



BODY CONFIDENCE

CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS

Be Real is campaigning to change attitudes to body image and help all of us put health above appearance and be confident in our bodies.

The *Body Confidence Campaign Toolkit for Schools* is designed to help your school develop body confidence in students aged 11 to 16, because body confidence has a direct impact on students' academic performance and general wellbeing.

#BeRealSchool

berealcampaign.co.uk





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Toolkit contents

The following materials can be found either within this document or the *Body Confidence Campaign Toolkit for Schools* zip folder.

Introduction

Training teachers

- Mapping your school's journey: school checklist *PDF poster, zip folder*
- Teacher guide
- Tips for teachers: internal training presentation *PowerPoint presentation, zip folder*
- Teaching body confidence across the curriculum
- Recommended resources
- Be body confident: staffroom poster
- School assembly presentation *PowerPoint presentation, zip folder*

Empowering students

- Student campaign guide
- Student campaign presentation template *PowerPoint presentation, zip folder*
- Student campaign document template *Word document, zip folder*
- Student-facing posters (series of four)

Engaging parents and partners

- Guide for parents and guardians
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- Engaging partners

Acknowledgements





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Introduction

The *Body Confidence Campaign Toolkit for Schools* is designed to help your school develop body confidence in students aged 11 to 16, because body confidence has a direct impact on students' academic performance and general wellbeing.

This toolkit is designed for all those with an interest in or a responsibility for PSHE, PSE, Health and Wellbeing or Personal Development and Mutual Understanding. Your school may already be doing things that support body confidence, or body confidence may be an issue that hasn't been tackled before; either way, the *Body Confidence Campaign Toolkit for Schools* is designed to help your school on its journey to supporting body confidence.

What is body confidence?

Body confidence is when someone accepts, appreciates, and thinks and behaves positively in relation to their body and appearance. The effects of having body confidence (or lacking it) are wide reaching, including a direct impact on academic participation and performance.

Many young people are unhappy with their bodies – as a result, they are likely to be less physically healthy and are more vulnerable to mental health issues. A lack of body confidence can lead to poorer classroom participation and performance and young people opting out of basic life activities like going to the doctor, joining a sports team or club or even giving an opinion.²

Adolescent girls who score well in body esteem have greater confidence about their ability to do maths and do better academically.¹

Half of students (52%) aged 11 to 16 often worry about the way they look.³



1. Halliwell, E., Diedrichs, P.C., & Orbach, S. (2014) *Costing the invisible: A review of the evidence examining the links between body image, aspirations, education and workplace confidence*
2. Government Equalities Office (2014) *Body Confidence: Findings from the British Social Attitudes Survey*
3. Be Real (2016) *Education Programme Survey*



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47% of girls aged 11 to 14 opt out of everyday activities such as swimming and speaking up in class because they don't like how they look.⁵

Three quarters of students (76%) aged 11–16 who learnt about body confidence said it made them feel more positive about themselves.⁶

Why should my school be supporting body confidence?

Schools have a vital role to play in supporting body confidence. By encouraging a body confident culture throughout the school, as well as incorporating it into classroom teaching and student-led activities, students' physical and mental wellbeing are nurtured. Ofsted has identified a strong correlation between schools that achieve a high grade for PSHE and those that are graded outstanding for overall effectiveness.⁴

Fostering body confidence is an important aspect of addressing the emotional health and wellbeing of students. By developing body confidence, your school will be helping its students become resilient, empathic, critical thinkers who understand that health is of greater value than appearance. This can be embedded within improvement plans, policies and practice, and will benefit from involvement by students, staff and possibly parents to develop, review and update policies. This will ensure support for body confidence is integrated, sustained and monitored for impact.

Support from the senior leadership team is essential to ensure body confidence is embedded throughout the school, but addressing body confidence does not require a lot of additional leadership work. Appointing a body confidence champion is an effective way of incorporating body confidence into the school's culture (page 3).

4. Public Health England (2014) *The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment: A briefing for head teachers, governors and staff in education settings*

5. PSHE Association (2016) *Teacher guidance: Key standards in teaching about body image*

6. Be Real (2016) *Education Programme Survey*



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Appointing a body confidence champion

One of the most effective ways of getting started is to appoint a body confidence champion. This person doesn't have to be an expert on the issue, just someone who is interested in it and can take the lead in promoting the campaign within the school. The body confidence champion might also find resources, organise training, support other staff and ensure the school's partners are informed about the campaign.

Toolkit resources

Body confidence can be developed through a mixture of classroom teaching and whole-school practices – none of which requires a lot of time, but all of which can help to change attitudes and improve young people's confidence.

We have created resources to help you and your school engage teachers, students, parents and partners on your journey to becoming a body confident school. A full list of the resources within this toolkit can be found on the *Toolkit contents* page.

Become a Be Real body confident school

We're rewarding schools that are committed to supporting and promoting body confidence with a [Be Real School badge](#). You can use the badge on your stationery, website and other materials, to share your school's achievement with your community.



To be awarded your badge tell us what your school is doing to promote body confidence at: berealcampaign.co.uk/schoolbadge



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Teacher guide: **Being confident about body confidence**

What is body confidence?

Body confidence is when someone accepts, appreciates, and thinks and behaves positively in relation to their body and appearance.

Why does body confidence matter?

People who lack body confidence are likely to have less confidence in general, which can hold them back from achieving their full potential. They are also likely to be less physically healthy and are more vulnerable to mental health issues.

"I think that the key thing is a lack of understanding of how important the issue is, and how it affects students."

Secondary school teacher

More than a third of students (36%) aged 11 to 16 say they would do whatever it takes to look good.⁷

Three quarters of students (76%) aged 11–16 who learnt about body confidence said it made them feel more positive about themselves.⁷



7. Be Real (2016) Education Programme Survey

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Why has body confidence become such a big issue?

Body image has always been a particular challenge during adolescence, but those challenges have been heightened by attitudes and activities that have become prevalent in society today. These include:

- celebrities who are hailed as having 'perfect' bodies or berated for being less than perfect
- the increasing level of obesity in the population
- the promotion of diet trends such as 'clean eating'
- the proliferation of underweight models in the media
- the manipulation of images to create impossible 'perfect' bodies
- the ease and frequency with which people can take and share photographs of themselves to compare with other people, e.g. on social networks.

Students are particularly vulnerable to body confidence issues during puberty, when their own appearance is changing and they take more control over their appearance. As students are particularly vulnerable to the messages transmitted by these social trends, it is vitally important that they feel confident about their own bodies so they can interrogate and challenge these messages to avoid unhealthy and damaging behaviours.

"I think it's so important for kids to be able to feel free to discuss things like this for mental health."

Secondary school teacher

Can and should people of all shapes and sizes have body confidence?

Yes. Body confidence is about valuing and protecting your body. People who are body confident are more likely to take care of themselves, including exercising an appropriate amount and having a balanced and healthy relationship with food. People who are body confident, irrespective of their size and weight, are more likely to eat fruit and vegetables, less likely to go on unhealthy diets and are less likely to gain or fluctuate in weight.

It is important to broach the topic of health and body size and shape in a way that does not undermine students' body confidence.

Do I need body confidence?

Yes! Not only is body confidence important for your own wellbeing, but you can be a role model for your students too. Help them boost their body confidence by showing them what to do.

Think about the way you talk about your own body. It has become socially acceptable to criticise the way you look, to talk about 'bad' foods and to comment on other people's appearances. Unfortunately these bad habits send out negative messages about how much we value appearance, which undermines body confidence and self-esteem.

Try to:

- recognise your own personal qualities and strengths
- recognise the qualities and strengths of other people too
- celebrate the fact that everyone is different
- show respect to other people.

Try not to:

- take part in 'body talk' (being negative about your own or other's appearance)
- compliment people on weight loss
- imply that someone's appearance is the most important thing about them
- discuss unflattering photos of celebrities
- talk negatively about how appearance changes with age
- talk about 'junk food' or 'bad' vs 'good' foods; instead talk about eating the right amount of different types of foods.



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Is body confidence just an issue for girls?

In the past, body confidence has been seen as a greater issue for girls, but it is increasingly recognised as an issue for boys too, who feel the need to have a 'perfect' look as promoted by male models in advertisements, or who perceive protein shakes as a way of achieving a 'perfect' look. Consequently, it's important that both boys and girls are encouraged to be body confident, and that both male and female teachers are aware of the issues and ready to tackle them.

40% of boys aged 11–16 said that they had used, or would consider using, protein shakes or supplements to change the way they look.⁸

Tackling the issue with boys and girls

Be aware that some boys and girls may be comfortable discussing body image and body confidence in a group, whereas other boys and girls may find this uncomfortable and resort to teasing and ridicule. Despite this, it can be beneficial to teach body confidence to mixed classes as it allows boys to appreciate the issues faced by girls (and vice versa). Use ground rules (page 6), established at the beginning of the session, to manage inappropriate behaviour.

Research suggests that, on the whole, mixed settings provide the most effective forum for learning, but that young people sometimes find they can talk more freely about especially sensitive topics when the class is divided by gender. You might like to use a combination of approaches, or ask your students which approach they would prefer.

8. Be Real (2016) Education Programme Survey

Body confidence-friendly language

Think carefully about how and what you communicate when speaking to students.

- Avoid using language that focuses on weight, e.g. 'skinny', 'obese', 'fat', 'chubby', 'big'; try to focus on health and body functions (e.g. 'strong', 'healthy' bodies).
- Avoid talking about 'junk food' or 'bad' vs 'good' foods; develop the idea that we should aim to eat the right amounts of different types of foods rather than stigmatising foods.
- Avoid commenting on your own body change behaviours, such as dieting, exercising and weight training.

Discourage students from making comments about other people's weight or appearance, whether these are negative or positive comments. Instead, encourage them to recognise their personal qualities and strengths and to show each other respect. Remember that being body confident means valuing health above appearance.

Are there any activities I should avoid in my teaching?

To avoid damaging students' body confidence, activities that require them to disclose either objective or subjective estimates of their body shape and size should not be used, including:

- weight
- body mass index (BMI)
- measurements of the body
- clothes size
- comparison of build or body type.

If students begin to focus on obesity, it is important to remind them that taking care of ourselves and implementing healthy behaviours are important no matter what our shape or size. You might also want to discuss how self-hatred, or being unkind to others because of their size, tends to discourage healthy behaviours.



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What sort of ground rules are needed when teaching body confidence?

The PSHE Association document [Key standards in teaching about body image](#) provides useful information about setting ground rules for lessons, as well as on teaching about body image in general. Ground rules should include taking a non-judgemental approach, confidentiality, the right to not answer a question or opt out of an activity, openness and avoiding talking about specific situations or experiences.

What if there are students who are at risk of health problems?

You may be aware of issues experienced by some students in your class, but there may be others that you are not aware of who are vulnerable too. For example, they may be recovering from an eating disorder, exercising at excessive levels or have experienced bullying about their weight or appearance. As body confidence is a sensitive topic, it is a good idea to treat all students as 'at risk'.

Is there a risk that some students will become more likely to develop an eating disorder?

Eating disorders are caused by a number of factors so addressing body confidence is not likely to cause a student to develop an eating disorder on its own. However, discussing body confidence and body image may lead some students to explore eating disorders, so it is important to take steps to safeguard vulnerable students.

- Keep pastoral/wellbeing staff informed about lessons you are planning to give on body confidence so they can prepare to follow up with vulnerable pupils if necessary.
- Provide details about where students can go for support if they have concerns.
- Make yourself available to pupils immediately after lessons in case they have concerns.
- Check that the resources you are planning to use do not encourage unhealthy attitudes towards eating, e.g. images of extreme thinness.



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Does a student's sexual orientation have any bearing on body confidence?

Particularly during puberty, students may be dealing with a growing awareness of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This is likely to affect their body confidence too. Encouraging understanding and acceptance of individuality as an aspect of supporting body confidence will help to support students facing these challenges.

How do we encourage body confidence in students that have a disability or disfigurement?

Students who look noticeably different due to a disability or a visible difference (e.g. cleft lip/palate, birthmark or a skin condition such as psoriasis) can be more likely to suffer from low self-esteem and a lack of body confidence. The acceptance of diverse appearances encouraged by the Be Real Campaign will help address this issue; additional work is likely to be needed to address related issues such as bullying.

Sources of additional support

If students need extra support, you could refer them to the school's body confidence champion or the pastoral head.

Alternatively, the following sources of support are recommended by the PSHE Association.

- Body confidence resources for parents and teachers: <http://selfesteem.dove.co.uk>
- Further advice and support on eating disorders: www.b-eat.co.uk
- Supporting pupils with disfigurement: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Supporting pupils with self-harm scars: <http://www.inourhands.com/self-harm-how-to-prepare-for-exposing-your-scars>



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Teaching body confidence across the curriculum

The most effective way to address body confidence is to use a number of different methods and at different times. While one session on body confidence is better than none, a steady drip-feed of information and support is more likely to have long-lasting effects.

While doing any of these activities in isolation should have a positive effect on body confidence, they will have the greatest impact if they are used as part of a whole-school campaign.

This guide demonstrates how the issue can be addressed in many curriculum areas, without the need for lots of extra resources, time or planning. All of these activity ideas support the development of a body confident culture in the school by encouraging students and teachers to reinforce the messages of the campaign.

You can find a list of resources for teaching about body confidence, self-esteem and media literacy in the [Recommended resources](#) list found within the *Body Confidence Campaign Toolkit for Schools*.

The following ideas are intended to be inclusive and can be used in all school settings; for further information on supporting vulnerable groups, see page 29 in the PSHE Association document [Key standards in teaching about body image](#).

As well as improving body confidence, these activity ideas should help students develop empathy, critical thinking, resilience, tolerance, appreciation of diversity, self-esteem and an understanding that health is of greater value than appearance.

All body confidence activities should be delivered with the guidance for supporting body confidence provided within this toolkit. For information about sensitivity towards body confidence, see: [Tips for teachers: internal training presentation](#) (PowerPoint, zip folder).



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Subject	Activity idea
PSHE/PSE/Health and Wellbeing/Personal Development and Mutual Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the reasons why some people lack body confidence and what can cause this. What effect does it have on physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing? Develop messages for young people to support their body confidence (e.g. using the student campaign materials within the <i>Body Confidence Campaign Toolkit for Schools</i>).
Physical education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide physical activities that also involve intellectual challenges (e.g. fencing, problem-solving activities or adventurous activities) and encourage students to work in a team. Encourage students to identify and try different physical activities, both in school and outside, to find an activity they enjoy doing. Celebrate regular participation as well as achievement.
Media studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how the media present 'ideal' appearances and body shapes and why these ideals are used. Explore how images are manipulated and how some high-profile figures have spoken out against this practice.
Biology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine how genetics creates unique appearances and body shapes – everybody is different. Looking after our bodies is vital – eating a healthy, balanced diet helps our bodies to function properly so we can feel healthy. Avoid activities that involve weighing students, comparing students' body shapes or counting calorie intake as these are likely to have a negative effect on body confidence.
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how views on the 'ideal' appearance have changed over time, and why particular ideals existed (e.g. the size of women's waists or the growth of men's facial hair).
Food and textiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and apply the principles of nutrition and health. Use the principles of nutrition and health to plan healthy menus and prepare dishes.
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how the 'ideal' appearance has changed over time and varies between cultures, e.g. comparing photography in western advertising with African art, or examining how males and females have been represented in art at different times and by different artistic movements. Create artwork that presents a diverse range of appearances.
Photography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how contemporary and historical photographers from different cultures have contributed to changing attitudes towards, and ideas about, body shape and appearance, for both positive and negative effect. Use photography to celebrate diversity.
Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a drama about the negative effects of continuously comparing yourself with images in the media and with your friends, and how to break this habit.
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and critique songs that idealise a 'perfect' look or body, or that criticise someone that does not look perfect. Find songs that celebrate qualities other than looks, or that celebrate diversity; compose songs that challenge the idea of a 'perfect' look.
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a letter to a brand, magazine or website challenging how they use an idealised appearance to sell their product or content. Celebrate non-appearance-based qualities and diversity in stories, letters or poems.

Assemblies

Assemblies can be a good way to disseminate whole-school messages about body confidence. You may wish to lead your own assembly to introduce the issue to your school using the [School assembly presentation resource](#) (PowerPoint, zip folder). Alternatively, you could ask students to present an assembly. They could:

- present a drama (see page 2)
- explain their findings, e.g. as a result of a PSHE/PSE/Health and Wellbeing/Personal Development and Mutual Understanding or media studies investigation into body image
- introduce a student-led campaign (see page 4)
- use the [Student campaign presentation template](#) (PowerPoint, zip folder) to create a presentation.

Tutor time

You can use tutor time to talk to students about how they are managing to put the body confidence messages from other lessons into practice, such as avoiding comparing themselves with others or avoiding body talk. Returning to the subject on a regular basis will help reinforce the messages of the body confidence campaign.

If it has not been covered in other subjects, you could also use tutor time to talk to students about the role of social media in body confidence. The ability to easily share photos using smartphones has created issues both regarding the appropriateness of the photos and the comments made by peers about them. Encourage students to think carefully about what they share and with whom; they could also think about how to use social media in more positive ways (page 2).



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Student-led campaign

Student-led activities about body confidence are valuable in two ways.

- They provide an opportunity for teachers to assess how effectively messages about body confidence have been communicated to students, following relevant teaching activities.
- A campaign run by students is likely to have a greater impact on other students than one run by teachers.

The student campaign materials within the *Body Confidence Campaign Toolkit for Schools* can be used to help students create their own materials for their body confidence campaign. The campaign could be planned within lessons, e.g. PSHE/PSE/Health and Wellbeing/Personal Development and Mutual Understanding or PE lessons, or as an extra-curricular activity, e.g. in tutor time or via the school council.

Older students may choose to use social media in a positive way as part of their campaign. The hashtag #BeRealSchool has been created to allow students and teachers to share their work on social media. However, any social media campaign must comply with your school's policy on IT and online safety and it should not target students younger than 13 years old.

It is important to make sure the campaign is checked by staff before it is launched, to make sure the information and messages used in the campaign are correct, safe and appropriate. This could be overseen by the schools' body confidence champion (see the [Introduction](#) to the *Body Confidence Campaign Toolkit for Schools* for more information).

The *Dove Confident Me Workshops for Schools* includes a session that you may find useful when supporting students working on a body confidence campaign. See: [Session 5: Be the change](#).

We hope to be able to showcase some of the best Be Real school campaigns with the Be Real community in the future. Please make sure you collect photographs and other evidence of your school's campaign and its impact, so we can share your fantastic work with others.



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Recommended resources

There are many resources available to schools for supporting teaching about body confidence. This guide will help you identify which resources will be most effective and best suit the needs of your students and your school.

We recommend that, wherever possible, your school uses resources that are evidence based. Evidence-based resources have been evaluated in rigorous research, and have been proven to improve body confidence and to be useful to teachers and students. By using evidence-based resources, you can be more confident of facilitating meaningful and lasting improvements to your students' body confidence.

Dove Confident Me Workshops for Schools

In particular, we recommend using the *Dove Confident Me Workshops for Schools*. These co-educational workshops are evidence based and designed for students aged 11 to 14, but might also work well with older groups. The workshops are available as either a five-session series or as a one-off session for teachers who have less time available.

The workshops have been endorsed by the PSHE Association. Research has also shown that students who participate in the five-session *Dove Confident Me* workshops have improved body image, higher self-esteem, and feel more confident to participate in social and academic activities. Teachers and students also report that they enjoy taking part in these lessons.

Download the *Dove Confident Me Workshops for Schools* from:
www.selfesteem.dove.co.uk/teachers



Evidenced-based resources

The following resources have been evaluated in rigorous scientific research with the input of teachers and students. They are proven to improve students' body confidence and students and teachers report that they enjoy the resources.

Resource	Intended audience	Age range	Cost	Source
Dove Confident Me from Dove Self-Esteem Project Interactive classroom workshops focusing on media, peers and resilience. Proven to promote self-esteem and body confidence in students aged 11 to 14. Includes single- and five-session formats.	Boys and girls	11–14 years	Free	Download from: www.selfesteem.dove.co.uk/teachers
The Body Project Interactive workshops for small groups of 6–10 girls outside of the classroom, proven to reduce body image concerns among girls and young women aged 14 to 25. Available in four- and six-session formats.	Girls	14+ years	Free (with option to buy official manual)	Download from: www.bodyprojectsupport.org or https://www.amazon.co.uk/Body-Project-Dissonance-Based-Prevention-Intervention/dp/0199859248/ref=dp_ob_title_bk
Media Smart from Flinders University (Australia) Eight-lesson media literacy classroom programme proven to improve body image and mood among girls and boys.	Boys and girls	11–14 years	AUS \$450 per school (approx. £230); purchase of the programme entitles a school to a site licence covering all students	Purchase online at: http://www.flinders.edu.au/sabs/psychology/services/flinders-university-services-for-eating-disorders/mediasmart/

Further resources endorsed by the PSHE Association

These additional resources have been recommended by the PSHE Association based on teachers and experts reporting that they are useful in the classroom, although they have not been formally evaluated in scientific research.

Resource	Intended audience	Age range	Cost	Source
Get Media Smart: Body Image and Advertising from Media Smart UK Two lessons providing an introduction to body image and advertising, with the aim of building emotional resilience in young people. Although aimed at younger students, it may be adapted or used as a transition resource.	Boys and girls	9–11 years	Free	Download from: http://mediasmart.uk.com/resources/teaching-resources/body-image
Islington Healthy Choices and Body Image scheme of work from Islington Healthy Schools A series of four lessons and accompanying notes, activity sheets and images.	Boys and girls, especially in schools where there are concerns about young people who are overweight, not eating healthily or are not active enough	11–14 years	Free to Islington schools; available to purchase elsewhere for £25	Order a PDF or CD from hayley.harkins@islington.gov.uk
Taking Action on Body Image – an active citizenship toolkit for those working with young people developed for use by National Citizen Service An 18-page PDF outlining a one-hour workshop aimed at promoting discussion around body image.	Boys and girls	16–18 years	Free	Download from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/370677/Body_image_final_17.10.14.pdf

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Resource	Intended audience	Age range	Cost	Source
This Girl Can from Sport England A media campaign launched in early 2015 to encourage girls and women to take up sports.	Girls	11–18 years	Free	Watch online at: https://youtu.be/jsP0W7-tEOc?list=PLVS1 Find out more at: www.thisgirlcan.co.uk
Caring for gender non-conforming young people from Gender Identity Research and Education Society and partners, funded by NHS Education Kent, Surrey and Sussex An interactive online resource aimed at raising awareness about gender variance in young people.	Primarily teachers, but the videos can be shared with boys and girls	11–16 years	Free	Access online at: http://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/gender-variance

For more information on any of these resources, see pages 35–46 in the PSHE Association document [Key standards in teaching about body image](#).

BE REAL

BE BODY CONFIDENT!

Be a model of body confidence for your students.

Do:

- talk respectfully and kindly about and to other people, and yourself
- focus on individuals' strengths and qualities other than appearance
- encourage acceptance of individuals' differences and diversity
- challenge media images of 'perfect' appearances
- encourage students to look after and respect their bodies by eating healthily and being physically active.

Don't:

- discuss people's weight and appearance
- use language that focuses on weight (e.g. 'skinny', 'fat')
- talk about 'junk food' or 'bad' vs 'good' foods
- comment on your own body change behaviours (e.g. dieting, exercising, weight training).

If you would like to know more about our body confidence campaign, please speak to our body confidence champion:

#BeRealSchool

berealcampaign.co.uk



YMCA



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Student campaign guide

As part of the Be Real Campaign, your school has been working to support body confidence in all its students. You may have taken part in lessons or workshops about body confidence or taken part in other activities.

Now we're challenging you to create a campaign to share the messages about body confidence with your school and to remind everyone of the importance of body confidence.

You could run this campaign in a variety of ways. For example, your campaign could be a project for your class or the school council, it could be run across a whole school year or phase, or it could be developed during a collapsed timetable day.

Where should you start?

It's a good idea to find out what the students in your school think body confidence is. Some students may have very different ideas compared to what you have in mind.

Next you can start to think about the message your campaign needs to communicate. For example, do you need to remind people what body confidence is, remind them that everyone should be able to feel body confident, or remind everyone that we should celebrate diversity?

You could use the ideas listed below as starting points.

- Avoid comparing your appearance with other people.
- Try not to talk about appearances all the time (look for people's other qualities).
- Remember that images published online and in magazines and newspapers are often airbrushed – they are not real or true.

Another possible way to develop your campaign is to research what celebrities have said about body image and body confidence. Are there some good role models who show health is more important than appearance?

You may find there are particular concerns among the students in your school, such as feeling pressured to share and compare photos on social media. Think about how you could address these concerns to make your campaign really effective.





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Communicating your message

When you've agreed your message, plan how you are going to communicate it around the school. This is an issue that affects everyone in your school, so make sure you use different ways to communicate your message so you reach everyone.

Take care if you are planning to use images in your campaign. Make sure any images celebrate diversity and do not use unrealistic beauty ideals (such as airbrushed models).

Leaflets

We've included a simple branded template, which you can use to create leaflets or other materials for your campaign.

Make sure you keep your information brief and accurate – people are more likely to read it if it's short and sweet!

Think about how you're going to share your leaflets. Will you hand them out at break time, put them in a leaflet stand in the school entrance or ask tutors to give every student a copy?

Posters

You may wish to display some of the student-facing posters included within the *Body Confidence Campaign Toolkit for Schools* (ask your teacher for these). Alternatively you might want to make your own.

Posters are designed to be read from a distance and in a short time – think about how quickly you walk past posters in the corridor. So keep your message really simple and clear to make them as effective as possible. Will you use one message/design or create a series that reinforces your message?

Think carefully about where to display the posters: where are they most likely to be seen, and where will they have the most impact? Check with a teacher before you put them up.



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School website

Ask your teacher if there is a place on the school website where you can put information about your campaign. Keep the information short and use sub-headings to break it up and make it easier to read.

Find out whether there's a way of letting all the students know (and possibly parents too) about the information, e.g. through the school email system.

Assembly

We've created a set of PowerPoint slides ([*Student campaign presentation template*](#)) that provides some basic information about body confidence and why it is an issue for young people. You can add to or adapt the presentation to introduce your campaign to the whole school.

You could also use assemblies to present a drama or showcase some of the work created in the school around the topic of body confidence.

Social media

Important: you will need to check your school's policy on using social media before using it. You'll also need to remember that many social media sites do not allow young people aged under 13 to join, so if you use social media as part of your campaign, you'll also need something else in your campaign to reach younger students. For example, you could create a display using some of the positive messages from social media, which younger students can then add their own comments to using sticky notes.

Think about how you can encourage positive and responsible use of social networks to challenge the pressures to look a certain way, and to ask other students to reflect on how they might reinforce appearance ideals and pressures through their use of social media.

It's really important that the information, images and messages in your campaign are suitable to share with everyone and cannot cause upset or offence. Whatever materials you create, make sure you check them with a teacher before you share them with the school.

BE REAL

**EVERYONE IS
INDIVIDUAL
— CELEBRATE IT!**

#BeRealSchool

berealcampaign.co.uk



YMCA

BE REAL

**DON'T COMPARE
YOURSELF
TO OTHER PEOPLE,
YOU'RE ONE
OF A KIND.**

#BeRealSchool

berealcampaign.co.uk



YMCA

BE REAL

**CELEBRATE
WHAT YOUR
BODY CAN DO,
RATHER THAN
HOW IT LOOKS.**

#BeRealSchool

berealcampaign.co.uk



YMCA

BE REAL

**LET'S TALK
ABOUT SOMETHING
OTHER THAN
THE WAY WE
LOOK.**

#BeRealSchool

berealcampaign.co.uk



YMCA



BODY CONFIDENCE
CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS | ENGAGING PARENTS AND PARTNERS

Guide for parents and guardians: Being confident about body confidence

Thanks for taking the time to read this short guide to body confidence, which supports the work your child's school is doing to become a body confident school. If you have any questions or concerns about what is happening at school, please get in touch with your child's form tutor or the head teacher.

What is body confidence?

Body confidence is when someone accepts, appreciates, and thinks and behaves positively in relation to their body and appearance.

Why does body confidence matter?

People who lack body confidence are likely to have less confidence in general, which can hold them back from achieving their full potential. They are also likely to be less physically healthy and are more vulnerable to mental health issues.

Recent research by the Be Real Campaign has shown that half of students (52%) aged 11–16 often worry about the way they look. More than three fifths of students (63%) aged 11–16 say what others think of the way they look is important to them. More than a third of students (36%) aged 11–16 say they would do whatever it takes to look good.





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Why has body confidence become such a big issue?

As well as the challenges of going through puberty, young people today are also dealing with lots of other pressures on body image, such as:

- celebrities being criticised for being less than perfect or praised for appearing to have a 'perfect' body
- rising obesity levels
- dieting trends such as 'clean eating' and fasting, which label foods as 'good' or 'bad'
- images being manipulated to create impossibly 'perfect' bodies in advertisements
- sharing and comparing photographs on social networks.

Is it just an issue for girls?

In the past, body confidence has been seen as a greater issue for girls, but it is increasingly being recognised as an issue for boys too, who feel the need to have a 'perfect' look as promoted by male models in advertisements, or who perceive protein shakes as a way of achieving a 'perfect' look. Research by the Be Real Campaign revealed that 40% of boys aged 11–16 said that they had used, or would consider using protein shakes or supplements to change the way they look.

What can I do to help?

As a parent/guardian, you have a really important role to play. Research by the Be Real Campaign found that students were more likely to turn to their parents for support on body confidence than anyone else. That doesn't mean you have to have all the answers, but there are some really simple things you can do to help your child develop their own body confidence, and you should find that you feel more body confident too.

It's a good idea to start by thinking about the way you talk about your own body. Do you tend to criticise the way you look? Do you talk about 'bad' foods, talk about exercise in terms of losing weight rather than being fit and active, or wish you looked different?



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Most of us fall into these bad habits at some point in our lives but these actions send out messages that we don't like the way we look and that it's okay to behave like this – yet we wouldn't want our children to copy this.

Try to:

- encourage your child to recognise their personal qualities and strengths
- recognise the qualities and strengths of your child, and of other people too
- celebrate the fact that everyone is different
- show respect to other people.

Try not to:

- take part in 'body talk' (being negative about your own appearance)
- compliment people on weight loss
- imply that someone's appearance is the most important thing about them
- discuss unflattering photos of celebrities
- talk negatively about how appearance changes with age
- talk about 'junk food' or 'bad' vs 'good' foods; instead talk about eating the right amount of different types of foods.

Your child may find body confidence a difficult topic to discuss, but try to give your child opportunities to raise any concerns they have. Remember to listen carefully and avoid judging or dismissing their feelings (e.g. "Don't be silly, you look fine!"). While it can be tempting to give advice or try to find solutions for their problems, encourage them to find their own solutions (e.g. "You sound upset about this. What do you think we could do that would help?").



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Where can I find out more about body confidence?

The Dove Self-Esteem Project (www.selfesteem.dove.co.uk) has useful information for parents. Although these materials are aimed at parents of girls, it will give insight into boosting self-esteem, bullying and the role of media for parents of boys too. Research with mothers and daughters in the UK shows that when parents read and engage with the articles on this website for 30 minutes, their own body image improves and their child's self-esteem and mood improves too. You can also download 'Uniquely Me', a useful guide for parents (selfesteem.dove.co.uk/Assets/Downloadable/Uniquely_Me_a_parents_guide_to_building_girls_body_confidence.pdf).

What should I do if I'm worried about my child?

Having low body confidence doesn't mean someone has, or is going to develop, a major health problem. However, if you are concerned about your child, try speaking to your GP, the charity Beat (www.b-eat.co.uk) or Find Get Give (www.findgetgive.com), an online directory of mental health support services that work with 13–25 year olds.



BODY CONFIDENCE

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Engaging partners

Partners and organisations that form part of the school's community have an important role to play in reinforcing body confidence messages. These might include:

- school nurses
- catering staff
- clubs, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Guides, Scouts, performing arts clubs, holiday clubs
- feeder schools
- schools in your network, e.g. a federation or multi-academy trust (MAT)
- faith organisations.

By involving these organisations in the campaign, you can make sure they are communicating the same messages as the school rather than contradicting or undermining them. They may also identify ways in which they can support the campaign, e.g. by offering different physical activities or activities that help boost self-esteem.

Governors also have an important role to play in the campaign. The [Mapping your school's journey: school checklist](#) (PDF poster, zip folder) is particularly useful for them to use when assessing where the school is currently and how to increase its support of body confidence.

Tell them about body confidence

Keep these partners informed about what your school is doing for the Be Real Campaign and why. For example, you may want to provide the [Guide for parents and guardians](#) or the [Tips for teachers: internal training presentation](#) (PowerPoint, zip folder) to help them understand some of the practical actions they can take.

If possible, discuss with the partners/organisers how they could support the school campaign, particularly in ways that are not possible within school. This will help reinforce the campaign and provide opportunities for students who do not feel comfortable getting involved in activities in school to take alternative action.

Tell partners/organisers about berealcampaign.co.uk and this toolkit, so they can explore and use the materials themselves.





**BODY CONFIDENCE
CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS**

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PSHE Association

The PSHE Association is the national body for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, leading the effort to ensure every pupil receives high-quality provision. The Association provides advice, resources and support and other membership services to a national network of teachers and other professionals across England: www.pshe-association.org.uk/membership

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Materials adapted from the Australian Government Proposed National
Strategy on Body Image (2009) [http://www.eatingdisorderhope.com/
pdf/Proposed-National-Strategy-on-Body-Image_australia.pdf](http://www.eatingdisorderhope.com/pdf/Proposed-National-Strategy-on-Body-Image_australia.pdf)

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