

MY CHOICE, MY VOICE: UNDERSTANDING CONSENT, BOUNDARIES AND RESPECT

SUBJECT Citizenship Education; Personal, Social and Emotional Learning

TOPIC Understanding Consent, Boundaries and Respect

DURATION 50 minutes

AGE 13+

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the lesson, students are expected to:

-  Understand the meaning of consent and personal boundaries in everyday life.
-  Recognise that consent must be freely given and informed, and that it can be withdrawn at any time.
-  Identify respectful and disrespectful behaviours in both offline and online interactions.
-  Develop empathy and practise expressing and respecting personal boundaries.

MATERIALS

- Projector or interactive whiteboard
- [Consent Traffic Light - Scenario Cards](#) (printed or digital)
- [Green, yellow and red cards & Teacher Answer Guide](#)

METHODS

- Guided class discussion
- Think- Pair - Share activity
- Small group work
- Interactive scenario-based activity
- Individual reflection

PREPARATION/OPENING

Before the lesson, the teacher focuses on the concepts of consent, boundaries and respect, also preparing ([see the examples below](#)):

- Printed (or digital) scenario cards describing realistic situations involving friendships, school life, social media and romantic relationships.
- Green, yellow and red cards for the interactive activity.

Start by asking students:

“Have you ever changed your mind about something after saying yes?”

Allow students to answer voluntarily.

Explain that changing your mind is normal and introduce the idea that **consent is an ongoing process, not a one-time decision**.

LESSON STRUCTURE/DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION (10 minutes):

- Introduce the key concepts. Explain that:

Consent means:

- Saying "yes" freely, without pressure.
- Having enough information to make a decision.
- Feeling comfortable changing your mind at any time.
- Respecting another person's decision, even if it is different from what you want.

Personal boundaries include:

- Physical boundaries.
- Emotional boundaries.
- Digital boundaries (photos, messages, passwords, location, social media).
- Personal space and privacy.
- Highlight that consent applies to many situations, although it may look different depending on the context, including romantic relationships, friendships, family interactions, school activities and online communication.

IMPLEMENTATION (35 minutes):

Part 1 – Think - Pair - Share (10 minutes)

- Present the question: "Why can it sometimes be difficult to say 'no'?"
- Students think individually for one minute. Then discuss in pairs.
- Finally, collect ideas as a class.

Possible responses may include:

- Fear of disappointing someone.
- Peer pressure.
- Wanting to fit in.
- Feeling guilty.
- Not knowing how to respond.
- Explain that these feelings are common but do not remove a person's right to set boundaries.

Part 2 – Consent Traffic Light Activity (20 minutes)

- Divide students into small groups: each group receives a set of Scenario Cards.
- For each situation, students hold up:
 - Green = Respectful / Consent is clear
 - Yellow = Uncertain – more communication is needed
 - Red = Boundaries are not respected.

See some example scenarios below.

LESSON STRUCTURE/DEVELOPMENT

- After each scenario, groups explain why they chose their colour.
- The teacher encourages discussion rather than searching for one "correct" answer, especially in yellow situations where communication is needed.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

- Summarise the key messages:
 - Consent should always be clear and voluntary.
 - Everyone has different personal boundaries.
 - Respect means listening to and accepting another person's decision.
 - Healthy relationships are based on communication, trust and mutual respect.
- Remind students that if they ever feel uncomfortable or pressured, they can speak to a trusted adult, teacher, school counsellor or another trusted person.

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

- Consent Traffic Light - Scenario Cards (friendships, online situations, family, school and dating).
- Green / Yellow / Red cards.

REFERENCES

- UN WOMEN - When it comes to consent, there are no blurred lines
- RTÉ - IRELAND'S NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA - "Setting Boundaries" (YouTube Video)
- NYUAD's Health Promotion Office - "The Importance of Consent in Everyday Situations". (YouTube Video)

CONCLUSION/ASSESSMENT

Assess students through: participation during discussions; ability to justify their choices during the Traffic Light activity; respectful communication with classmates; understanding of consent and boundaries demonstrated during classroom dialogue.

HOMEWORK

Ask students to choose one of the scenarios discussed in class where consent or boundaries were not respected.

Then, ask them to rewrite the situation so that it demonstrates: respectful communication; clear consent; active listening; respect for personal boundaries.



CONSENT TRAFFIC LIGHT - SCENARIO CARDS EXAMPLES

Read each scenario carefully. Decide whether the situation is a **Green, Yellow, or Red light**, then discuss your choice with your group and explain your reasoning.

Scenario 1 - "Can I Post This?"

After taking a group selfie, Emma says:

"I'd love to post this on Instagram. Is everyone okay with that?"

One friend replies: "I'd rather not be in the photo".

Emma smiles and says,

"No problem, I won't post it".

Discussion questions:

- Which colour would you choose?
- What do you notice about Emma's response?
- Why is asking for permission important before sharing photos online?

Scenario 2 - "If You Really Cared..."

During a private conversation, Jamie asks their partner to do something intimate that they are not comfortable with.

When their partner says "No", Jamie replies:

"If you really cared about me, you wouldn't say no".

Jamie becomes distant and makes their partner feel guilty.

Discussion questions:

- Which colour would you choose?
- What do you notice about Jamie's behaviour and their partner's response?
- What makes you choose this colour?
- What would respectful communication look like instead?

Scenario 3 – "Just a Joke"

During class, a student repeatedly makes jokes about another classmate's appearance.

The class laughs, but the classmate looks uncomfortable.

When another student says the jokes are hurtful, the first student replies: "Relax, it's just a joke".

Discussion questions:

- Which colour would you choose?
- Does intent matter more than impact?
- How might the classmate feel?
- How could bystanders respond respectfully?

Scenario 4 – "Silence Doesn't Always Mean Yes"

Students are working on a group project.

One student asks: "Is everyone happy with this idea?"

One classmate stays silent and looks uncertain.

The group immediately continues, assuming everyone agrees.

Discussion questions:

- Which colour would you choose?
- What might the classmate's silence mean?
- What could the group do to make sure everyone's opinion is heard?
- Why is checking in important?

Scenario 5 – "Do I Have to?"

A family member asks Sam to give them a hug. Sam stays quiet and looks uncomfortable. The family member says: "Come on, it's only a hug."

Another family member notices that Sam seems uncomfortable.

Discussion questions:

- Which colour would you choose?
- What do you notice in this situation?
- What might Sam's reaction mean?
- How could Sam's boundaries be respected?

TEACHER ANSWER GUIDE

SCENARIO	TOPIC	SUGGESTED COLOUR
1. Can I Post This?	Online consent & digital privacy	 Green = Consent is clear
2. If You Really Cared...	Dating, emotional pressure & consent	 Red = Boundaries are not respected
3. Just a Joke	School, respect & bullying	 Red = Boundaries are not respected
4. Silence Doesn't Always Mean Yes	Communication & consent	 Yellow = Uncertain
5. Do I Have to?	Physical boundaries & consent	 Red = Boundaries are not respected

GREEN, YELLOW AND RED CARDS

