

# Send My Friend to School

## Make schools safe – activities

### Activity 1 – What makes your school safe?

This activity aims to engage young people in thinking critically about school safety in their own lives. They will begin to identify the different types of risks and dangers children face, how these risks and dangers are reduced, and who is responsible for managing different types of risks and dangers.

You will need a large sheet of paper and pens in three colours.

1. Think of the risks and dangers you and your friends face during the school day. After discussing a few examples begin to classify them according to whether they occur outside the school or inside the school. Write the risk(s) and danger(s) down in your first colour.

Outside the school	Inside the school
e.g. heavy traffic on the road outside the school gate	e.g. bullying by older year groups

2. Next add solutions that would reduce these risks and dangers to your chart in a second colour.

Outside the school	Inside the school
e.g. heavy traffic on the road outside the school gate e.g. campaign to have a pedestrian crossing outside the school	e.g. bullying by older year groups e.g. the school introduces a new anti-bullying policy

3. Finally take a third colour and add who is responsible for finding a solution to the problem.

Outside the school	Inside the school
e.g. heavy traffic on the road outside the school gate e.g. campaign to have a pedestrian crossing outside the school e.g. the local council roads department	e.g. bullying by older year groups e.g. the school introduces a new anti-bullying policy e.g. the head teacher

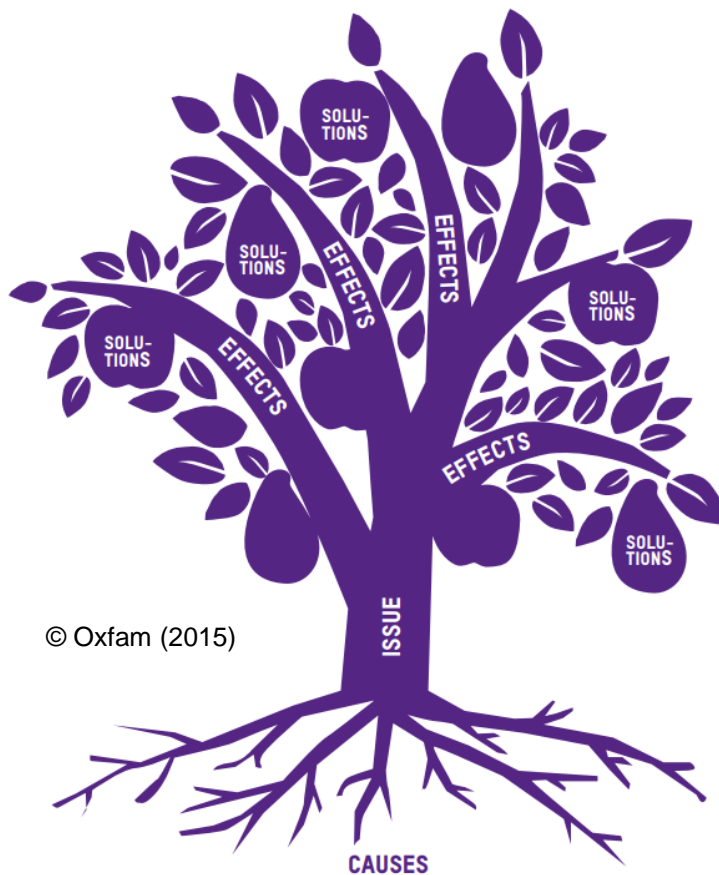
Conclusion: Children’s safety and wellbeing in school is a complicated issue. It’s about things that happen both inside and outside the school, and problems that frequently cannot be solved by a school on its own. Schools in the UK have done much to make British schools safer. Just

think about the implementation of safeguarding in recent years. However, to what extent are schools in the Global South also safe?

## Activity 2 – Children in danger. Issue trees

Schools everywhere should be peaceful and safe places for children and teachers. In many places this is true. However, for millions of children around the world school can be a place of violence and danger.

This activity asks young people to begin to analyse the reasons why schools are not peaceful and safe everywhere, and to begin to propose solutions.



An issue tree is a way of structuring an enquiry to encourage young people to explore the causes, effects and solutions of a given issue. The issue of school safety is complex. Therefore, the class should be divided into groups, with different groups working on the separate issues listed below.

### How to do an issue tree

Young people draw a fruit tree in outline (see left).

They label the trunk of the tree with the chosen issue, the roots of the tree with the causes of the issue, the branches with the effects of the issue and the fruit with their proposed solutions to the issue.

When each group has finished their issue tree they should present their ideas to the rest of the class. There are two alternative ways of doing this activity:

### Alternative one

Pupils label their issue trees with the issue 'Make Schools Safe'. Selected students read out the four case studies of children who have been placed at danger in and around school (see below). As the case studies are read out the rest of the class completes their issue trees. The information they present can come from the case studies and their own ideas.

## Alternative two

Groups are presented with different issues to work on. These issues are

1. Schools experience life-threatening armed attacks during wars, and armed forces occupy school buildings.
2. Schools are vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes, storms and floods.
3. Girls experience bullying and sexual violence both inside and outside the school.
4. Vulnerable groups of children – e.g. children with disabilities, ethnic minorities etc. – face bullying and physical harm.

After each issue tree is presented ask the class if they can prioritise one issue for attention over the others. What information is needed to be able to do this? Is it even a good idea to try to prioritise one issue over another?

### Activity 3 – What makes schools safe? A diamond nine

The purpose of a *diamond nine*<sup>1</sup> is to promote discussion or reflection about the relative importance of a range of factors. This method of ranking can be used in many different contexts where there is a need to define, prioritise or make decisions. For example, it could be used to evaluate different definitions of ‘development’, or to prioritise classroom rules.

Pupils begin by reading the nine cards with statements describing a safe education. These are based on the issues raised by the *issue tree activity* (Activity 2). Pupils select the statement they think is the most important and place that card at the top of the diamond nine. They then select the next two most important statements and place them in the second row of the diamond nine, and so on as shown in the diagram. By the end of the activity, pupils should have decided the three or four most important elements they would prioritise if they were asked to provide all children with a ‘safe education’.

This activity could be differentiated by asking younger pupils to distribute 20 counters or stickers among the different boxes to reflect which statement (or statements) they feel is the most important. Pupils should be told that there is no minimum or maximum number of counters for any statement. In other words, some statements could have none and they could put all the counters on one if they want.

Print and cut out the diamond nine cards on the next page. A further option is to add blank cards for pupils to write their own ideas.

Allow time at the end of the activity for pupils to share their ideas together.

**DIAMOND NINE RANKING**

1  
2 2  
3 3 3  
4 4  
5

The purpose of diamond nine ranking is to provoke discussion or reflection about the relative importance of a range of factors. This method of ranking can be used in many different contexts where there is a need to define, prioritise or make decisions. For example, it could be used to evaluate nine different definitions of ‘development’, or to select classroom rules.

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<sup>1</sup> Full details about how to organise a diamond nine are given in Oxfam (2015) *Global Citizenship in the Classroom: A guide for teachers*, pp. 15–19 <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/global-citizenship/global-citizenship-guides>

### Diamond nine ranking

<p>A safe education means that the world's governments promise their armies will never attack a school.</p>	<p>A safe education means that schools are never used as military bases or stores.</p>	<p>A safe education means that all schools are built to withstand earthquakes and other natural hazards.</p>
<p>A safe education means that schools should act to stop all gender-based violence and discrimination against girls.</p>	<p>A safe education means that schools should have strong anti-bullying policies.</p>	<p>A safe education means that schools should have secure and hygienic toilets and washing facilities.</p>
<p>A safe education means that corporal (physical) punishment should never be used.</p>	<p>A safe education means that schools should promote equal rights for all children, including girls, LGBT+ young people, minorities and students with disabilities.</p>	<p>A safe education means that young people have a safe daily journey to and from school.</p>

### Activity 3 – Safe schools case studies

The purpose of this activity is for young people to review their thoughts about 'safe schools' in the light of real children's experiences and evidence. Slides 5–8 of the accompanying slideshow introduce the four children whose stories are presented in the case studies.

Parts 1 and 2 of the activity are suitable for all pupils and should be preceded by a discussion of what they consider to be a 'safe school'. Part 3 (shaded in the grid below) is more appropriate for older and more able pupils. Teachers should therefore adapt the template accordingly.

To complete the activity, pupils should review the case studies and evidence, and complete the table provided below. They should weigh up the extent to which the different children attend a 'safe school' and, in the extension activity, how far the safety and wellbeing of children in different circumstances are met by the Safe Schools Declaration, which is summarised below.

### Safe schools?

	1. Are they receiving a 'safe education'? Why/why not?	2. What is missing that would make their education safe? What are their needs?	3. Would the 'Safe Schools Declaration' make their education safe? Why/Why not?
Amnah			
Majid			
Agrina			
Zeinab and Ali			

## Case study: Amnah

**Amnah, 12, lives in the Johor Al Deek area of Gaza in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT)**

'We are not safe. We live near the border. Shooting can start at any time. Going to school can be risky and dangerous; we walk for almost an hour every day along a slippery, bumpy road, sometimes subject to shooting from soldiers. We



have to wake up very early in the dark before the sunrise so we can reach school on time. We feel stressed during our walk to school. We always walk next to each other holding each other's hands. We fear getting shot at by soldiers and we also fear explosions of suspicious objects! We stay away from everything on the road, because it might be explosive!

Last year, I happened to get home early from school. I was waiting for my siblings and cousins to get back and have lunch together. Suddenly we heard shooting, very near to the road we take to school. I was so scared for my siblings and cousins, then we saw them from a distance walking together, crying and very scared, they were running away from the shooting. This was one of the hardest moments in my life; I felt my heart was going to stop!

I am in my seventh grade, and I want to top my class and study hard. My hobby is reading, I read bedtime stories to my little sister Malak. She loves it when I do! My dream is to become a doctor in the future; I have seen many war injuries during the last couple of years. I really wish to become a doctor so I can treat those people and help them!'

Photo: © Paul Evans/Action Aid



## Case study: Majid

**Majid, 15, is from Iraq.**

'I was in the fourth grade when ISIS came and was very good at school. My elder brother always encouraged us to study hard so we could get a proper job when we grow up, but since ISIS came the school was closed.

Everything became very difficult, we didn't have any money or even food,

especially in the last period when the military operations started. Many families went really hungry, everyone was very poor, and day by day the situation got even worse.

In the last few months many families left, and we also wanted to leave but it was very difficult to do so because ISIS would target anyone who was trying to escape. Also because my father and my brother couldn't walk, so we didn't leave, but about two months ago the village became almost empty. Only old people and some farmers stayed, so my father asked us to leave.

With the sunset we started walking, it was very dark and cold, we walked with another family but we got lost between the hills. We got really exhausted and we were afraid to get caught by ISIS, so we waited until sunrise and then continued walking. It took us until the afternoon to find the military area, and from there we were sent here to this camp, and once we arrived my mum registered me and my brother in school.

We started going to school since the first day we arrived, but because we were out of school for almost two years, we had to attend some support classes to be able to catch up. There will be an exam in the coming few days so I am studying really hard to be able to go to the fifth grade, otherwise I will have to go back to the fourth grade. I love Arabic literature and I would like to be an Arabic teacher. I want to have a good job and help my family, we already lost everything we had and I must stand with them.'



Photo: © Save the Children

## Case study: Agrina

### **Agrina, 15, lives in the southern district of Zambia.**

Agrina, 15, lives with her mother, father and two brothers in the Southern district of Zambia. She attends Njola East Community School in Zambia's Southern District.

Every day she sets off on her walk to school extremely early at 4.30 a.m. She arrives at school at 7.15 a.m. after walking for nearly three hours, over dry, dusty, hilly terrain. As her school has no running water Agrina shares responsibility for collecting water for the school from a pump two kilometres away.

Agrina used to walk to school with her friends, but they dropped out of school so now she has to walk alone. She is scared of animals like poisonous snakes and rabid dogs and gets frightened if she is alone, especially as she feels intimidated by 'men who are not good'.

There are only two filthy latrines at Agrina's school, which are used by over 180 students. The latrines are poorly constructed over pits and there is a concern that these could collapse at any time, putting the students at a huge risk. The latrines have no doors, only a wall outside partly shields them from prying eyes. Agrina says she doesn't feel very comfortable in the school toilets because they are so exposed and so she can't relax – in her words "my mind is always conscious that someone might walk in on me". Agrina would love to use her time studying instead of collecting water and when she is older she dreams of being a nurse. She doesn't have much free time, so when she does she prefers to study than to play because she wants very much to finish school.



Photo: © Tom Pilston/WaterAid

## Case study: Zeinab and Ali

**Zeinab is an 8-year-old Syrian refugee living in Lebanon.**

'I was not able to go to school in Syria. There were bombs and it was not safe to walk to school or anywhere else. After the war broke through in Syria, my family and I had to relocate to Lebanon and leave our home and life behind. When I came to Lebanon, none of the schools here would enrol me. My father had to talk to a lot of people and ask them to enrol me in a school until I was lucky enough to go to school this year.



I only go to school in the afternoon. I like school. My favourite subject is Arabic. Our teacher reads to us and it is fun. Little Red Riding Hood is my favourite story. I have fun with my cousin and my brother. I like to play hide-and-seek with them during our school break. But I am



scared of using the toilets at school. My cousin was inside once and a boy tried to lock her in and was laughing at her. The door knob is broken so she was very afraid. She was crying and shaking. I told my mum about what happened. She talked to the school but the door knob is still broken. Plus, there is no water in the toilets; we can't even

wash our hands. The toilets are disgusting. If I need to use the toilet, I wait till I get home.'

**Ali is Zeinab's little brother, a 5-year-old Syrian refugee living in Lebanon.**

'I like school. My favourite subject is Arabic. I like to study the letter 'H'. But, I am afraid to walk to my school. I walk to school with my mother and sister. It is usually dark and there are stray dogs on the street. If a dog bites me, I will run away. I also like to play with blocks. I make a bus from the blocks. I also find toys on the street next to my house. I take them home and clean them. Then I play with them. I found a green car on the street. When I am done playing with it, I will put it away.'

Photos: © Nada Mounzer/Oxfam

## ***The Safe Schools Declaration***

Never put schools or universities under armed attack.  
Never use schools or universities for any military purpose, for example storing ammunition.

Collect statistics on attacks on schools and universities and on the military use of schools and universities.

Provide help to young people affected by armed attacks on schools and universities.

Investigate attacks on schools and universities, and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Use teaching methods and lesson plans that are sensitive to the needs of young people who have experienced conflict.

Aim to keep schools and universities open during conflicts or re-open them as soon as possible afterwards.

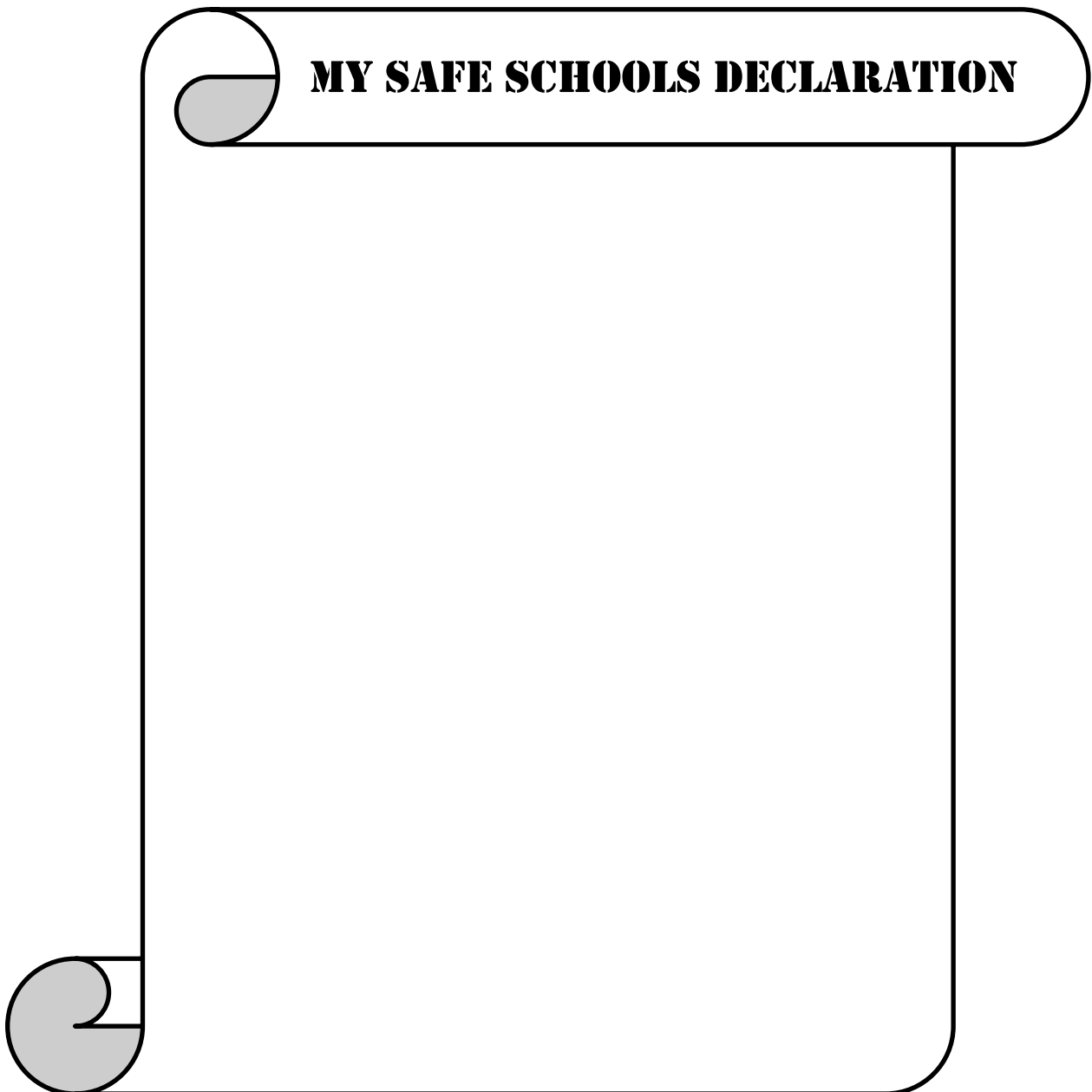
Work in partnership with the United Nations agencies responsible for protecting children.

Regularly meet other governments and organisations to review whether the Safe Schools Declaration is working well.

## Activity 4 – My Safe Schools Declaration

Finally, young people could review the full range of risks facing children at schools and write their own safe schools declaration. The Safe Schools Declaration focuses on protecting students, teachers and schools during armed conflicts. However, many children also face dangers and risks, including violence, outside periods of armed conflict.

- Does the Safe Schools Declaration provide protection for all children in danger?
- Have any important priorities been left out of the Safe Schools Declaration?



**MY SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION**



Resource created by Send My Friend to School and Oxfam GB  
for the Global Learning Programme.

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