

Handouts – Words with Care: Pause, Phrase, Repair

These handouts form part of the method package. Schools may translate and adapt fictional scenarios while preserving dignity, privacy, accessible participation, safeguarding, non-discrimination and the distinction between respectful discomfort and avoidable harm.

Handout 1 – Pause–Phrase–Repair Pocket Card

Use the routine before a difficult message and after communication has caused harm.

It can be used in person, in writing, online or with assistive communication.

Stage	What to do	Useful language/actions
PAUSE	Slow the reaction. Notice emotion, audience, timing and channel. Decide whether to speak now, move to private, write a draft, ask for time or seek adult support.	"I need a minute before I answer." / Save the draft. / "Can we speak privately?" / "I need an adult to help with this."
PHRASE	Describe the observable issue, impact or need. Avoid labels and humiliation. State a specific request or boundary. Protect privacy.	"When ... happened, the impact was ... I need/request ..." / "I do not want ... Please stop." / "The task is incomplete; let us agree the next step."
REPAIR	Stop, listen, name the action and impact, take responsibility, make a corrective action and change the repeated behaviour. Do not demand forgiveness.	"I did ... That affected ... I am responsible. I will ... Next time I will ... Is there a safe step I can take now?"

Before you speak, post or forward: six checks

- Purpose: What legitimate issue, need, question or boundary am I trying to communicate?
- Person or behaviour: Am I describing a situation/action, or judging the person's identity, worth or character?
- Truth and necessity: Is the information accurate, necessary and mine to share?
- Timing and audience: Is this the right moment, place, group and level of privacy?
- Tone and format: Could words, humour, emojis, images, capitals, silence, eye-rolling or forwarding change the impact?
- Safety: Is this something I can address respectfully, or does it need a trusted adult or school procedure?

Phrases that protect dignity without avoiding honesty

Situation	Example
Specific feedback	"The introduction is clear. The evidence section still needs two sources. Can we divide that task?"
Disagreement	"I understand your point. I see it differently because ..."
Boundary	"I do not want that photo shared. Please delete it and do not forward it."
Pause	"I am too activated to answer well. I will return to this after the lesson."
Public-to-private shift	"This concerns one person. Let us discuss it privately rather than in the group chat."
Bystander response	"That comment is about the person, not the issue. Please rephrase." / "I think an adult needs to help with this."