

UK POLICE MEMORIAL



Session 2: Key Stage 3/4 lesson plan – Police Decision Making

Key Stage 3/4 lesson plan

A 1-hour session on decision making by police officers in the UK, incorporating its significance in modern policing, exploring the Code of Ethics, their link to British values, and reflection on the duty and sacrifice of officers.

Lesson Objectives:

- Understand the importance of decision-making in policing and its evolution.
- Explore the Police Code of Ethics and its relationship to British values.
- Consider the moral and ethical challenges faced by police officers.
- Reflect on these principles in relation to duty, the courage, and sacrifice of officers doing their duty.

Lesson Structure

1. Starter Activity (10 minutes)

Objective: Engage students and introduce the theme of decision-making.

Scenario Activity:

- Present a brief fictional scenario:
“You are a police officer who arrives at a chaotic scene where a fight has broken out. Several people are injured, and you must decide: should you first call for medical support, try to break up the fight, or gather evidence for an investigation? What would you do and why?”
- Ask students to briefly write their response and reasoning.

Class Discussion:

Share a few responses, emphasising the complexity of decisions police officers face.

Highlight how decision-making in policing must align with ethical principles and British values, such as fairness, accountability, and respect.

2. Core Learning (20 minutes)



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Objective: Explore the development of decision-making in policing and the Police Code of Ethics.

A. Brief Input:

Development of Decision-Making in Policing (5 mins):

- Explain the shift in policing from reactive enforcement to proactive decision-making that emphasises ethical judgment and community engagement.
- Introduce Sir Robert Peel's principles (e.g., "the police are the public and the public are the police") and how they laid the foundation for decision-making based on public trust.

Police Code of Ethics (5 mins):

- Introduce the Police Code of Ethics (2023), focusing on key principles such as integrity, fairness, accountability, and respect.
- Highlight how these align with British values (democracy, rule of law, respect, and tolerance).

B. Task: Ethical Decision-Making Case Studies (10 mins):

Provide students with three brief case studies that illustrate ethical dilemmas:

- I. A decision to use force or during a protest.
- II. Handling a minor theft involving a vulnerable individual.
- III. Deciding whether to disclose sensitive information in a criminal investigation.

Group Task: Divide students into small groups. Each group analyses one case study and discusses:

- What ethical principles and British values should guide the officer's decision?
- What are the possible consequences of different decisions?
- What would your group decide, and why?

3. Reflection and Discussion (15 minutes)

Objective: Reflect on duty, sacrifice, and the challenges of decision-making in policing.



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A. Input:

- Discuss the concept of duty and sacrifice, linking it to the decisions officers make in high-pressure situations.
- Highlight an example of a police officer who faced a significant ethical challenge and made a sacrifice (e.g., PC Keith Palmer during the Westminster attack in 2017).
- Pose the question: How does the Code of Ethics guide officers in life-threatening decisions?

B. Task: Personal Reflection Writing (10 mins):

- Ask students to imagine they are police officers writing a personal journal entry after a difficult decision in one of the earlier scenarios.
- Prompts:
 - I. What decision did you make, and why?
 - II. How did British values and the Code of Ethics guide you?
 - III. How did this decision impact the community or individuals involved?

4. Plenary (5 minutes)

Objective: Summarise learning and encourage further reflection.

Whole-Class Discussion:

- How does decision-making in policing demonstrate British values?
- Why is it important for police officers to follow a Code of Ethics?

Exit Question: Students answer on a sticky note:

- What did you find most challenging about making decisions in the case studies?

Materials Needed:

- Printed or projected case studies for group tasks.
- Visual aids explaining the Police Code of Ethics.



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- Writing materials for personal reflection tasks.

Extension/Homework Ideas:

- Research a real-life case where police decision-making was praised or criticised and write a short report on how ethical principles were applied.
- Create a poster illustrating the key principles of the Police Code of Ethics and how they align with British values.

This plan balances knowledge-building, ethical reflection, and practical engagement, allowing students to critically explore decision-making in policing.

