

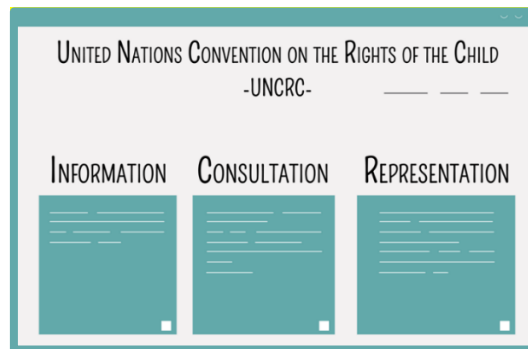


University  
of Exeter



## *Rosie's story: What happens if families change?*

Teacher Guidance and Lesson Plans



**University of Exeter  
National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)  
National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC)  
Upper KS2**



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## Introduction

This guidance has been written to accompany a two-part lesson plan for upper Key Stage 2 pupils focusing on family life, changes to families and the help available to young people if parents separate.

The lessons are designed to be taught within the relationships education curriculum in PSHE.

The lessons have been written by researchers in the Law School at the University of Exeter working in collaboration with two organisations with expertise in meeting the needs of young people following parental separation: The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) and The National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC).

Please read and consider this guidance first, before teaching the lessons.

## Preparing to teach

These lessons should be taught as part of wider learning on healthy relationships in the context of parental separation, within a comprehensive PSHE education programme. The lessons consider different family forms and how families care for one another. They also consider how families change if parents separate and the rights that young people have to make their views known and have those views taken seriously when decisions are being made about their lives, including when parents separate (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Article 12). Pupils also need to learn ways to manage grief about changing relationships including the impact of separation and divorce, the sources of support available to them when parents separate and how to access them. There are PowerPoint plans which accompany each lesson and the notes below for each lesson are reproduced in the notes section under the slides for ease of teaching.

## Children's rights under the UNCRC

The UNCRC is the global “gold standard” for children's rights and sets out the fundamental rights of all children. It is the most widely and rapidly ratified human rights treaty in history. It sets out the civil, political, economic and cultural rights of every child. Governments agree to safeguard the rights and ensure that adults and children know about them. It was signed in 1989 and ratified to bring it into force in the UK in 1991. It has been signed by 196 countries of which all but the USA have ratified it. It has four guiding principles (non-discrimination; the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right of children to express their views freely and to be heard) which apply to all under 18s.

Young people's right to information, consultation and (where needed) representation within the decision-making processes for their futures when parents separate is enshrined in Article 12 of the UNCRC yet young people are seldom consulted. Research shows that young people want access to good quality information and support and a voice in the decision-making when parents separate. Failure to provide information to young people at this sensitive time has been found to compound their sense of confusion and uncertainty. The lesson plans address this by setting out what rights young people have when parents separate. Discussing the rights that children have under Article 12 ensures that the sensitive topic of young people's rights when parents separate are taught in a way that is universal and non-stigmatising.

## Managing the impact of separation and divorce

The parents of approximately 280,000 young people separate each year.<sup>1</sup> Research by the University of Exeter funded by The Wellcome Centre for the Cultures and Environments of Health (The Healthy Relationship Transitions (HearT) Project) has shown that there is a strong appetite amongst young people for high quality information from a trusted source and to be consulted about arrangements for them when their parents separate. Research indicates that children cope better when they are consulted and that the arrangements made are longer-lasting, yet they are seldom consulted. Lesson 1 will normalise the range of emotions that young people may feel if their parents separate. This should help young people who are coming to terms with separation or help them to support others going through this transition. The lessons aims to demystify the legal processes surrounding separation and equip young people with details of sources of support and how to access them when parents separate.

## Links to PSHE Association’s Programme of Study 2020-2021 and DfE statutory guidance for Relationship Education

The table below shows how the lessons fit some of the core themes from the PSHE Association’s **Programme of Study 2020-2021** at (upper) KS2. It also indicates which aspects of the **DfE Guidance on Relationship Education** are met through the lesson content. The lessons consider different family forms and what families do to show that they care (**KS2, R5-R8**). However, the primary purpose is to help pupils to manage grief about changing relationships including the impact of separation and divorce and to learn about sources of support and how to access them (**KS2, R9; H20; H23**).

The lessons are devised to be used within a ‘spiral programme’, building on lessons the pupils will already have had within the new Relationships Education (RE) curriculum. Under the theme of ‘relationships’, if adopting the PSHE Association’s questions-based model, this suggests teaching these lessons in Summer 1 and 2 of Year 6; the thematic model suggests teaching this in Autumn of Year 3 and the cross-phase model in Spring 2 of Year 4.

PSHE Association Programme of Study 2020 Key Stage 2	DfE Guidance on Relationship Education
<p><b>CORE THEME 1: HEALTH AND WELLBEING</b> Learning opportunities in Health and Wellbeing: Pupils learn...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ strategies to respond to feelings, including intense or conflicting feelings; how to manage and respond to feelings appropriately and proportionately in different situations (<b>H20</b>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ focus... on teaching the fundamental... characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to... family relationships (<b>para 54</b>)</li> <li>▪ be based on knowledge of pupils and their circumstances... [with] <b>no stigmatisation</b> of children based on their home circumstances and recognising that families of many</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> See The Report of The Family Solutions Group Report, November 2020 at p 19, available at: [https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FamilySolutionsGroupReport\\_WhatAboutMe\\_12November2020.pdf-final.pdf](https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FamilySolutionsGroupReport_WhatAboutMe_12November2020.pdf-final.pdf)

- about change and loss... and how these can affect feelings; ways of expressing and managing grief (H23)

## CORE THEME 2: RELATIONSHIPS

Learning opportunities in Relationships:  
Pupils learn...

- that people who love and care for each other can be in a committed relationship (e.g. marriage), living together, but may also live apart (R5)
- that a feature of positive family life is caring relationships [and] about the different ways in which people care for one another (R6)
- to recognise and respect that there are different types of family structure (including single parents, same-sex parents, step-parents, blended families, foster parents); that families of all types can give family members love, security and stability (R7)
- to recognise other shared characteristics of healthy family life, including commitment, care, spending time together; being there for each other in times of difficulty (R8)
- how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice (R9)

## CORE THEME 3: LIVING IN THE WIDER WORLD

Learning opportunities in Living in the Wider World:  
Pupils learn...

- to recognise there are human rights, that are there to protect everyone (L2)
- the importance of having compassion towards others; shared responsibilities we all have for caring for other people... [and] how to show care and concern for others (L4)

forms provide a nurturing environment for children (para 59)

- creates an opportunity to enable pupils to be taught about positive emotional and mental wellbeing (para 61)

## FAMILIES AND PEOPLE WHO CARE FOR ME

By the end of primary school:

Pupils should know

- that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability
- the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives
- that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care
- that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up
- how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed

## Safeguarding

Managing the grief associated with parental separation is an emotive subject. Situating this two-part lesson plan within a discussion of children's rights when parents separate helps to ensure that the teaching is universal and non-stigmatising (DfE Guidance on RE, para 59). Nevertheless, since evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study indicates that 39% of children were not living in the same household as both parents by the age of 11,<sup>2</sup> there is likely to be a number of children in the class whose parents have separated, or whose close friends or family are going through separation. Others will be living in households with high levels of conflict between parents.

The following safeguards should be put in place:

- Inform pastoral and safeguarding staff of the dates you will be teaching this topic and encourage them to discuss the lesson content with any pupils who are accessing support following parental separation or difficulties within the home. It can be helpful to inform relevant parents too in case pupils come home with questions or wish to discuss these issues further.
- Give the pupil(s) a chance to withdraw from the lesson if appropriate (without being expected to justify their absence to their peers). Consider how to follow up the missed lesson with the pupil(s), as this learning may be especially relevant to them.
- Signpost sources of support before, during and after the lesson.
- Ensure that all teachers delivering the materials are familiar with school safeguarding/child protection policies and safeguarding protocols.
- Should a pupil make a disclosure about a personal matter during the lesson, following the teaching, teachers should refer to the safeguarding/child protection policy and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead, so that appropriate support can be put in place.

## Creating a safe learning environment

A safe learning environment helps pupils to express opinions and consider others' views safely and should be established in all PSHE lessons. Given the nature of the topics discussed, it is especially important that the learning environment for the pupils is safe. Teachers must be sensitive to the needs and experiences of the pupils. Distancing techniques are employed in the lesson - pupils are introduced to 'Rosie' a fictitious 9 year old whose parents separated a year ago to normalise how young people may feel at this difficult time of transition and explore young people's rights when their parents separate. Pupils should be encouraged to discuss how 'Rosie' may be feeling, to discourage personal disclosures. Teachers should refer to the [Handling complex issues safely in the PSHE Classroom](#) guide before teaching.

If a class has established 'class ground rules' then these can be used, and pupils can also be asked to add to the ground rules as appropriate. Otherwise the following ground rules are suggested:

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<sup>2</sup> Platt, L. (Ed.) *Millennium Cohort Study Initial findings from the Age 11 survey* (November 2014): Institute of Education, University of London

We will:

- not talk about anything personal about ourselves or others
- not talk about anything personal that others say in the lesson to anyone else
- we will listen to other's views and opinions respectfully, not judging them
- not ask anyone to answer a question if they don't want to, and we don't have to answer either
- talk about 'someone I know...' rather than using a person's name
- comment on what is said, not who has said it
- not ask personal questions or try to embarrass someone
- seek help in school/encourage friends to seek help if needed

Teachers should also:

- have an 'ask-it-basket'/ question box for pupils to ask questions confidentially
- review and address any questions submitted in the anonymous 'ask-it-basket'/ question box before and after the lesson
- work within the school's policies on safeguarding and confidentiality
- link PSHE education into the whole school approach to support pupil wellbeing
- make pupils aware of sources of support, both inside and outside the school
- explain to pupils that while confidentiality is important, if something is said or a behaviour causes concern, teachers may speak to another member of staff

## Developing understanding

### Glossary of terms

Many of the terms used within the lesson plans may not be familiar to pupils unless their parents have separated. To ensure that accurate terms are used during the lessons a glossary of terms used is set out below.

#### Lesson 1

Term	Description
Marriage	A legal union between a mixed-sex or a same-sex couple
Divorce	The process of legally ending a marriage
Adoption	The process by which a person, or a couple, become the legal parents of a child who is not biologically their own

## Lesson 2

Term	Description
The United Nations	An international organisation founded in 1945 to keep the peace, help the poor and protect rights
Convention	A formal agreement between countries on matters that concern them all
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	The agreement which sets out the rights of all children
Article	A numbered section of a convention containing the details of what has been agreed
Ratified	An international act confirming a State's consent to be bound by the terms of a convention
Mediation	A voluntary process in which an independent professional helps separated parents to reach an agreement without going to court
Child Inclusive Mediation	A process in which the child meets with the mediator separately so that their voices can be heard
Family court	This is where the judge makes important decisions about children, young people and their families if parents or guardians cannot agree
Lawyer	A legally trained person who provides advice to people going through the family courts and can speak for them in court [NB – for teacher information, this may be a solicitor or a barrister]
Judge	The person who works in the court who listens to everyone and makes a final decision
Representation	When a lawyer speaks to the judge on behalf of a person in court – either an adult or a child
Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass)	The organisation which represents children in court and independently advises the court what is in the child's best interest



Family Court Advisor (FCA)	The person from Cafcass who meets the children to hear their wishes and feelings and reports back to the court
A Contact Centre	A safe place where children and young people can see a parent who they do not live with
Applicant	A person who makes an application to court
Respondent	A person responding to an application made to court

## Signposting to support

### Support for teachers

For further guidance on the UNCRC visit:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

or

<https://www.unicef.org/media/62371/file/Convention-rights-child-at-crossroads-2019.pdf>

For further guidance on representing children in court cases visit:

<https://www.nyas.net/services/legal-services/>

For further information on consulting children in mediation visit:

<https://www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk/mediation-isnt-only-for-the-adults/>

For further information on child contact and contact centres visit:

<https://naccc.org.uk/for-professionals/>

For further guidance on marriage and divorce visit:

[www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages/marriage-divorce](http://www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages/marriage-divorce)

### Support for pupils

For further guidance on the sources of support on parental separation visit:

National Youth Advocacy Service: <https://www.nyas.net> (tel: 0808 8081001)

National Association of Child Contact Centres: <https://naccc.org.uk> (tel: 01159 484557)

Cafcass: <https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/young-people/my-parents-are-separating> (tel: 0300 456 4000)

Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/home-families/family-relationships/divorce-separation> (tel: 0800 1111)

Relate: <https://www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-children-and-young-people/children-and-young-peoples-counselling> (tel: 03000030396)



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Rosie

## *Rosie's story: What happens if families change? (Part 1)*

### **Lesson 1**

# Lesson 1- Overview

## Rosie's story: What happens if families change? Part 1

This is the first of two lessons for upper Key Stage 2 focusing on families and changes to families if parents separate, including young people's right to be heard when decisions are being made if parents separate under the UNCRC, Article 12.

### Learning Objectives

#### Pupils will learn:

- about different types of families and how they can change



### Resources:

- Post-it notes
- An 'ask-it-basket'/ question box for pupils to ask questions confidentially
- Save for the above, no additional teaching resources needed to teach the lesson

### Learning Outcomes

#### Pupils will be able to:

- describe the different ways in which people can be a family
- explain some of the ways that families show that they care for each other
- describe the range of emotions that young people may feel when parents separate and what friends can do to support them at that time



### Timing:

The lesson is designed to



### Climate for learning:

Read the accompanying teacher guidance before teaching for advice on establishing ground rules, the limits of confidentiality and sources of support

### Support and extension

To differentiate teaching some activities have support and extension activities marked with icons below and on the slides



### Keywords:

Marriage  
Divorce  
Adoption

## Timing

Activity	Description	Suggested Timing
Introduction	Ground rules, learning objectives and outcomes	5 minutes
Baseline activity	Pupils will suggest key words associated with 'family' and the different people who can be part of a family	8 minutes
What do families do for one another?	Pupils will discuss on their tables what family members, or people that are special to them, do to make them feel loved and cared for	7 minutes
Introduction to Rosie	Pupils will be introduced to Rosie; where she lives, her school friend and teacher and what she likes to do	2 minutes
Who is part of a family?	In pairs, pupils will be asked to consider the people and groups that are important to Rosie and decide which are part of her family	6 minutes
Rosie's feelings	Pupils will consider how Rosie might have been feeling after her parents separate and how Rosie's friend Billy could support Rosie	10 minutes
Endpoint assessment	Pupils will revisit and revise the baseline answers as appropriate	5 minutes
Further support	Pupils will consider the further support available in school and online	2 minutes

The lesson is designed to be taught over 45 minutes. Should you have time for a 60-minute lesson we suggest adding time to the following activities so that the revised times are:

Introduction (no change)

Baseline activity - 10 minutes

What do families do for one another? - 10 minutes

Introducing Rosie - 3 minutes

Who is in Rosie's family? - 7 minutes

Rosie's feelings - 15 minutes

Endpoint assessment - 6 minutes

Further support - 4 minutes

## Baseline assessment



### 5 Introduction slides – 5-7

Negotiate or revisit ground rules for the lesson. Introduce the learning objective and outcomes and explain that today's lesson will explore families and changes to families if parents separate.



### 8 Baseline activity (What is a family?) – slide 8

To begin, place three graffiti walls around the room with one heading per piece of sugar/flip chart paper: *'What is a family?', 'Who can be part of a family?', 'What words do you think of when you think about a family?'*

Ask the whole class to privately think about these questions and then either ask pupils to get up and move around the room or, if you would prefer, you could hand out post it notes for pupils to complete in response to these questions, that they then stick on each 'wall'.

Do not give any further hints or tips, even if pupils ask questions. They should not share their ideas with classmates during the activity. This will give you the opportunity to see what pupils' own beliefs and ideas are on 'family' before the lesson begins.

Pupils may suggest:

- What is a family? (*A group of people who usually live together who share their money and food and - take care of one another.*)
- Who can be part of a family? (*Parents/stepparents, children, grandparents/ step-grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins etc. including single parents, same-sex parents, step-parents, blended families, foster parents or adoptive parents.*)

*What words do you think of when you think about a family? (Loving, caring, helpful, sharing, trust, playing, comforting.)*

## Core activities



### 7 What do families do for one another? – slide 9

This exercise looks at different ways in which family members care for each other (**Programme of Study 2020** KS2, R6 and R8).

Explain that sometimes family relationships can be difficult as well as happy. Sometimes parents have to discuss things and don't always agree. Sometimes brothers and sisters argue but that doesn't mean that families don't care for each other.

Give the class 3 minutes to discuss ideas on their tables about the things that families do for one another to show that they care. Ask them to then feedback some of their suggestions and write these on the whiteboard. In slideshow mode, go through the suggestions on the PowerPoint, pointing out those that the class had already suggested and any that are in addition to the suggestions made by the class (adding the further suggestions to the whiteboard).



**Support activity** consider giving the pupils some of the answers to start them off or asking them to name 3 things only that families do for one another to show that they care.



**Extension activity** consider asking the pupils to list which of the actions on the slide (and any additional actions they have come up with) are actions that care for their physical health, which are actions that care for their mental health and wellbeing and which care for both physical health and mental health and wellbeing.



## 2 Introduction to Rosie – slide 10

This introduces the pupils to Rosie, aged 9. In slideshow mode pupils are introduced to where Rosie lives, her friend from school, Billy, and her teacher, Mr Green. We are also told a little about her hobbies as she likes to go bowling.



## 6 Who is in Rosie's family? – slide 11

This exercise looks at different types of family structure (**Programme of Study 2020** KS2, R5 and R7).

Encourage pupils to share any questions they may have during and/or after this activity.

Ask pupils to draw a table with the headings, '*family*' and '*not family*' at the top. In slideshow mode, show pupils the various groupings and ask them to write down the characters under the heading they think they belong to.

- Rosie's mum and dad (pupils should readily agree that they are family). Explain that Rosie's mum and dad separated a year ago and are now divorced. Rosie now lives with her mum and spends lots of time with her dad and his new partner Min and her son Jonny who have lived with her Dad for the last 9 months. Ask if pupils think it makes any difference that Rosie's parents are divorced (again they should readily agree that it makes no difference).
- Rosie's brother Jack and her sister Chloe. Pupils are likely to correctly agree that they are in Rosie's family.
- Dad's partner Min and her son Jonny. As Min and Rosie's dad have lived together for 9 months as a 'blended family', pupils are likely to agree that Min and Jonny form part of Rosie's family.
- Rosie's dog, Max. For lots of children, their pets are an important member of 'their family'.
- Rosie's Uncle Mike, Mike's husband Will and their adopted son, Ollie. Pupils should be able to recognise that a same sex couple can be part of your family, here because Mike is Rosie's uncle so Will is her uncle by marriage. Explain sometimes if a child cannot live with their birth parents, then another couple may adopt them so that they become the child's adoptive parents. This is what has happened to Ollie, making Ollie Rosie's cousin.
- Rosie's next door neighbour Tom. Explain that Tom lives with his mum, dad, grandma and grandpa. This gets across to pupils that intergenerational families sometimes live

together. Explain that Tom has lived next door to Rosie's family since Rosie was a baby. Tom doesn't have any brothers or sisters, so the two families have always been very close. Despite this, pupils should recognise that even though Tom and his family are important people in Rosie's life they do not form part of her family. They might feel like family, or they might be as close to Rosie's family as some families are with other members of their family, but they are not actually part of Rosie's family.

**Ask:** *Does anyone have any questions about who is in Rosie's family?*

Encourage pupils to write anonymous questions they can add to the ask it basket which teachers can check at the end of the lesson.



## 10 Rosie's feelings – slide 12

Explain to pupils that Rosie's parents separated a year ago and she found it hard to start off with, but she is now feeling much happier about the situation. Here the emphasis is on the fact that parental separation can be a form of grief for children and that many go through a five-stage cycle, much in the same way as they experience grief when someone dies. The emphasis should be on normalising some of the feelings that young people may have if their parents separate such as anger or sadness. Every child's experience is unique and will depend in part on the situation at home prior to the separation and how amicable the parents are upon separation. If the home life had been difficult the separation may be a relief. Not every child will feel all of these things or progress in a linear fashion through them.

**Ask** pupils to write down how they think Rosie may have felt when her parents first separated.

**Answer:** sad, hurt, angry, worried and/or confused).

Distancing techniques should be used, so describing how it is normal that **Rosie** might feel hurt, sad, bewildered, angry, worried, confused or overwhelmed. Normalise how it is common for young people to feel that they were somehow responsible for the separation (the 'bargaining' aspect of how Rosie might feel– *How can I stop this happening?* - refers to attempts by young people to change their own behaviour in the hope that a parent will return home).

Tell the pupils that Rosie's friend Billy wants to support Rosie. Give pupils 2-3 minutes on their tables to suggest 3 top tips for Billy that could help him support Rosie through her parents' separation. Once pupils have had an opportunity to discuss this in their group **ask** each group to feedback what would be their 3 top tips for Billy [listen to how Rosie is feeling, without judging and 'be there' for her; help her to seek out pastoral support at school; reassure her that she is not to blame for the separation and encourage her to keep up with friends, hobbies, exercise etc.]



**Support activity** consider asking pupils to think of just one thing that Billy could do to support Rosie through her parents' separation.



**Extension activity** consider asking the pupils to think of something that Billy could do to support Rosie through **each stage** of how she might be feeling following her parents' separation.

# Assessment of learning



## 5 Endpoint assessment Activity – slide 13

Summarise the ideas written on the original graffiti walls/on post-it notes on the graffiti walls and ask the class if they now have anything to add. Following on from the discussion about who is in Rosie's family, pupils may now recognise, for example, that a couple in a same sex relationship are a family, as is an adoptive family, blended families, single parent families and intergenerational families.

Teachers should be aware of and acknowledge cultural differences in meanings that pupils may attach to 'family', some cultures for example are more likely to live in intergenerational family units than others. Families have also changed over time with many parents having fewer children than in previous generations.

If pupils don't have anything to add to the graffiti walls at the end of the lesson, and to ensure all pupils participate, you could instead ask pupils to complete the following sentence, 'Family is...'. Pupils can describe in a sentence what they believe family is.



## 2 Further help and support – slides 14 and 15

To finish, run through slide 14 to remind pupils who they can talk to in school, e.g. teacher or head of year, or the pastoral support team (you may wish to personalise this slide with names of contact staff).

Slide 15 lists support available outside of school, e.g. NYAS, NACCC, Cafcass, Childline and Relate. In slideshow mode each charity and its contact details are grouped and will be listed in turn.

Some pupils may have heard of Relate as a relationship counselling service but point out to them that Relate also offer counselling for young people. Tell pupils that they will be finding out more about these organisations in the next lesson.

At the end of the lesson explain to pupils that in lesson 2 they will be learning about how young people can 'get their voices heard' when parents separate, the different sources of support available to young people when parents separate and the topic of divorce more generally and that, if they wish to, pupils can let the teacher know/put a note in the 'ask it basket' if that is an issue for them.





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Rosie

## *Rosie's story: What happens if families change? (Part 2)*

### **Lesson 2**

## Lesson 2- Overview

### Rosie's story: What happens if families change? Part 2

This is the second of two lessons for upper Key Stage 2 focusing on families and changes to families if parents separate, including young people's right to be heard when decisions are being made if parents separate under the UNCRC, Article 12.

#### Learning Objectives

##### Pupils will learn:

- about rights children have if parents separate and the type of support they might need

#### Resources:



- Post-it notes.
- An 'ask-it-basket'/ question box for pupils to ask questions confidentially.
- Handout for 'Quick fire quiz' if using.

#### Learning Outcomes

##### Pupils will be able to:

- explain young people's rights under Article 12, UNCRC when parents separate
- describe the range of emotions that young people may feel when parents separate
- identify ways in which young people can be consulted if parents separate
- identify sources of support for these young people and explain how to access them

#### Timing:



The lesson is designed to be taught over 45 minutes.

#### Climate for learning:



Read the accompanying teacher guidance before teaching for advice on establishing ground rules, limits of confidentiality and sources of support.

#### Support and extension

To differentiate teaching some activities have support and extension activities marked with icons below and on the slides.

#### Keywords:



children's rights, children's voices, child-inclusive mediation information, consultation representation

## Timing

Activity	Description	Timing
Introduction	Ground rules, learning objectives and outcomes	5 minutes
Baseline activity	Pupils will draw a mind map of what questions Rosie may have had and her support needs when her parents first separated	7 minutes
Introduction to the UNCRC	Pupils will be introduced to The United Nations, the UNCRC, and will complete the gap-fill exercise to recap on Article 12	5 minutes
Who can Rosie speak to for support?	In pairs, pupils will be asked to write down the people that Rosie has at home or at school who she could talk to if she is feeling upset	3 minutes
Processes and quick fire quiz	Pupils will learn about the process of divorce and for making child arrangements, and how their voices are included then consolidate with a quiz	15 minutes
Sources of support	Pupils will learn about the support, online and in the community, available to young people whose parents separate	5 minutes
Endpoint assessment	Pupils will revisit and revise the baseline answers as appropriate and consider support available in school and out of school	5 minutes

The lesson is designed to be taught over 45 minutes. Should you have time for a 60-minute lesson we suggest adding time to the following activities so that the revised times are:

Introduction (no change)

Baseline activity – 10 minutes

Introduction to the UNCRC– 8 minutes

Who can Rosie speak to for support? – 5 minutes

Processes and quick-fire quiz – 18 minutes

Sources of support– 7 minutes

Endpoint assessment– 7 minutes

# Baseline assessment



## 5 Introduction – slides 8-10

Negotiate or revisit ground rules for the lesson. Introduce the learning objective and outcomes and explain that the pupils will continue to look at 9-year-old Rosie's changes in her family. Remind pupils that Rosie's mum and dad separated a year ago and Rosie now lives with her mum, her brother Jack and her sister Chloe and spends lots of time with her dad and his new partner. Tell pupils that Rosie is much happier now but that they are going to look back at some of the help and support available to Rosie when her parents first separated.



## 7 Baseline activity: support for children – slide 11

For this activity, if pupils wish to discuss questions with one another, remind them to work independently and any questions they may have will be answered after the baseline assessment is completed.

Ask pupils (without conferring) to each to draw a mind map with the word 'Rosie' in the middle. Around the outside, ask them to write down:

- a) questions you think Rosie may have at this time. (Is this because of something I have done? Is there any chance of you staying together? Where am I going to live? Who am I going to live with? How often will I see my other parent? Will I have to change schools? Will I be able to keep up my friendships/hobbies/time with wider family? How will things get sorted out? Will I be asked what I want? If so, by whom? Will I have to go to court?)
- b) the support you think Rosie may need and any examples you know of support that may be available to her. (Support needed may include - good friends around her; peer support from others who've been through this; good pastoral support at school; good information online to get some of her questions answered; someone to speak to about how she's feeling; someone to speak to about what she would like to happen around arrangements for her care. Sources of support may include- pastoral support at school; friends or wider family; ChildLine or other counselling service).

**Note:** Do not give any further hints or tips, even if pupils ask questions. They should not share their ideas with classmates during the activity. This will give you the opportunity to see what pupils' own beliefs and ideas are before the lesson begins.

**Circulate the room** as pupils complete their mind maps in order to gauge what pupils know/think/feel/believe in relation to the topic. After pupils have had 3-4 minutes or so to complete their mind maps, ask for all class feedback (using the suggested answers above to guide you).

Ask pupils not to add anything else to their mind maps during class feedback and to put these to one side as they will return to them (and these two questions) at the end of the lesson.

## Core activities



### 5 Introduction to the UNCRC and gap-fill exercise – slides 12-13

(NB: Further subject knowledge is outlined on slides 4-5)

Explain that young people have the right to have their voices heard and their opinions taken into account when their parents separate. This right is contained in an important document called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Begin by explaining key terms:

**Governments:** The group of people who make decisions and the laws for a country.

**The United Nations:** Organisation that most countries in the world including the UK belong to which exists to find solutions to the world's problems.

**Convention:** Agreements that governments sign.

Explain that most countries in the world, including the UK, are members of the United Nations. Explain that the United Nations exists to find solutions to the world's problems. Sometimes the United Nations makes conventions which are agreements that the countries sign. One very important convention is The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC). Explain that the UK ratified the convention in 1991 (i.e. they agreed to uphold it). The UNCRC is made up of 54 statements, known as articles, which protect children's rights.

**Article 12 gives children the right to give their opinions on matters affecting them and adults must listen and take those opinions seriously.** This means that when parents separate **all** children have the right to **information** about what will happen and what support is available and to be **consulted**. Most children won't need it, but they could also be **represented** in court if necessary.

Depending on level of engagement and level that the class are working at, either ask what consultation and representation mean or explain the terms:

**Consultation** – to be asked your opinion

**Representation** – to have someone to speak on your behalf in court i.e. to have a lawyer whose role it is to tell the judge what you want and what is best for you

**Ask:** *What might a child think or feel if they aren't given this right?*

Ask pupils to discuss this on their tables and feed their answers back to the class. Suggested answers could include feeling *unheard, unimportant or excluded*.

In this lesson pupils will explore the sources of support available to them when their parents separate and how to access this support. This will be discussed as part of young people's Article 12 right to give their opinion and for adults to listen and take it seriously. To set this up and to recap, ask pupils to use the suggested words on slide 13 to fill in the gaps on Article 12 above.

In slideshow mode, the gap-fill appears without the suggested words, with the suggested words appearing on a click to give you the option of doing the exercise as a support or extension task.



**Support activity:** Consider giving pupils the sentence with only the word 'right' missing and ask them to tell you the missing word.



**Extension activity:** Ask pupils to write a short statement/summary about the rights children have.



### 3 Who can Rosie speak to for support? – slide 14

**Ask:** what does the term separation mean? What might happen when two people separate?

Remind pupils that Rosie's parents separated a year ago so she's feeling much better about the separation than she did at the time but sometimes still need some support.

Run through the characters again to remind pupils who Rosie has for support (or for any pupils who were absent for lesson 1). In slideshow mode each character is shown in turn. N.B. Rosie's mum and dad have been grouped together to avoid any inference that one is superior or preferable to the other.

Ask pupils to list one advantage and one disadvantage for **each person** that Rosie speaks to:

Mum or Dad: advantage - Rosie will be used to speaking to them when she's upset; disadvantage - Rosie may be upset about them so it may be hard to talk to them about it.

Chloe or Jack, her sister and brother: advantage - they will be upset too so will understand how Rosie is feeling; disadvantage - Rosie may not want to speak to them in case it upsets them.

Rosie's friend Billy or one of her other friends: advantage – they are not part of Rosie's family so she doesn't risk upsetting them; disadvantage - Rosie's friends may not have gone through this experience so may not fully understand how she's feeling.

Rosie's teacher, Mr. Green: advantage – he will have had others in his classes that have gone through what Rosie has gone through so he will be able to help Rosie too; disadvantage - at first it might be hard for Rosie to talk to Mr Green about things that are going on outside of school.



**Support activity:** Consider asking pupils to list one advantage and one disadvantage for **one or two** of the people who Rosie could speak to for support.



**Extension activity:** Consider asking pupils to script the opening to a conversation about seeking support – how might they ask someone for help?



### 15 Process and quick-fire quiz – slides 15-21

Slides 15-20 have information on divorce and separation and on the processes for agreeing child arrangements. Depending on the time available and engagement of the pupils, teachers may choose to a) run through all the information in the slides emphasising to pupils the **key**

**messages** highlighted in bold in the notes or b) simply emphasise the **key messages** for each slide and give sufficient information to allow pupils to complete the quick-fire quiz that follows.

To consolidate learning from this and the next four slides on processes and how children's voices can be heard in these processes, and to scaffold this part of the teaching, there is a quick-fire quiz on slide 21. To ensure that all pupils participate, either provide a handout for pupils to complete/refer back to if they find they need the information in future (a handout is at the end of the Teacher Guide) or write the questions on the whiteboard at the start of the lesson. If using the handout, hand it out now and ask the pupils to write the answers on the handout/make a note of the answers as you go through the slides as you will be asking individual pupils to give their answer to a question later.

Allow time, as you cover slides 15-21, for pupils to consider any thoughts or questions they have and ask questions if they would like.

The **key message** for slide 15 is that from April 2022 there will be no need to show that the other person was at fault to get a divorce.

Run through the slide pointing out the distinction between formalising separation when a couple are married versus living together. Stress that for a divorce after April 2022, no one needs to blame the other party, and no one needs to attend court in person – to help bust the myth that divorce is an acrimonious process.

If pupils are particularly engaged or interested you could explain that parliament passes 'Acts' when it wants to change the law in a certain area and has recently passed *The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020* which came into force in April 2022 and introduced 'no fault divorce' so that no one needs to blame the other person in order to get a divorce.

If pupils are particularly engaged you may also wish to point out, as a higher-level point, that under the new rules from April 2022 the Applicant and Respondent can make a joint application on the basis that the marriage has broken down and the divorce can be obtained after 6 months.

Ask pupils to comment on why it might be better for children that the parents don't have to say that the relationship breakdown was the other parent's fault when they divorce.

**Answer:** It may make the separation more friendly, and the parents may be more open to listening to their children's views. It makes it easier for the parents to agree the arrangements for the children between themselves and therefore make it less likely that they will apply to court. It probably won't cost as much.

The **key message for slide 16** is that most parents agree arrangements themselves to bust the myth that parents need to go to court to sort out child arrangements.

Explain that when Rosie's parents separated a year ago it had been hard for Rosie and her brother and sister at first. Their dad introduced his new girlfriend quite quickly which upset and confused Rosie, so she had been reluctant to see him. Rosie's mum and dad agreed that Rosie would see her dad at a contact centre until things settled down. Rosie thought that the contact centre had been really useful for her family. Rosie's dad applied to the court for a court order and now all three children saw their dad together, staying over with him and his new partner, and things were better. The **key message for slide 17** is that parents can't agree they don't have to go to court, they can choose to meet with a mediator instead.



Explain the role of a mediator as outlined on the slide. The trained mediator is a neutral person who helps parents to agree without going to court.

Explain that Rosie's parents did not go to mediation but instead made an application to the court.

**Ask:** How do you think that going to mediation rather than to court might have helped Rosie's family?

**Answer:** Her parents would be able to listen to each other and might have been able to agree things. This might be easier, less stressful and quicker than going to court.

The **key message for slide 18** here is that if parents are in mediation, children have the right to make their views known and to meet with the mediator.

**Child inclusive mediation:** Child inclusive mediation gives young people the opportunity to meet and talk (alone or with siblings) with the mediator who is helping their parents to sort things out for the family when parents separate. The mediator then tells the parents what the young person wants the mediator to say to help the parents make decisions - so children don't make the decisions, but their views inform the parental decision-making process.

Child inclusive mediation is voluntary, so children do not have to go even if they are given the option. Mediators will usually see children who are around nine or older although some will see children as young as six if it is felt appropriate and in the child's interests.

**Ask:** How do you think that speaking to the mediator might have helped Rosie when her parents separated?

**Answer:** It might have helped Rosie to understand the process better; get things off her chest; given her the chance to give the mediator messages to pass on to her parents that might be hard for her to say to her parents herself.

The **key message for slide 19** is that if a parent makes an application to the family court, children and young people have the right to give their views on arrangements to be made by talking to the Family Court Advisor (FCA).

Explain that because Rosie's parents couldn't agree how much time Rosie, Chloe and Jack would spend with each parent, her dad made an application to the family court. The judge asked the FCA to write a report and the FCA spoke to the children individually to gather their views which he used to write his report for the court.

The **key message for slide 20** is that even if parents apply to court, most parents are able to reach an agreement without the judge having to decide and children do not have to attend court.

By the date of the court hearing the judge, the parents and any lawyers representing the parents will have had the FCA's report and will usually agree child arrangements on the basis of the FCA's recommendation.

Quick fire quiz on slide 21: to consolidate learning, take 3 minutes to ask the class to answer the 6 questions. As noted above, if using the handout, it should be handed out at the start of the discussion on the divorce process. In slideshow mode, each question in the left hand box is followed by an answer in the right hand box.





## 5 Sources of support for young people– slides 22

Remind pupils of the support available to them in school from the pastoral lead. There is also lots of information and support available to young people online (it's sufficient to highlight key information in bold below) including:

**National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS):** NYAS provides information to young people on its website; a free helpline and an advocate for young people (a person to speak on the young person's behalf) in the family court if needed..

**National Association of Child Contact Centres:** NACCC runs a network of 350 contact centres which provide a safe, neutral, welcoming space for children to spend time with parents (or other people important to them, such as grandparents).

**Cafcass:** Cafcass stands for Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service. Cafcass works with children and young people in family court cases.

**Relate:** Relate offers counselling to young people who are experiencing difficulties in any area of life, including if parents are arguing or have separated.

**Childline** has a huge amount of information, advice and support for young people whose parents have separated available online, by telephone or through one-to-one counselling.

Contact details for each of the organisations listed appear on slide 24.

## Assessment of learning



### 5 Endpoint assessment – slide 23-24

Ask the pupils to return to the mind map they drew earlier and in a different colour add to their mind map by writing down:

- any words for how you think Rosie might have felt once she learned she had the rights to express her opinion and for this to be taken seriously? (Words like hopeful, happier, stronger and/or empowered will hopefully be suggested. It is important to acknowledge however that she may still be feeling sad.)
- where Rosie could find information and support to help her now and in the future (giving specific examples of organisations)?

Pupils should mention: National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS); National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC); Cafcass; Relate and/or Childline. To finish, show slide 24 and remind pupils who they can talk to in school, e.g. teacher, head of year, or the pastoral support team (you may wish to personalise this slide with names of contact staff) or outside of school. Leave the slide up so that any pupil who wishes to can note down details.

**Tell pupils that if anything that's been discussed today is an issue for them and they need some support they can let you know or put a note in the 'ask it basket'.**

## Feedback

It would be helpful for us to understand why you chose these resources and how you have found using them. We would be very grateful if you would take the time to complete a short feedback form. It should take 5-8 minutes to complete. The form can be found here: <https://forms.office.com/e/aaYBgMQc7t> or by scanning the code below.

'Rosie's Story' lesson plans



## Rosie's story: What happens if families change?

### Lesson 2: Quick fire quiz

What did you learn from hearing about the processes when parents separate and how young people can have their voices heard at this time? Answer the 6 questions below in the boxes.

QUESTION	ANSWER
1. After April 2022, do couples have to say whose 'fault' it was to get a divorce?	
2. Where did Rosie see her dad at first?	
3. What is the name of the person who helps parents to reach an agreement without going to the family court?	
4. What is the name of the person who writes reports for the family court?	
5. Do children have to go to court if their parents apply to the family court?	
6. Can children make their own application to the family court?	