

Teaching about online safety and grooming at KS3/4

Important message from the PSHE Association <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/>

Warning against using Breck's Last Game

"A film has been launched for use in schools and the PSHE curriculum called 'Breck's Last Game'. The film focuses on the murder of Breck Bednar, a teenager who was groomed online, and aims to be an educational resource to reduce young people's vulnerability to online grooming. We have significant concerns about the educational effectiveness of this film and its likely impact on young people, and warn schools against using it.

The film's aim of reducing young people's vulnerability to online grooming is laudable, and providing young people with the knowledge and skills they need to recognise risk online and seek help is a crucial part of PSHE. However, though this film has been produced with the best of intentions, it is not in line with best practice principles in PSHE education and as a result we do not believe it will support learning around reducing young people's vulnerability.

The film focuses on a tragic real life story and contains some scenes which will disturb or traumatise some young people. The film has been certified as 15 but we do not believe it is suitable for use in any PSHE classroom. From an educational perspective there are a number of reasons for not using shocking or upsetting films, stories or images:

- Using shocking imagery, stories or videos can re-traumatise pupils who are already more vulnerable to distress in this area.
- Using extreme examples and images can actually delay young people from seeking help. Pupils may see or hear a story and be left with the impression that "my situation is nowhere near as bad as that" and so feel they are not yet deserving of help or support. This might be the case particularly when teaching pupils about relationship abuse, drug use or gang crime.
- Extreme cases may be more likely to make young people think 'that won't ever happen to me' than the desired 'that could be me' response.
- In a classroom, it is very difficult for pupils to disengage; they cannot simply stand up and walk out without inviting attention or further consequences.
- For more info on best practice in using stories of crime in PSHE see our Police in the Classroom handbook.

We advise schools not to use this film with young people as part of their PSHE curriculum. Our concerns are not limited to the full version of the film, and whilst accompanying lesson plans are available, these do not provide a safe and effective context for using either version of the film. "

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