

Social Skills Practice Pack

(Chapter 7)

Activities and games for social skills groups:

1 *Listening skills*

(i) Fruit salad/traffic jam

In the usual form of this game students are allocated an exemplar of a category (e.g. fruit, vegetable, vehicle). For older students more adult categories such as chemicals, animals, types of rock or any other relevant category can be selected. The leader calls two (e.g. igneous/sandstone) and the students swap places. When the leader calls 'Rock fall' they all swap seats.

(ii) Reporter game

Students work in pairs to find out three things about their partner. The areas may be illustrated to help the student e.g. favourite food/TV programme/sport. The 'reporter' listens and feeds back to the group about their partner. All students take a turn at being the reporter.

(iii) Screen games

Students work in pairs and take it in turns to describe a diagram, picture, model, and so on, so that their partner can draw or construct the same object. All students take turns to be the instructor.

(iv) Silly stories

The leader reads a story and changes some of the words. Students listen for these obvious changes.

(v) Chinese whispers

(vi) Listen for your number – turn – sit down

This may also be played using characters (e.g. from a book or play the students are reading in class). Each student is allocated a character name. A story is read and when their name is mentioned they stand up, turn around and sit down. When the leader says 'Party time', they all swap places.

(vii) Who is it?

The leader described someone in the group by physical appearance. Students guess who the leader is describing. The person who guesses correctly then describes someone in the group, until all the students have had a turn.

(viii) Listening role plays – observation sheet to tick

(ix) Build a story

The aim is to create a story. Each member of the group says a sentence in turn, accompanied by appropriate gestures and facial expression. The facilitator may start the story at first and when they have mastered the technique the students take turns to start the story. The last person in the sequence thinks of an appropriate concluding sentence.

(x) What do I like?

The leader says 'I like apples but not pears'. Students take turns to guess what the leader likes by saying 'You like apples, do you like plums?' 'No' is the answer because the rule in this case is 'double letters' on the card. The leader, therefore, would also like letters, sheep, pillows etc. A more simple form might be a rule of having the same first letter sound, something connected to the sea, red things etc. The format can be changed – I am going on holiday and will take a but not a



2 Good looking

(i) Murder wink (detective and murdered cards)

(ii) Spotting the leader

A group member leaves the room while the rest of the group choose a leader. The leader starts an action and the others follow. The leader changes the action periodically and the person who went out guesses who the leader is.

(iii) Action circles

One student starts an action and the others repeat the action. Second student repeats and adds an action. The sequence of actions builds around the circle.

(iv) Pass the expression

Student picks an expression card. Student passes that expression to their neighbour without the others seeing. The expression moves around the group and the last person tries to name the original expression.

(v) What's new? (Spot the difference)

A student leaves the room and returns having changed their appearance in some way. The other students identify what has been changed.

(vi) Kim's game

Objects are placed on a tray. Students have 2 minutes to look at the objects. The tray is then covered and one object removed. Students identify which object has been removed.

(vii) What's in the box mime

The topic box is used. It may contain objects, photographs or an instruction. The group members watch the mime and try to identify was the cue was.

(viii) Eye contact swap

The group members look at the floor. The leader counts 1, 2, 3 (or may clap the numbers). At '3' the group members look up and swap places if they are looking at someone looking at them.

3 Developing friendships

(i) Matching up

Interests and 'about me' templates attached (No. 15). Any other parameters might be selected.

(ii) Same interest game

Student says three interests. Students whose interests match stand up and they change chairs.

(iii) Guess the mime

For example miming hobbies, miming things they don't like doing. Group members guess the mime.

(iv) The guiding game

Set up an obstacle course. Students work in pairs – one is blindfolded and the other acts as a guide. Partners then change roles

(v) Guess the feelings

Pick a picture and mime it. Group members guess the feeling. Discuss triggers for that feeling.

(vi) Read a phrase

Students read a phrase or sentence with appropriate body language/facial expression.



(vii) Role plays – joining a group

Students work in threes. Two students start a conversation and the third tries to join the conversation. The two try to block the joiner. The group members take turns. The whole group discusses how it feels to be excluded.

(viii) Strength cards

Used to give compliments to group members.

(ix) Find out

Students work in pairs and take turns to find out three new things about each other. It may help to give ideas about the sort of information they might seek (e.g. where they were born, mother's name etc.)

(x) Famous names

The name/photograph of a famous person is pinned to the back of each group member. They move round the group and ask questions to find out who they are. Only a 'yes' or 'no' response is allowed.

4 Negotiation skills**(i) What shall we have tonight?**

Students work in groups of three. They have five minutes to negotiate what they will eat. At the end of the time one student states the menu and the group describe how they came to the decision.

(ii) Shipwrecked

Students individually think of three items they would like to save from the ship. In pairs the students negotiate which three of their six combined items would be saved. The pairs of group members discuss how the decisions were made and whether they felt their views had been heard.

(iii) Birthday line up:

Ask the group to line up in order of their birthdays (or some other chosen dimension). Students do this using mime and gesture – no talking.

5 Other games**(i) What's my line**

Student mimes a job/role. Group members question the students to guess the job.

(ii) How close to be

Students select a scenario (e.g. comforting a friend; speaking to a shopkeeper; asking someone for directions). The group members take it in turns to sculpt the appropriate social distance for each encounter. Group members discuss the 'proxemics' for each.

(iii) Brain drain

Leader names a category (e.g. buildings). Categories may be linked to curriculum topics. Students take turns to name an example of the category. If a student cannot think of a different example they say 'Brain drain'. Leader tells the group how many they scored (i.e. how many examples they found).



Teacher Rating Scale (1)

PUPIL NAME: _____

SUBJECT: _____

SUBJECT TEACHER: _____

This student has been identified as experiencing difficulties in school and the Rating Scale will help me to explore the nature of those difficulties.

Please complete the Rating Scale and return to:

..... (SENCO) by (date)

When compared with other students in your group is s/he:

1 = Good

3 = Average

5 = Cause for concern

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Understanding and following questions					
2. Ability to settle to a task					
3. Completion of tasks independently					
4. Participation in oral activities/class discussion					
5. Conflict resolution skills					
6. Response to questions					
7. Working co-operatively with peers					
8. Listening to the teacher					
9. Organisational skills					
10. Confidence as a learner					

Continued/..



Strategies that have been successful:

Strengths:

Level working at in subject: _____

Other comments:

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Behaviour Questionnaire (2)

PUPIL NAME: _____

SUBJECT: _____

SUBJECT TEACHER: _____

When compared with other children in your class, how does the pupil rate with respect to the following behaviour where: 1 = Good 3 = Average 5 = Cause for concern

Please circle the number that is most appropriate to describe this pupil.

Please give any examples that you have of specific behaviours.

Examples

1 Motivation for learning tasks

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

2 Ability to complete tasks

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3 Participation in oral activities

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4 Understanding and following instructions

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5 Awareness of acceptable boundaries for behaviour

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6 Relationship with peers

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7 Conflict resolution skills

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8 Verbal or physical aggression

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9 Relationship with adults

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10 Attention-seeking behaviours

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Behaviour Questionnaire (BLANK) (2a)

PUPIL NAME: _____

SUBJECT: _____

SUBJECT TEACHER: _____

When compared with other children in your class, how does the pupil rate with respect to the following behaviour where: **1 = Good** **3 = Average** **5 = Cause for concern**

Please circle the number that is most appropriate to describe this pupil. Please give any examples that you have of specific behaviours.

Examples

1.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

2.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Student Information Form (3)
Setting Targets (3)

Setting Targets

Summary Information about Individual Group Members:

Name of student: _____ **Date:** _____

1. What are his/her strengths?
2. Areas of strength you would like to encourage:
3. What are the areas s/he finds most difficult?
4. What social skills need to be developed?

-
-
-
-
-
-



Student Information Form (4)

Name of student: _____

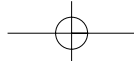
Date: _____

What does s/he do that causes you concern?

For each area of concern think about the skills that s/he needs to learn in order to behave more adaptively:

■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____
■	_____





Group Information Form (5)

Setting Targets

Summary Information about the Group:

Date:

1. What are the strengths of members of the group?

Name:

Strengths:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Areas of strength you would like to encourage:

Name:

Areas of strength:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3. What are the areas of difficulty of members of the group?

Name:

Areas of difficulty:

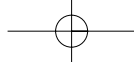
.....
.....
.....
.....
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.....

4. What social skills do members of the group need to learn?

Name:

Target:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....



Social Skills Contract (6)

I agree to:

- 1. Attend social skills sessions punctually without being reminded by teachers.
- 2. Carry out my assignments.
- 3. Keep confidential any personal information that arises during the sessions.

Signed:

Date:

I hereby give my consent to my son/daughter to attend the social skills group for 6 weeks during theterm

Signed:

Parent/Guardian of:

Date:

Please return to school



Letter to Parent (7)

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

..... (name) has been put forward as a candidate for a support group at school.

The group will meet each week during the school day for a period of 6 weeks.

The aim of the group is to help the children to practice the social skills which are important in order to make friends and to work together in a co-operative way. The ability to work as a member of a group is particularly important now because of the way in which GCSE course work is organised.

I do hope that you will agree to your son/daughter taking part in the group during the summer term.

Yours sincerely



Video Parent Consent (8)

To:

Parent/Carer

Home Address

Dear

The Social Skills Training Programme utilises the video recorder to support students as they learn new skills throughout the course. We are writing to seek your permission for this to occur with your child. The videos will be used strictly for the educational purposes of coaching your child as they progress through the units and will be shown to the participants of the group immediately following the session. We have also included a section to seek your permission for the tapes to be used for staff training purposes within the Education Department.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions regarding this and we will be pleased to assist.

Thank you

Name of Group Leader

I hereby give permission for my child to be video taped as part of the Social Skills Training Programme

Signed: Parent/Guardian

Print Name:

Date:

I hereby give my permission for the video contents to be used for training purposes within the Education Department.

Signed: Parent/Guardian

Print Name:

Date:



Group Checklist (9)

Names of leaders:
.....

Venue of social skills (SSG) sessions:
.....

Day/dates of SSG sessions:
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Start and finish times:
.....

Planning times:
.....

Reflection/planning:
.....

Names of possible pupils:

Name	NC Yr	Teachers questionnaire	Observation	Discussion



Chosen pupils:

Name	Parent interview/meeting	Parent written permission		Parent questionnaire	Pupil questionnaire
		Group	Video		

Setting targets:

Complete summary of information for pupils and group

List strengths and difficulties

Discuss with each pupil:

_____	<input type="text"/>
_____	<input type="text"/>
_____	<input type="text"/>
_____	<input type="text"/>
_____	<input type="text"/>
_____	<input type="text"/>

Outline of sessions



Social Skills Programme

Session plan:

Target Skill:

1. Warm up activities

[Empty box for warm up activities]

2. Review of last week's target

Target Skill:

[Empty box for target skill]

3. Introduction to the topic

Activity 1

[Empty box for activity 1]

4. Activity 2

[Empty box for activity 2]

5. Activity 3 (optional)

[Empty box for activity 3]

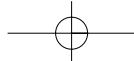
6. Target skill for week

[Empty box for target skill]

7. Closing activities

[Empty box for closing activities]





Session Debriefing (11)

Debriefing:

1 Content of the session

- Did the activities chosen help the student practice the target skill?

Comment on individual activities
1
2
3

- Did the balance of activities work?

E.g. too much sitting, listening?

- Was the pace of the session right or will the skill need to be reinforced next time?

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2 Participation and enjoyment

- Comment for individual students

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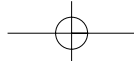
3 Environmental factors e.g. distractions

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4 Proposed changes to next session plan

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Parent/Teacher session feedback (12)

Social Skills Programme

Dear (parent name)

This week we have been working on:

.....
.....

Please praise and encourage when s/he uses these skills.

Signed: Date:

Social Skills Programme

Dear (teacher's name)

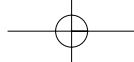
This week we have been working on:

.....
.....

..... has selected you to help him/her practice this skill.

Please praise and encourage when s/he uses these skills.

Signed: Date:



Pragmatic Skill Checklist for Teachers

Pupil Name: _____ Date: _____

Subject: _____ Subject Teacher: _____

When compared to other students in your class how does the pupil rate with respect to the following behaviours. 1 = good 3 = average 5 = cause for concern

Please circle the number that is most appropriate to describe this pupil and give examples of any specific behaviour you have observed.

Examples**1. Eye contact**

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

2. Listening

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3. Attention control

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. Turn taking

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. Initiation of conversation

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6. Ending a conversation

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7. Conversational repair

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. Facial expression

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9. Use of gesture

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10. Voice control/prosody

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11. Response to praise

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

12. Level of arousal (tense/anxious)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Record Generalisation Targets (14)

Now that you have practiced _____
in the group, you are ready to practice the skill at home and at school.

1. When and where did you practice?

e.g. Monday in English

2. What did you say/do?

--

3. How did the other person respond?

--

4. How did you feel?

--



Session Plans for Social Skills Groups

Sample Session 1:

How and when to initiate a conversation

- Warm up activities
- Adults model good/bad timings for initiation
 - Examples of good timing e.g. when someone has just put their books away/come to sit next to you
 - Examples of bad timing e.g. someone on the telephone

In later sessions the non-verbal judgement of mood might be introduced to this exercise.

- Students practice initiation in the role play scenarios
- The group discusses suitable opening gambits for “how” to initiate a conversation in different settings. The ideas can be recorded for use in subsequent sessions as prompt cards
- Students practice using the “openers” in role play scenarios e.g.

“There’s room for your bag here”

“Did you have a good weekend?”

- Generalisation exercise
 - Students select one or more people that they will try to initiate a conversation with. This might be an adult at home or school or another student. They will feedback their experiences at the next session
- Closing activities

Session 2 – with development activities for subsequent sessions

Taking Turns in Conversations

- Warm up activities
- Choose a topic, using a choice board or topic box. The topic box contains possible subjects of conversation represented as objects, pictures or words. Students take turns to reach into the box and draw a topic
- A microphone or object is used to pass round the group to signal that it is their turn to talk. The turn taking may go clockwise or anti-clockwise around the group for the first turn.
- Flexibility is introduced by using a symbol which signals “I have something I want to say”. A student can show the card and when the previous person has finished their turn the turn passes to them.
- “How long is a turn?” The group can decide if 1, 2, 3 ideas/contributions constitute a turn. Topic closure, knowing when to stop talking, may be a particular difficulty for some students.

Further activities may be planned to practice relevance when taking turns in a conversation. A student signals that they want a turn when they have something to say that links to the contribution of the previous speaker. The ‘link’ can be made symbolically by adding pieces to a physical structure, drawing a link line on a large shared sheet of paper and, if appropriate, writing what ‘link’ was made.

- Generalisation group work in lessons that are supported by an LSA provide ideal opportunities for students to practice the skills of turn taking and receive feedback. The LSA can also supply prompts/reminders if necessary
- Closing activities



Session 3

The role of speaker and listener in a conversation

- Warm up activities
- The adults role play good and bad listening skills. Students use a recording sheet and feedback to the adults 'code violations' such as 'fiddling', interrupting etc and the positive signs such as nodding and smiling.
- Students use a simple scenario to play the role of good listeners. They work in threes – speaker, listener, observer. The observer feeds back the positive signs of good listening shown by the listener. The speaker comments on how the exchange felt for them. Students swap roles until everyone has had a turn.
- Students choose a particular lesson or situation when they will practice a skill that is relevant for them looking at the speaker, giving non-verbal signals that they are listening.
- Closing activities

Session 4

Ending a Conversation

- Warm up activities
- Adults model scenarios which illustrate behaviour that may appear rude e.g. walking away while the person is still talking or saying something inappropriate. Students discuss the behaviour at the end of each scenario and decide why the behaviour was inappropriate
- Students discuss some more appropriate ways of ending each scenario more appropriately. Ideas are recorded and may be made into prompt cards.
- Students practice the scenarios using the closing strategies that have been agreed e.g. *"Sorry, but I must go now or I will miss my bus."*
- Students are asked to choose a situation that they find difficult, decide on a suitable form of words and practice using the skill during the week
- Closing activities

Session 5 And many subsequent sessions

Reading and Providing Non-verbal Cues

Each session may focus on a specific aspect of non-verbal behaviour such as

- Facial expression
- Tone of voice
- Proxemics (proximity, social distance)
- Gesture, body language

The first sessions will help the students to practice using the skills using techniques such as role play scenarios which relate them to situations and feelings; mime to illustrate hobbies or reactions to foods, events picked from the topic box.

The final stage is to put together the elements that have been practiced separately as a complete, skilled performance.

Once students are able to use non-verbal communication in a scenario the focus can change to the reading of non-verbal cues. Students work in pairs and choose a topic to discuss. One is given a clue to act as if bored, excited etc and the partner identifies the non-verbal message. Adults may need to demonstrate the exercise before it is practiced by the students. Each student should have the opportunity for their partner to be interested, enthusiastic about what they are saying as well as uninterested.



Session 6

Adapting what is said and how, to the needs/expectations of different people/groups

- Warm up activities
- Role play giving the same core message to different people e.g. how would you say that you were sorry to be late to
 - Tutor
 - Parent
 - Friend
 - Royalty

Discuss tone, word choice, body language. Practice in pairs

- Role play giving different types of message e.g. delivering sad or happy news. Match the facial expression and body language to the message
- Discuss the differences in style of delivery and the reasons for this
- Choose words, phrases, greetings that would be appropriate to use with friends, parents, teachers etc. This can be made into an activity:-
 - Chart with columns/segments for each category of person
 - Students select a card with a greeting/message and place it on the chart
 - The group discusses whether the choice is appropriate, if the same card might be appropriate for any other person or group

Session 7

Cueing in the Listener by giving the appropriate amount of detail

- Warm up activities
- Adults role play examples of not cueing in the listener e.g. initiation: "*Did you watch it last night?*"
- Students discuss what the listener needs to know in order to respond e.g. that the person is a football fan and that there was football on TV. What question would have cued in the listener?
- Discuss the component parts to a question
 - What does the listener need to know?
 - What cues are available in the question?
 - What is the knowledge base of this person? E.g. does he/she know I like football?

The issue of giving the appropriate amount of detail in a response is linked to having an understanding of the interests and knowledge base of the person e.g.

Q: *Is the computer working?*

A: *No, it's not plugged in. Can I help you log on?*

Or

A: *No, the modem is incompatible with this particular software system which means that and so on*

Role play scenarios to help the students adapt the detail of their response to the knowledge base of the other person, to ask checking questions when this is not known, to monitor expression and body language to see if the message is pitched appropriately.



A Sample Session Plan – Asking and Responding to Questions

- Welcome: Bean Bag – name something good. The bean bag or soft toy is used to signal ‘turn to talk’. In this group the students said their name and something good that had happened to them that week. They then threw the object to another student, first calling their name and waiting for eye contact. The empty chair game completed the warm up activities.
- Review of last week’s homework – answering a question from two nominated teachers in class
- Introduction of the topic
- Activity 1 – matching up
- Activity 2 – ‘Who am I?’ game in pairs. Pictures of sport/pop/TV personalities
- Activity 3 – Question cards: Individuals ask a question to a group member in whole group
- Target skills for the week: nominate two teachers to ask for help/ask a question. The students are encouraged to set very specific goals as these are easier to monitor and ensure a successful outcome.
- Strength cards – relaxation exercises: The strength cards are a flexible resource. In this context the students were asked to pick a strength card for the person on their left which illustrated something good about their behaviour in the group.

