

Reach Out

What makes it easier to ask for or offer help?

Suitable for: Upper primary and secondary, adaptable by age	Time: 45–60 minutes
Theme: Anti-Bullying Week 2022 — Reach Out	Permanent resource: Yes

Learning aims

Pupils will have opportunities to:

- explore why asking for help can feel difficult
- think about what makes support feel trustworthy
- consider how friends, peers and adults can reach out safely
- distinguish support from taking over
- identify practical ways to connect someone with help

Important note for staff

Use fictional situations throughout. Pupils should not be asked to disclose personal experiences.

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

1. What does “reach out” mean?

Ask:

Who might need to reach out when bullying is happening?

Possible answers:

- the person experiencing harm
- a friend
- a witness
- someone who has joined in and wants to stop
- someone causing harm who needs help changing their behaviour
- an adult who has noticed something
- a school wanting support

Then ask:

Does reaching out always mean asking for help?

It can also mean **offering help, checking in, listening, or connecting someone with support.**

Reach Out — 2022

2. Why might someone not reach out?

Give groups a fictional character:

A pupil knows something is wrong but keeps saying, “I’m fine.”

Ask:

Why might they not want to ask for help?

Ideas may include:

- embarrassment
- fear of making things worse
- not knowing who to trust
- worrying about being judged
- not wanting adults to take over
- thinking the situation is not serious enough
- believing nobody can help

Key idea

Not asking for help does not mean help is not needed.

3. Reach out badly / reach out well

Give groups two versions of support.

For example:

A: “You need to tell a teacher right now.”

B: “Do you want to talk about what’s happening?”

Or:

A: “Don’t worry, I’ll sort it.”

B: “What would feel helpful right now?”

Ask:

Which response leaves more space for the person?

When might an adult still need to act?

Explore the difference between **supporting someone** and **taking control away from them**.

Reach Out — 2022

4. The support circle

Ask pupils to draw a fictional character in the middle of a page.

Around them, add possible sources of support:

- friends
- trusted staff
- family
- safeguarding staff
- peer supporters
- clubs or youth groups
- helplines
- online support services

Then ask:

Which kinds of support are useful for different problems?

This helps reinforce that one person does not have to carry everything alone.

5. Reaching out as a witness

Give a scenario:

You have noticed someone being left out and mocked regularly, but they have never asked you for help.

Ask:

What could reaching out look like?

Possible responses:

- checking in privately
- sitting with them
- inviting them into something
- asking if they want help
- telling a trusted adult
- offering to go with them
- refusing to join in with the group

Make clear that helping should not mean putting yourself in danger.

Reach Out — 2022

6. What if someone says no?

Ask:

What happens if you offer help and the person says they do not want it?

Explore:

- respecting their choice where possible
- leaving the door open
- checking in again later
- seeking adult advice if there is serious risk
- not abandoning someone simply because they were not ready to talk

Key idea

Reaching out is not a one-off demand. Sometimes support means staying available.

7. Final reflection

Complete:

“It is easier to reach out when...”

“A good way to offer support is...”

Closing message

Reaching out can begin with something very small: noticing, asking, listening, or helping someone find the next safe step.

Follow-up possibilities

This lesson could lead into:

- **What kind of help would help?**
- **Write to Someone Who Needs Support**
- peer-support work
- mapping trusted adults and support routes
- tutor-group discussion about asking for help
- reviewing how pupils know where to go if they are worried