

The Importance of Teaching First Aid to Pupils in Schools

First Aid is now an approved part of the PSHE curriculum, however, knowing the best way to teach this complex topic to children can be a challenge.

Techniques for life

Learning first aid is not a tick box exercise but a specialist skill that deserves care and attention. First aid training encourages children to be self-reliant and empowers them with invaluable skills to help themselves and others in medical emergencies. Children love learning the practical nature of this learning and such useful information that they will turn to throughout their lives.

Growing a new generation of life savers

The introduction of this new compulsory requirement will educate a whole generation of young lifesavers. We know prompt and appropriate first aid treatment prevents minor injuries becoming major ones. Knowledge of first aid also encourages young people to be more risk-aware and will consequently lead to a reduction in avoidable accidents.

Vital life skills

As teenagers gain independence and look to push boundaries, it is vital that they are equipped with the life-saving skills to be able to help themselves or others in a medical emergency.

These skills and a first aid qualification are also increasingly sought after by employers as they demonstrate a clear sense of responsibility.

Learning first aid has a direct impact on survival

Out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rates in the UK are currently three times lower than in countries where first aid is taught in schools.

In 2005, CPR training became compulsory for all Danish schoolchildren over 11 years of age. Within the next 6 years, CPR carried out by members of the public more than doubled and survival from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest tripled.

Putting first aid on the school timetable

The Government recognises the importance of first aid, hence it they approved it as a mandatory element of the PSHE curriculum. Primary school children will be introduced to age-appropriate basic first aid, such as learning how to call for an ambulance and helping with common occurrences such as burns, choking or putting someone who is unconscious and breathing into the recovery position.

For children transitioning to secondary school, learning these skills is a vital opportunity to reinforce safety messages. To remind them as to the importance of remaining vigilant when crossing roads and give them the skills to be able to help themselves and others in a medical emergency. For secondary school pupils, they should understand how to stay safe around drugs

and alcohol, understand the importance of keeping someone's airway clear, be confident putting someone into the recovery position. They should also be competent giving CPR, using an AED and helping with other first aid emergencies such as bleeding, burns, asthma, anaphylaxis...

Top tips for teaching First Aid and CPR to children

First aid concepts can be introduced to pupils by existing school staff, or they can bring in external experts. Both options have cost and resource implications.

Specialist first aid professionals provide hands-on practical training to bring the subject to life and really engage the children.

An ideal approach is to teach first aid as blended learning – that way you can teach larger groups, it is a more cost-effective approach, and more inclusive, as students who are home-learning can also fully participate.



Students can undertake engaging, interactive online learning at their own pace, consisting of videos, step by step directions and infographics. This can be consolidated with practical or remote Zoom Q&A and demonstration training.

Avoid paying lip-service to such an important topic

First aid is a complex specialist subject. A common misconception is that first aid can be taught to large numbers at once – for example in a school assembly. However, this runs the risk of children misunderstanding or misapplying first aid techniques, which could be potentially dangerous. It is such an important topic that it is vital they fully understand what they need to be doing and why.

Small groups

Ideally, practical first aid courses should be taught at an age-appropriate level to groups of up to 16 children. This way trainers can ensure everyone is actively involved and has fully understood everything they are learning.

Teaching resources

All practical training should be age appropriate and tailored to your needs, the needs of your pupils and of course, to your budget! Professional organisations come



armed with mannequins, defibrillators, choking aids, bandages and other teaching aids to make the teaching a truly engaging, memorable and enjoyable experience.

First Aid for Life, St John Ambulance, British Red Cross and the British Heart Foundation have all created invaluable, accompanying teaching resources to enhance their practical training.

First Aid for Life have free worksheets, PowerPoint presentations and short online courses to easily introduce first aid to your pupils.

Online learning

It is possible to equip larger groups of students with first aid skills through online modular pre-learning and First Aid for Life have created age-appropriate modular learning packages to enable students to learn these skills in school with supporting learning resources for teachers. This can be followed up with hands-on training and question and answer sessions which are ideal to consolidate the online learning.

Successful engagement

When first aid is taught practically by first aid experts, the children's engagement levels soar. They love the hands-on nature of the subject, using mannequins and mastering defibrillators.

Written by Emma Hammett First Aid for Life
www.firstaidforlife.org.uk

First Aid for Life is a multi-award-winning, fully regulated, first aid training provider specialising in First Aid for Pupils and Staff in Schools.

Free resources: to access the free online courses, lesson plans, work sheets and posters – please visit their website. For more information please visit or email emma@firstaidforlife.org.uk
Tel 020 8675 4036