

PSHCE: Unit 02 Crime (or equivalent)

This unit has been adapted from the QCA plan at the standards site to relate to crime near railways.

ABOUT THIS UNIT

In this unit pupils learn about crime and the criminal justice system in relation to young people. They do so by investigating crime and its impact on the community. Pupils consider why young people become involved in crime and the consequences for different people in the community, including young offenders, victims and others. They find out how the criminal justice system operates and about the roles of different agencies.

The activities can be arranged as a series of sessions or as an off-timetable event involving a range of 'expert witnesses', eg British Transport Police officers, magistrates, victim support workers.

Objective

Children should learn:

- Some of the causes and consequences of crime
- How crime affects those that work on the railways and the community
- About the roles of some of the agencies that work with young offenders

Resources:

A range of resources are available on the Track Off website including information on the legal consequences of railway crime as well as a range of items from the the Sound, Video and Image Banks at www.trackoff.org/zone:

- Animation of young people being anti-social on board a train (clips from 'Off the Rails' video)
- Newspaper reports about inappropriate behaviour near railways
- Images of vandalism to trains and equipment
- Images of young people behaving inappropriately
- Images of police and paramedics

For a few of the sessions it would be ideal to use a computer suite.

Introduce the lesson by showing a series of images and video clips showing inappropriate behaviour on or near the railways.

Activity:

In small groups discuss the reasons why some people become involved in railway- related crimes.

What kinds of crimes are committed?

Using the resource banks on this website allow children to look at how crimes are reported in newspapers.

Ask pupils to consider the consequences of specific cases of crime against the railway. They could look at newspaper accounts and police reports or you could use fictitious scenarios.

Pupils should be able to identify who is affected and how they are affected e.g. a victim of a railway crime related incident, the driver of the train, relatives of the victim, police/fire officers/paramedics, hospital staff, witnesses and magistrates.

Some pupils may have personal or family experiences of the consequences of crime that is relevant to this focus.

In groups continue research. Pupils need to look at the point of view of a service or organisation in the community when crime against the railways occurs. Pupils could use libraries, write to organisations and research view points of the police or fire service.

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They could research into support agencies such as Victim Support or Youth Offending Teams.

- They could also use the internet to help with their research
- Information about local crime is published on local authority websites, as is the local community safety strategy or crime and disorder strategy. Local police can supply crime figures, and the Home Office publishes crime statistics annually in Criminal Statistics in England and Wales. Information about railway crime is available on the facts and figures section of the Track Off website www.trackoff.org
- Information on the criminal justice system can be found at www.criminal-justice-system.gov.uk
- Information on Youth Action Groups (for secondary age pupils) and Primary Action (for primary age pupils) can be obtained from www.crimeconcern.org.uk

The groups of pupils are to report back to the class, explaining the impact of juvenile crime near railways from the point of view of the agency they have researched e.g. British Transport Police, Ambulance or Youth Offending Teams etc.

If it is possible you could arrange for a representative of a service the pupils have researched to visit the school. They could discuss with the pupils their experience of dealing with incidents on railway tracks and how it affects them. Encourage pupils to ask questions.

At the end of this unit

By the end of this pupils can appreciate that crime towards the railways affects a range of people in different ways, directly and indirectly.

They will be able to consider the viewpoints of other people.

Take part responsibly in group and class discussion, communicating effectively and asking appropriate questions.

RAILWAY CRIME FACTS

Railway crime is a big problem for the people who run the railway tracks and the trains. It takes place at railway stations, on trains and on railway tracks.

At railway stations, crimes include stealing cars and from cars, hurting station users or staff, theft from customers and damaging station buildings.

On trains, crimes include stealing peoples' suitcases, hurting passengers or train staff and damage by football hooligans.

On railway tracks, crimes include walking on or across the railway line without using an official crossing, throwing things at trains, putting things on the track in front of trains, dumping rubbish at the side of tracks and damaging or spraying graffiti on railway buildings.

These are some of the shocking facts about railway crime:

- Half of all damage to trains is usually caused by children between the ages of 5 and 16 throwing rocks or bricks from the side of the tracks or putting things on the tracks.
- 4 million objects are thrown at trains every year.
- 640,000 objects are put on the tracks in front of trains every year.
- It costs the railway industry £260 million every year to repair damaged trains and tracks, replace staff who may have been shocked or injured and in delays to trains.
- It is estimated 27 million crimes of going on the railway tracks without permission (trespass) are carried out each year - 17million of these crimes are committed by adults and 10 million by children under the age of 16.
- It is estimated these crimes of going on the railway tracks without permission are carried out by 1 million adults and 1.3 million children under the age of 16.

British Transport Police is a special police force that deals with all railway crime.

- British Transport Police will visit the homes and schools of young children who carry out acts of railway crime.
- Walking on or near the tracks without permission, except at an official crossing, is a crime - people can be fined up to £1,000.
- Throwing things at trains is a crime - people can be sent to prison for life for a serious offence.
- Putting things on the track that can damage or derail a train is a crime - people can be sent to prison for life for a serious offence.

Going on or near the railway tracks, either to take a short cut or to carry out other acts of railway crime, is very dangerous.

- A train cannot stop quickly or swerve like a car. Even a slow moving freight train cannot stop quickly as it can weigh up to 2,000 tonnes.
- At a speed of 225 kilometres an hour an inter-city train can travel over 2,000 metres (20 football pitches) in 7 seconds.
- If the driver puts on his emergency brakes it would take 2 kilometres metres for an inter-city train to stop.
- Track switching points can trap feet causing serious injury or trap someone in front of a train.
- Electricity from overhead cables on the railway can 'jump' across gaps because it is at a high voltage of 25,000 volts - you do not have to actually touch the cables to be badly burnt or killed.
- Dangling anything near a high voltage overhead cable can result in the electricity jumping and travelling up the item being held.
- Some railway tracks have a 'live' extra rail that looks like a normal railway line but carries electricity at 750 volts, enough to cause very serious burn injuries or even death if you step on it