

Primary lesson plan

What helps someone speak up?

Age	Primary, best suited to ages 7-11
Time	45-60 minutes
Theme link	Break the Silence
Can be reused year-round	Yes

Learning aims

- think about why someone might stay silent when something is wrong
- recognise that speaking up is not always easy
- explore what witnesses and friends can do
- identify trusted adults and safer ways to ask for help
- understand that listening properly is part of helping

Important note for adults

Use fictional situations rather than asking pupils to disclose personal experiences.

If a child does disclose something concerning, follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

1. Start with a question

Write or display:

Why might someone not tell?

Ask pupils to suggest possible reasons.

These might include:

- being frightened
- thinking nobody will believe them
- worrying it will get worse
- feeling embarrassed
- not knowing who to tell
- thinking it is their fault
- not wanting to get somebody else into trouble

Make the point that silence does not necessarily mean that nothing is wrong.

2. Freeze-frame: What is happening here?

Put pupils into small groups.

Give each group a simple fictional situation, for example:

A child is regularly left out of a playground game.
Someone keeps hiding another pupil's belongings.
A group chat is being used to make fun of somebody.
One pupil sees another being called names every lunchtime.

Ask each group to create a silent freeze-frame showing one moment from the situation.

The rest of the class looks at the image and discusses:

What might be happening?

Who has noticed?

Who has some power here?

Who might be able to help?

Avoid rushing to decide who is a “bully” or “victim”. Concentrate on what people are doing and what might change.

3. What makes speaking easier?

Return to one or two freeze-frames.

What could make it easier for this person to say something?

Pupils can suggest changes to the scene.

For example:

- a friend stands beside them
- somebody listens without interrupting
- a teacher checks in privately
- another pupil says, "I saw what happened"
- there is a trusted adult they already know
- somebody makes it clear that they will be believed and taken seriously

Allow pupils to alter the freeze-frame to show one of those changes.

4. The people watching

What difference can the people watching make?

Explore the idea that someone does not have to confront another person directly to help.

They might:

- refuse to join in
- check whether somebody is okay
- tell a trusted adult
- include somebody who has been left out
- keep evidence of something happening online
- stand beside someone who is asking for help

Also acknowledge that sometimes a witness may be frightened too.

The safest action will not be the same in every situation.

5. Who could I talk to?

Ask pupils individually to think of three people or places they could go to if something was worrying them.

They do not have to share their answers with the class.

This might include a parent, carer, teacher, teaching assistant, safeguarding lead, family member or another trusted adult.

You do not have to wait until something becomes unbearable before asking for help.

6. Finish: Speak, Listen, Notice, Act, Follow up

Briefly introduce the five ideas:

Speak	when something needs to be said.
Listen	when somebody trusts you enough to tell you.
Notice	what is happening around you.
Act	in a way that is safe and helpful.
Follow up	because one conversation may not solve everything.

Finish with:

Breaking the silence is not only about asking someone to speak. It is also about making sure there is someone ready to listen.

Follow-up

Invite pupils to create one short message beginning:

“It is easier to speak when...”

These could become a class display, poster, assembly contribution or starting point for another lesson.