



Teacher notes Project 10 Session 5: AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

In this session we will • learn about the age of criminal responsibility. • understand what this might mean for us. • learn how to take responsibility for our actions.

Slide 3

The main ideas of this session are:

- Everyone has legal rights
- Behaviour has consequences for the person, people around them, and for everyone
- As small children grow older, they need care and teaching about how to control their behaviour
- When a child is 10 years old, they then have legal responsibilities for what they say and do
- It is important to learn about the law
- We can learn strategies to avoid being involved in crime
- We should all know how to be a good citizen

SLIDE 4

There is space in the workbook to note answers to the slightly humorous introduction – ‘who stole the doughnuts?’ with the children in paired/group discussion. Keep the discussion focused on whether they should be charged, not whether they could have done it or not. Get them to explain their reasoning with regard as to why.

- Why is this stealing?
- How likely is it that each of these people know it is stealing?
- Are there ideas about which person should be charged?

We are working up to learning about the age of legal responsibility. However, we are not looking for them to “get” the right answer here.

- Baby – would not understand the concept of ownership or stealing
- Children at a party – would we think the excitement of the moment was an excuse
- Teenager – might feel rebellious
- Business man – would we think twice before believing he might have taken them?
- Woman – do we have stereotypes about her, which might influence what we think?
- Elderly person – may have dementia

SLIDE 5

Sort the following into what they think are rights and responsibilities – see session 5 activity sheet 4

- Which are rights and which are responsibilities?
- Which of these are rights for children?
- Which of these are responsibilities of children?





Which of these are only the responsibilities of adults?

- To pick up litter
- To put my own litter in the bin
- To be kind to others
- To report crimes
- To have enough food
- To stop someone bullying another person
- To have access to necessary health care
- To be heard/listened to
- To be educated
- To go to school
- To relax, play and join in activities
- To be loved and respected
- To help other people
- To be safe and free from harm
- To listen to others
- To have a clean environment at home/school/in the community
- To be a good citizen

Extension - Can the group work together “Matching” rights and responsibilities e.g. to be heard and to listen to others

SLIDE 6

Link to information in workbook Read through information and check understanding with children.

Core Concepts

Why does the law wait until a child is 10 years old, before making them legally responsible for what they do? Ideas might include:

- They need to be taught the difference between right and wrong
- They need time to learn about the link between their behaviour and the consequences for them of what they do
- They need time to learn about the link between their behaviour and the consequences for other people of what they do
- They need to see themselves as part of a group: a family, a pupil at school, a member of society, with responsibilities for appropriate behaviour
- They need to be old enough to be able to control their behaviour

Development ideas

Who teaches children about right and wrong, and the law? Ideas such as:

- Parents/ carers/ family members
- Teachers • Faith leaders
- Social media/ television/ films
- The Government and the Police
- Programmes like Project 10





Think of children who are 10 years old but who shouldn't be charged if they commit a crime.

Ideas such as:

- Disabled children
- Children who are being exploited

Extension activities

England and Wales has a lower age of criminal responsibility than many other countries.

Research the age of criminal responsibility in: America, Australia, Scotland, Germany, Denmark.

It is likely that the age in England and Wales will be raised, what are the arguments for keeping it the same or raising it to 12 years or 14 years. Have the debate and then vote.

SLIDE 7

Discuss their ideas.

Look at the consequences of criminal acts, in stages: for the person who does it, for people affected by their act, for bystanders, for their family, for the community, for the Police, for the well being of the planet.

Core Concepts

Get the group to think about someone having their bag stolen. What are the consequences for the person who has had their bag taken? Ideas:

- They will have lost their money and not be able to pay for something
- They can't call someone in an emergency, if they had their phone in the bag
- Their bag may contain important medication that they need
- They can't get to work their money or bus pass
- They can't buy their dinner at school or at work
- They may have something precious to them, such as a photograph or a keepsake, which they have now lost
- They will be shocked and upset
- How would you feel if someone took something of yours without asking?

Development ideas

Help the group to understand that consequences can be tangible and intangible, physical or psychological, short and/or long term.

- Vandalism
- Litter
- Stealing
- Damaging property, such as a fire extinguisher or a car or a shop window
- Hitting and hurting someone
- Telling untrue things about someone on social media

Key point: Reinforce that if they commit a crime from the age of 10 years, this may be reported, there could be police involvement, and they could be charged.





All behaviour has consequences. At the age of 10 years and older, you could get a criminal record, if you behave in ways which break the law. The worse the behaviour, the bigger the consequences.

Extension activities

Are there such things as victimless crimes?

- Taking stationery from work
- Telling lies when making an insurance claim
- Keeping something you find in the street
- Not providing a witness statement when you know about a crime

SLIDE 8

Discuss these words and agree an example of each.

It can help the group to clarify their thinking, if they write their answers in the worksheet for the lesson

(Possibly Refer to the “Junior Citizen” day that all Year 6+ have done, and remind them of the alleyway and how they felt.)

SLIDE 9

Turn the earlier discussions on their head – perhaps take ideas from students first, ideas such as:

- Help people in need
- Report crimes
- Listen to other people when they ask/hint for help,
- Watch out for signs that someone is struggling with something
- Use your support networks
- Be a model of law bidding behaviour
- Advise younger people about the right thing to do
- Learn about the law

