them themselves.

Imagine the positive impact on behaviour in our schools, primary AND secondary, if this skill was developed, valued and practised with our youngest children and became part of school culture at the earliest opportunity.



Too many times problems, that derive from poor communication, spill over into the classroom and are brushed aside because there is IMPORTANT learning to be done.

These problems then fester, escalate, grow. They prevent effective learning taking place and develop into behaviours management issues then... this repeats. Over and over! Year after year!

**What if it didn't have to be this way?**

What if it was possible to meet the requirements of the curriculum **AND** solve this problem and countless others?

**How?**

**By using one (or even half) a literacy lesson a week to learn and practise having difficult conversations.**



# National Curriculum – Statutory Requirements for Spoken Language – y1 to y6

## **Pupils should be taught to:**

- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- Use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates
- Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- Select and use appropriate registers for effective communication.



# How to start a difficult conversation!

I'm upset about what happened and want us to fix it. I'd like to hear what you think about it and share what I think about it with you too.

I'm sad about what happened and I'd like things to get better. When would be a good time to talk?

Our friendship is important to me, I want us to work this out. When shall we talk?

I know we have different ideas and I want to understand your thoughts and feelings. When would be a good time for you us to talk about our thoughts and ideas?

I'd like to hear what you think about X are you ready to share your thoughts? I'd like to share my thoughts too.



# How to hold a difficult conversation!

Listen and stay open to their thoughts and ideas too – This doesn't mean always agreeing, just being open.

Take turns to talk.

Keep it simple and strong AND respectful.

Show you are listening with your body language.

Solve the problem because you want to solve the problem **NOT** because you want to be right.

Think about your tone of voice.

Avoid using 'you' it makes the other person feel blamed and defensive.

Describe your point of view, thoughts and feelings as clearly as possible. Be specific with examples as to why you feel like you do.

Solve one problem at a time.

Pause or take a break if it's not working – I need to take a break, let's come back to this?



# 'I' instead of 'you'

You never listen to me **becomes** I need you to hear what I'm saying.

You are taking my friends away **becomes** I'd like to join in.

You were mean to me **becomes** I feel sad when I am called a name.

You talked about me behind my back **becomes** I feel sad when I don't know what people are saying about me.

You never let me play **becomes** I really like to play with you.

You were online when you told me you weren't, and you didn't accept my friend request **becomes** I feel worried when I don't think I know the truth about something.

You ignored me **becomes** I hate feeling left out.

You are so bossy **becomes** I need to be able to say what I want to do to.

You told me off **becomes** I felt sad about being in trouble.

You told a lie – I feel upset **because** I know the truth.

