

THEME LESSON

Power for Good — 2025

How can power help rather than harm?

Suitable for: Upper primary and secondary, adaptable by age	Time: 45–60 minutes
Theme: Anti-Bullying Week 2025 — Power for Good	Permanent resource: Yes

Learning aims

Pupils will have opportunities to:

- explore different kinds of power
- recognise that power is not always negative
- examine how individuals and groups can use influence to protect, include or exclude
- consider how peer pressure affects behaviour
- identify practical ways to use power more positively

Important note for staff

Use fictional situations and avoid asking pupils to disclose personal experiences.

If a safeguarding concern is raised, follow the school's usual procedures.

1. What is power?

Write:

Who has power?

Invite answers.

Pupils may suggest:

- teachers
- parents
- older pupils
- popular pupils
- friendship groups
- people with information
- people with confidence
- people who control access to something
- people others listen to

Then ask:

Is power always bad?

The aim is to distinguish **having power** from **using power harmfully**.

Key idea

Power can protect, include and support, or it can control, exclude and intimidate.

Power for Good — 2025

2. Hidden power

Give groups short fictional examples:

A pupil decides who is allowed into a friendship group.

One student is good at making people laugh, and others copy what they do.

A teacher makes time to listen privately to a pupil who is worried.

A group refuses to share an embarrassing photo.

An older pupil helps a younger pupil find support.

Ask:

Where is the power here?

How is it being used?

3. Power without a title

Ask:

Do you need to be “in charge” to have influence?

Explore informal power.

Someone can influence a group because they are:

- funny
- confident
- admired
- feared
- trusted
- willing to disagree
- the first person to act

Ask:

Which of these kinds of influence can be used for good?

Power for Good — 2025

4. Change the use of power

Give each group one fictional harmful scenario.

For example:

A popular pupil repeatedly makes jokes about someone else, and everyone laughs.

Ask groups to change **how one person's power is used**.

Possibilities:

- the popular pupil stops
- another influential pupil refuses to laugh
- a friend changes the subject
- someone checks on the person afterwards
- an adult notices and acts
- the group decides not to share something

Ask:

What changes when power changes direction?

5. Group power

Ask:

When does group strength become group pressure?

Explore examples such as:

- standing together to support someone
- excluding someone because “everyone agrees”
- refusing to join in
- daring someone to do something harmful
- backing someone who speaks up
- spreading a rumour because the group is doing it

Invite pupils to sort these into:

Power that helps	Power that harms	Depends
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Power for Good — 2025

6. Your power to influence

Ask pupils to think about small forms of influence they may have.

Not heroic actions. Ordinary ones.

For example:

- what they laugh at
- what they share
- who they include
- what they ignore
- who they stand beside
- what they tell an adult
- whether they copy the group or make a different choice

Then ask:

Which of these choices might seem small but still change a situation?

7. Final reflection

Complete:

“Power is useful when...”

“One way I can use influence positively is...”

Closing message

Power is not only about who has the most authority. It is also about the choices people make with the influence they have.

Follow-up possibilities

This lesson could lead into:

- **Stronger Together**
- **Group Power: Help or Harm?**
- peer-support work
- student leadership discussion
- examining how influence works in friendship groups
- creating pupil-led “Power for Good” messages