

# About SNS: Understanding our work

What gives  
you hope?

Why is  
peace  
so political?

How do you  
cope with fear  
or anger?

How do  
you react  
to hate?

# Peace Education, Democratic Resilience and Community Cohesion

Organisation: SNS

Founded: 2019 | Status: UK-registered education charity

Primary setting: UK secondary schools and youth contexts

Annual reach: Approximately 10,000 young people

## Purpose of this briefing

This document provides information for people seeking to understand:

- how SNS's work supports the long-term health of UK democracy
- why conflict resolution and peace education are increasingly relevant to the Citizenship curriculum
- how SNS contributes to community cohesion and the prevention of hate and polarisation
- why this work is preventative, scalable and politically impartial

SNS works at the intersection of education, safeguarding, democracy, hatred towards minorities, and social cohesion, supporting schools and communities to navigate polarising issues without dehumanisation or harm.



What helps build trust between people?

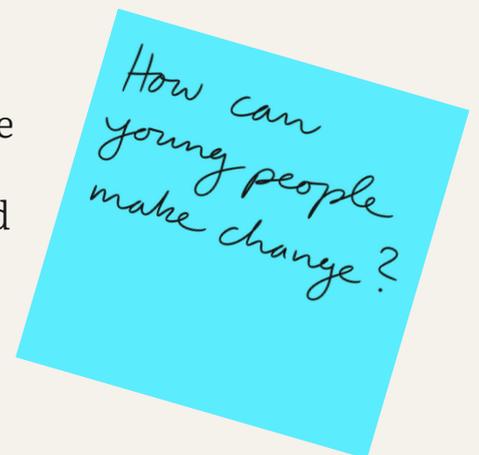
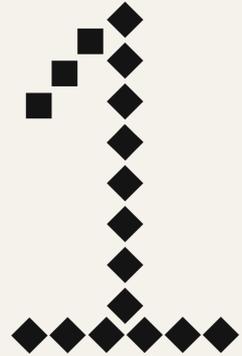
## The democratic challenge SNS addresses

The UK is experiencing rising levels of:

- political and social polarisation
- antisemitism, Islamophobia and racism
- online misinformation and identity-based hostility
- declining trust in democratic institutions and civic participation
- Mental Health Crises amongst young people

Young people are highly exposed to global conflicts and polarised narratives, yet often lack the skills to disagree constructively, assess information critically, or engage with power non-violently. When these capacities are absent, frustration and moral concern can manifest as disengagement, absolutism or attraction to dehumanising ideologies.

SNS addresses a core democratic weakness: democracy cannot function without citizens who can tolerate disagreement, recognise shared humanity, and pursue change through non-violent civic means. We also engage young people in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to provide key life skills for navigating the world inside and outside the classroom, for short and long term development.

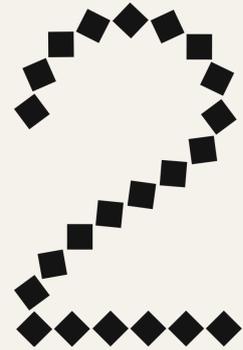


## What SNS does (and what it does not do)

SNS is an education charity, not a campaign group, pressure organisation or political advocate.

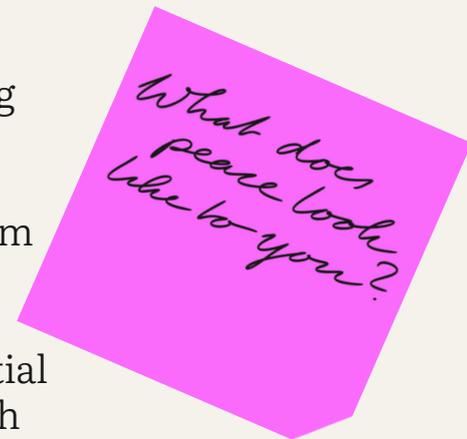
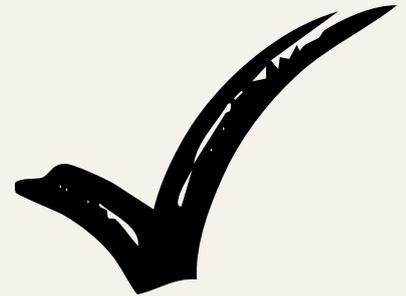
SNS does not:

- promote specific political positions
- lobby for foreign policy outcomes
- tell young people what to think



SNS does:

- create safe, facilitated spaces for inquiry and dialogue
- equip young people with skills for empathy, critical thinking and active citizenship
- support teachers to handle sensitive issues safely and professionally
- reduce polarisation and hate by addressing underlying drivers of conflict
- Support schools with the SEL Provision and curriculum integration



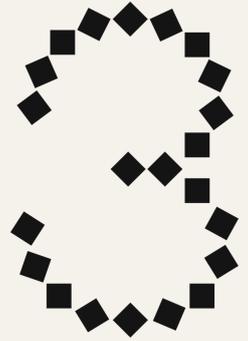
SNS's work is deliberately question-led, politically impartial and safeguarding-focused, enabling schools to engage with difficult topics without escalating risk.



## Educational approach and evidence base

SNS's school-based programmes and youth leadership residential programmes are grounded in:

- human needs theory (including Maslow's hierarchy of needs)
- non-violence and human rights frameworks
- social and emotional learning
- dialogue and critical media literacy

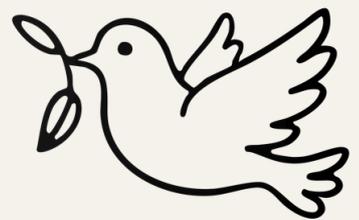


SNS's PEACE Model: Participate, Equip, Apply, Create, Enact provides the framework for this curriculum and approach—moving from understanding conflict to responsible citizenship in practice.

This approach reframes conflict not as a struggle between “good” and “bad” groups, but as the result of unmet needs such as security, dignity, identity, belonging and agency.

This enables young people to:

- analyse conflict structurally rather than emotionally
- reject collective blame and stereotyping
- critique violence and abuses of power without demonising populations
- understand why repression often fuels further insecurity



The result is a more mature, democratic form of engagement with injustice and disagreement.



## Role of Israeli and Palestinian peace-builder speakers

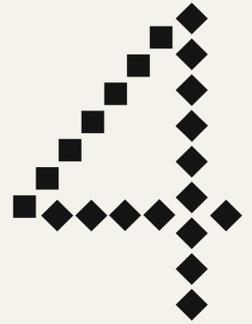
A distinctive feature of SNS's work is the use of trained Palestinian and Israeli speakers who are actively engaged in non-violent civic action within their own societies.

These speakers are presented not as “neutral” voices, but as role models of democratic responsibility, demonstrating that:

- dissent is compatible with belonging
- patriotism and critique are not opposites
- moral responsibility does not end at group identity
- non-violent activism is neither passive nor weak

For young people, this is often transformative: it replaces polarised, militant role models with lived examples of ethical leadership, accountability and civic courage.

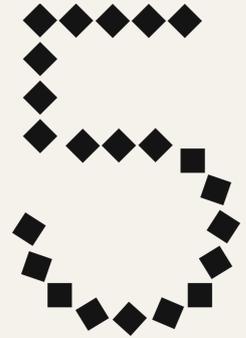
All speakers are carefully selected, trained and supported under SNS's safeguarding framework.



## Relevance to the Citizenship curriculum

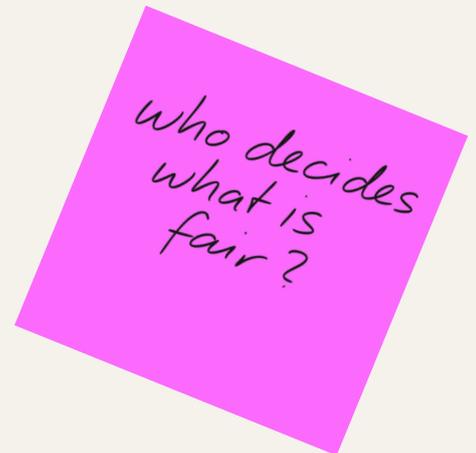
Following the Independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, the government has committed to:

- making Citizenship compulsory from KS1 to age 16
- strengthening content on democracy, law, rights, media literacy and life skills



SNS's work aligns directly with this direction of travel. Conflict resolution education supports:

- democratic participation
- media literacy and critical thinking
- understanding rights, responsibilities and power
- constructive political activism



SNS is currently working with a coalition of respected education organisations to develop practical, teacher-safe models for embedding conflict resolution within:

- Citizenship
- RSHE
- Religious Education
- History

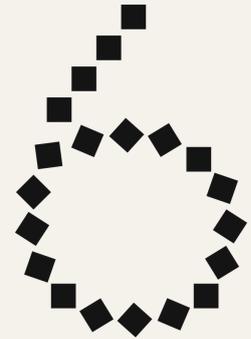


This ensures that essential democratic skills are systematically embedded, rather than delivered through ad-hoc or crisis-driven interventions.

## Community cohesion and safeguarding

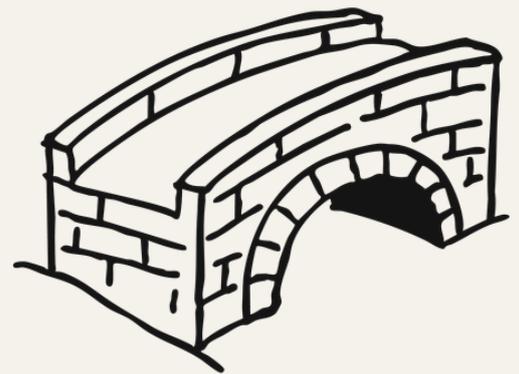
Global conflicts increasingly impact UK classrooms and communities, particularly through:

- antisemitism and Islamophobia
- imported narratives and identity-based hostility
- fear among young people and teachers of “saying the wrong thing”

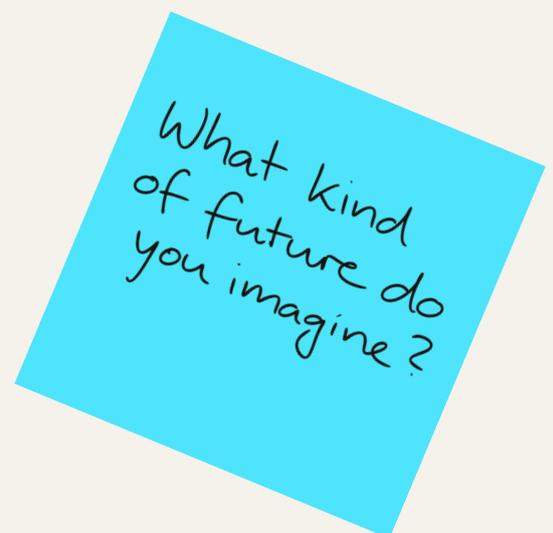


SNS helps schools address these pressures without importing foreign conflicts into domestic divisions. By centring non-violence, equality and rejection of hate, SNS:

- reduces tension in classrooms
- supports safer conversations
- protects young people from collective blame
- strengthens local community cohesion
- Encourages activism on global issues in ways that don't marginalise other groups



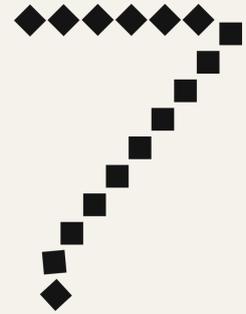
SNS has extensive experience managing risk in highly sensitive contexts, with robust safeguarding, facilitator training and oversight structures in place.



## Impact and outcomes

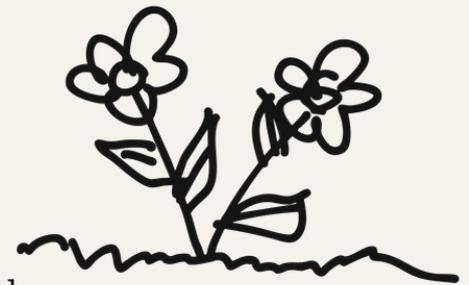
SNS monitors impact through:

- pre- and post-programme questionnaires
- qualitative teacher and student feedback
- case studies of youth civic engagement



Outcomes include:

- increased confidence in democratic participation
- reduced tolerance for dehumanisation and hate
- improved ability to analyse conflict critically
- greater understanding of non-violent routes to social change
- access to further opportunities for deeper engagement



Teachers consistently report safer classroom environments and increased confidence in teaching sensitive issues.

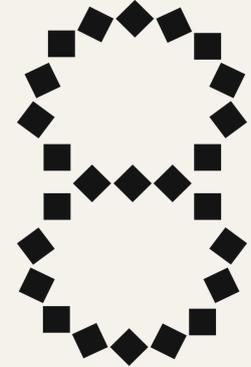


## Why this matters

SNS's work is pro-active, not reactive. It addresses root causes of polarisation rather than managing its consequences.

At scale, this approach:

- strengthens democratic culture over the long term
- reduces susceptibility to polarisation and misinformation
- supports education policy objectives
- complements safeguarding, cohesion and counter-hate strategies



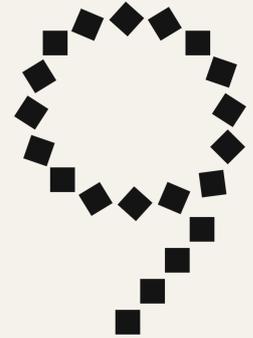
Investment in peace education is an investment in future democratic stability.



## Key takeaway about SNS

Democracy depends not only on institutions and laws, but on citizens who can disagree without hatred, challenge power without violence, and participate without fear.

SNS equips young people with those essential democratic capacities.



# Thank you

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