Prayas (Health Group)

सहज
सन्मान हक्क जबाबदारी

SAHAJ · A PROGRAM FOR SAFE, INFORMED AND RESPECTFUL GROWING-UP

Year One Implementation Guide

A practical guide for educators

THE CENTRAL IDEA

The purpose of Year One is to establish a foundation that allows students to participate meaningfully in SAHAJ from that point onwards. The sequence in this guide is indicative, not prescriptive.

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Prayas (Initiatives in Health, Energy, Learning, and Parenthood) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization based in Pune, India. Prayas Health Group focuses on public health issues, including HIV/AIDS, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Climate Change and Health, and Preventive Oncology.

1. Understanding Year One

SAHAJ is designed as a spiral curriculum. Across Grades 1–10, students return to important ideas at different stages and explore them in greater depth as they grow. The sequence assumes that students have encountered earlier concepts and can build on what they already know.

Year One is different.

When SAHAJ is introduced for the first time in a school, students in every grade are new to the programme. A Grade 8 student, for example, has not necessarily had the Grade 1–7 sessions. We therefore cannot assume that they have learnt concepts that would normally have been introduced earlier—such as correct names for body parts, bodily autonomy, consent, puberty, trusted adults, bullying, gender stereotypes or healthy relationships.

At the same time, Year One should **not become a complete replay of Grades 1–7**.

The purpose of Year One is to establish a foundation that allows students to participate meaningfully in SAHAJ from that point onwards. This means balancing three things:

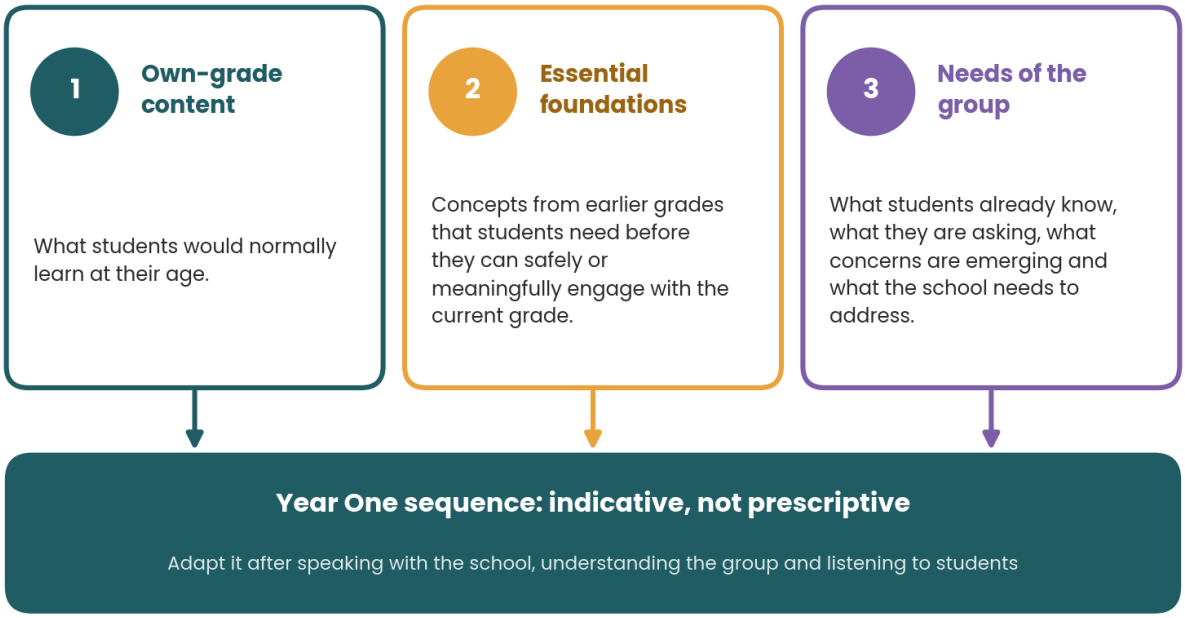


Figure 1. Year One balances three things when choosing lessons.

1. **The student's own grade-level content** — what students would normally learn at their age.
2. **Essential foundations from earlier grades** — concepts that students need before they can safely or meaningfully engage with the current grade's content.
3. **The needs and context of the particular group** — what students already know, what they are asking about, what concerns are emerging, and what the school needs to address.

The Year One sequence in this guide is therefore **indicative, not prescriptive**. It is one reasonable starting point for a school where no students have previously experienced SAHAJ.

It should be adapted after speaking with the school, understanding the group and listening to students.

> **A USEFUL PRINCIPLE**
>
> **If an earlier lesson provides an essential foundation for safety, understanding or participation, bring it forward. If it mainly provides additional depth, it can usually wait.**

This is why Year One gives particular attention to earlier lessons on:

Bodies and puberty	Safety, boundaries and consent	Bullying and harassment
Friendship and relationships	Gender and stereotypes	Seeking help and identifying trusted adults

The aim is not to "cover everything students missed." The aim is to give them the foundations they need **now**.

2. How to think about the Year One sequence

Before choosing lessons, educators should understand the logic behind the sequence.

2.1 Start with the student's developmental stage

The lesson belonging to a grade is usually the starting point because it reflects what students at that age are developmentally ready to explore.

Grade	What students begin to engage with
Grade 4	Begins to engage more directly with changes associated with puberty.
Grade 5	Goes deeper into puberty, anatomy and reproduction.
Grade 6	Explores body image, attraction and gender.
Grades 7–10	Move increasingly into relationships, consent, sexuality, reproduction, contraception, sexual health and online safety.

However, students entering SAHAJ for the first time may need earlier foundations before they can engage comfortably with these topics.

2.2 Bring forward foundations, not entire previous grades

An earlier lesson can be brought forward for two different reasons.

Reason	What it means	Example
Foundation	Students need the concept before they can understand the current lesson.	Students may need basic anatomy before a session on puberty or reproduction.
Protection	The concept gives students information or skills that are important for their immediate safety and wellbeing.	Boundaries, consent, seeking help and recognising unsafe behaviour may need to be introduced even if they formally appear in an earlier grade.

These lessons should not necessarily be taught exactly as they would be in the original grade. The educator can select and adapt the parts that are appropriate for the older group.

2.3 Repeat important ideas, but change the depth

Some ideas are worth revisiting.

A YOUNGER CHILD MIGHT LEARN

"My body belongs to me."

→

AN OLDER STUDENT MAY REVISIT THE SAME PRINCIPLE THROUGH

"Consent means freely agreeing to something, and agreement can change."

The concept is repeated, but the conversation becomes more sophisticated.

Repetition is therefore not a problem in SAHAJ. **Unchanged repetition is.**

2.4 Use the student's questions to adjust the sequence

The sequence should respond to what students are actually experiencing.

Before finalising the programme, educators can collect anonymous questions through a question box or written slips. These questions can help reveal:

What students already know	What they are curious about	What myths they have heard
What topics make them anxious	What topics they may need help understanding	

The questions do not need to determine the entire programme. They are one source of information that helps the educator decide where to spend more or less time.

The question box can remain available throughout the year.

2.5 Consider the school context

The school is also an important source of information.

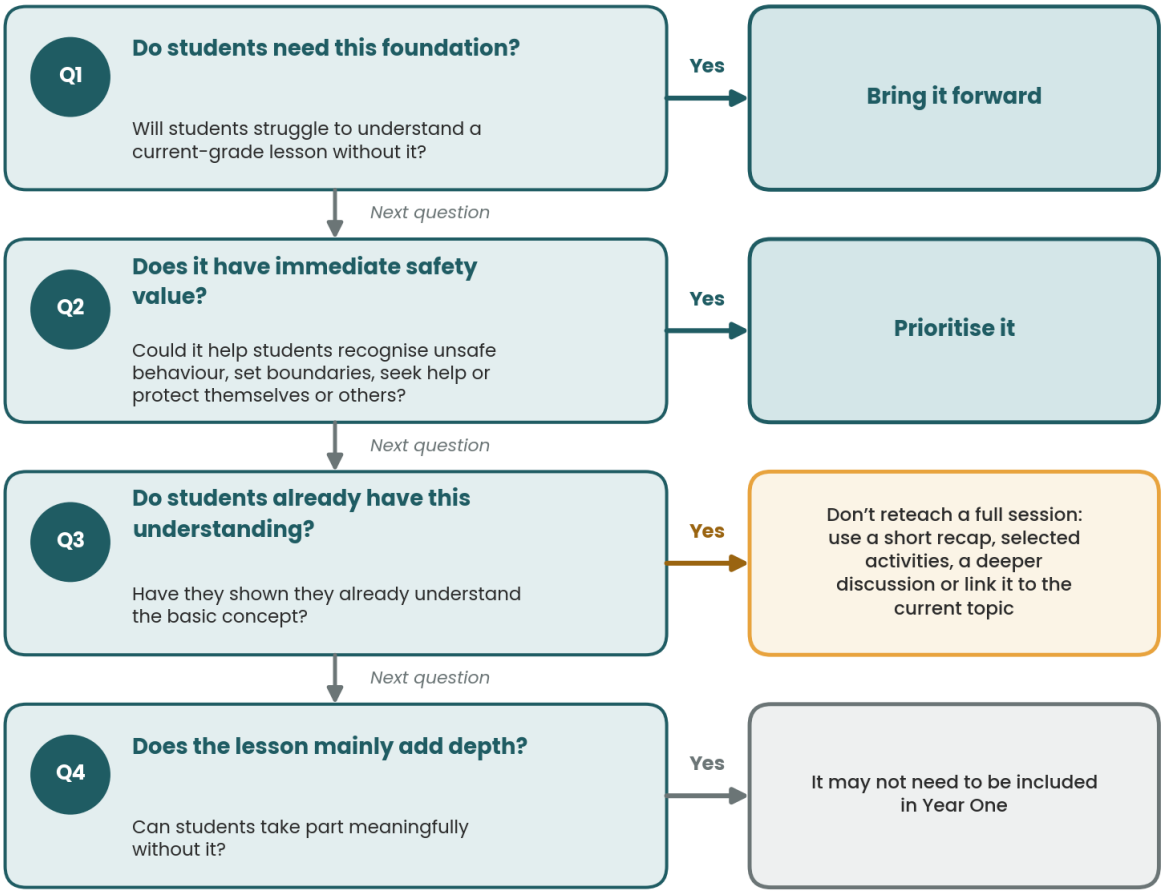
Before finalising the sequence, speak with school leaders, teachers and counsellors about:

Concerns they are seeing among students	Bullying or harassment	Friendship and peer-group issues
Online behaviour	Questions around puberty and menstruation	Concerns about body image
Students' ability to seek help	Existing school policies and support systems	What has already been covered elsewhere

The school's priorities should inform the sequence, but should not replace student needs or the developmental logic of SAHAJ.

3. A simple decision framework for choosing lessons

When deciding whether to include an earlier lesson, ask four questions.



Only a limited number of sessions are available, so choose with care.

Figure 2. Four questions to ask when deciding whether to bring an earlier lesson forward.

4. Understanding the different types of lessons

The sequence uses three categories.

Type	What it is	Example
Own grade	A lesson originally designed for the students' current grade.	5.2 for Grade 5.
Catch-up	A lesson from an earlier grade brought forward because students need its foundation or because the topic has particular importance.	Grade 6 students may revisit 5.1 because they did not experience it in Grade 5.
Combined	Two or more lesson plans are used together to create one session.	A session combining 2.5 and 3.5 might use the strongest activities from both plans to create one coherent conversation about boundaries, consent and seeking help.

A combined lesson does **not** mean teaching both lesson plans in full. Instead:

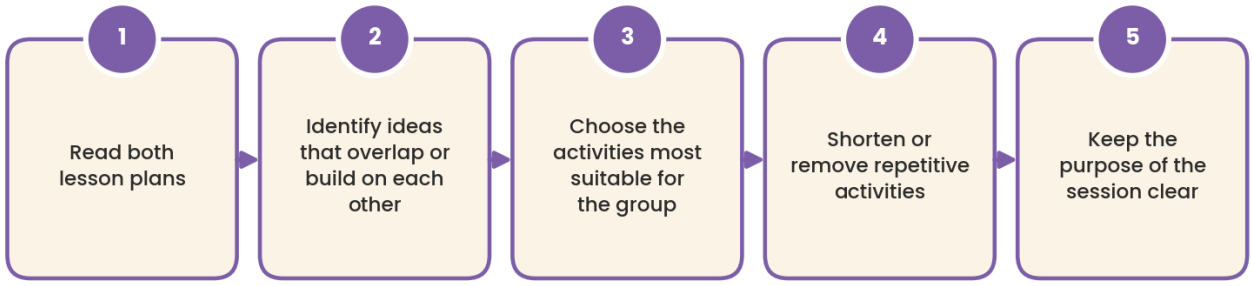


Figure 3. How to build a combined lesson.

> **THINK OF LESSON PLANS AS A RESOURCE BANK**
>
> The educator should think of the lesson plans as a **resource bank**, rather than a script that must be completed from beginning to end.

5. Year One: the grade-by-grade pathway

The sequences below provide a starting point for implementation. They are not fixed timetables.

The number before each lesson indicates the lesson's original grade. For example, **3.6** is a Grade 3 lesson.

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6	Session 7	Session 8
Grade 1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8
Grade 2	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.3	2.5 + 1.5*	2.6	1.7	1.8
Grade 3	1.2	2.2 + 3.2*	3.3	3.4	2.5 + 3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8
Grade 4	4.2	2.2 + 3.2*	4.1	3.3 + 4.3	2.5 + 3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8
Grade 5	4.2	5.8	5.1	5.2	5.3	2.5 + 3.5 + 5.5*	3.3 + 4.3	5.7
Grade 6	5.1	5.2	5.3	6.2	2.5 + 3.5 + 5.5*	3.3 + 4.3	5.7	4.2
Grade 7	5.1 + 5.2	5.3	6.2	6.4	5.5	6.6	6.7	7.6
Grade 8	5.1 + 5.2 + 5.3*	7.1	8.3	6.6	8.5 + 8.6	6.7	8.2	7.6
Grade 9	5.2 + 5.3	7.1 + 9.3	8.3	6.6	8.5 + 8.6	6.7	8.2	7.6
Grade 10	5.2 + 5.3	7.1 + 9.3	9.2 + 10.2	8.3 + 8.4	8.5 + 8.6	6.7	8.2	7.6

Own grade · Catch-up · Combined · * selected parts of that lesson

Numbers show the original grade and lesson (3.6 = Grade 3, lesson 6).

Figure 4. Year One at a glance: the suggested sequence for every grade.

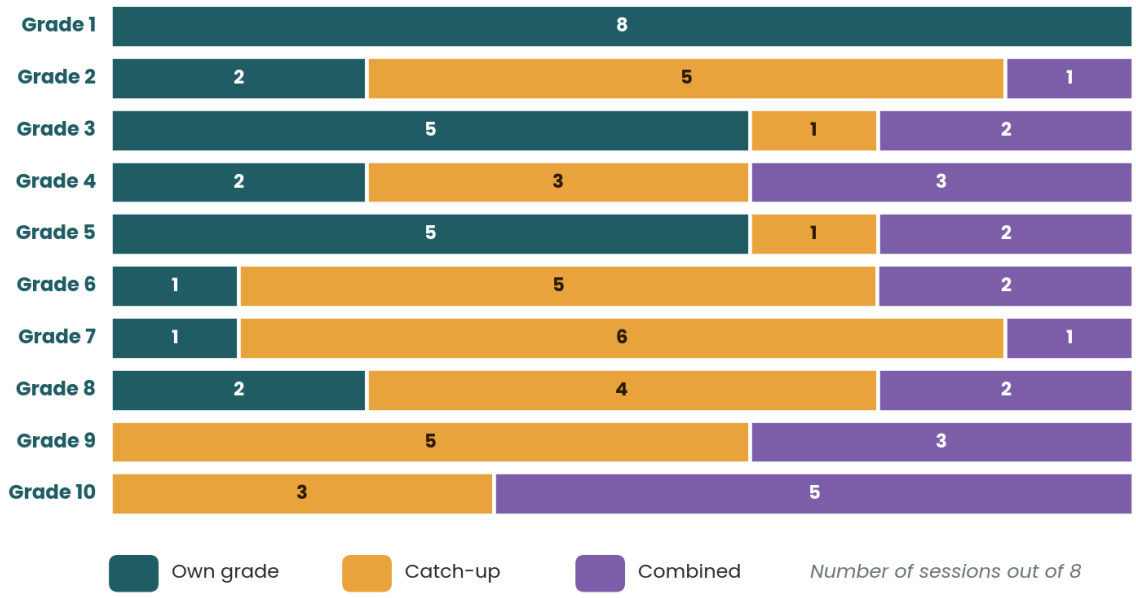


Figure 5. Mix of lesson types in each grade.

Grade 1 follows its own sequence entirely. From Grade 6 onwards, most sessions bring earlier lessons forward, either as catch-up or combined lessons.

Grade 1

In Grade 1, students can follow the own-grade sequence.

#	Lesson	Type
1	1.1 All are welcome	Own grade
2	1.2 Friendship	Own grade
3	1.3 Understanding our bodies	Own grade
4	1.4 Circle of life	Own grade
5	1.5 My space, your space	Own grade
6	1.6 My body is my body	Own grade
7	1.7 My Princess Boy	Own grade
8	1.8 Different kinds of families	Own grade

FOCUS OF THE YEAR

Grade 1 establishes the basic language and classroom culture for SAHAJ: belonging, friendship, bodies, personal space, safety, diversity and families.

Grade 2

Grade 2 needs some Grade 1 foundations, followed by its own lessons on safety, bullying and relationships.

#	Lesson	Type
1	1.1 All are welcome	Catch-up
2	1.2 Friendship	Catch-up
3	1.3 Understanding our bodies	Catch-up
4	2.3 Bullying is never okay	Own grade
5	2.5 Feeling safe + selected parts of 1.5 My space, your space	Combined
6	2.6 Being together, being yourself	Own grade
7	1.7 My Princess Boy	Catch-up
8	1.8 Different kinds of families	Catch-up

FOCUS OF THE YEAR

The priority is to establish foundations around bodies, friendship, belonging, personal boundaries and bullying.

Grade 3

Grade 3 begins to connect basic body knowledge with communication, consent, safety and help-seeking.

#	Lesson	Type
1	1.2 Friendship	Catch-up
2	2.2 Understanding our bodies: basic anatomy + selected parts of 3.2	Combined
3	3.3 Knowing the difference: teasing, bullying, harassment	Own grade
4	3.4 Say it clearly	Own grade
5	2.5 Feeling safe + 3.5 Seeking help	Combined
6	3.6 If you don't have consent, you don't have consent	Own grade
7	3.7 Who can do what?	Own grade
8	3.8 Media around us	Own grade

FOCUS OF THE YEAR

The emphasis is on giving students language and practical skills: naming bodies, communicating clearly, understanding boundaries, recognising harmful behaviour and knowing how to seek help.

Grade 4

Grade 4 introduces puberty while bringing forward essential Grade 3 foundations.

#	Lesson	Type
1	4.2 Figuring out friendship	Own grade
2	2.2 Basic anatomy + selected parts of 3.2	Combined
3	4.1 Change is good	Own grade
4	3.3 Teasing, bullying, harassment + 4.3 Taking a stand against bullying	Combined
5	2.5 Feeling safe + 3.5 Seeking help	Combined
6	3.6 If you don't have consent, you don't have consent	Catch-up
7	3.7 Who can do what?	Catch-up
8	3.8 Media around us	Catch-up

FOCUS OF THE YEAR

The key transition is towards understanding change, puberty, friendship, bullying and personal safety.

Grade 5

Grade 5 moves more directly into puberty, anatomy and reproduction while strengthening safety and relationship skills.

#	Lesson	Type
1	4.2 Figuring out friendship	Catch-up
2	5.8 Stop, think, solve	Own grade
3	5.1 The journey of growing	Own grade
4	5.2 Sexual and reproductive anatomy	Own grade
5	5.3 Story of our birth	Own grade
6	2.5 Feeling safe + 3.5 Seeking help + selected parts of 5.5	Combined
7	3.3 Teasing, bullying, harassment + 4.3 Taking a stand	Combined
8	5.7 Breaking gendered boxes	Own grade

FOCUS OF THE YEAR

Students begin building a more complete understanding of adolescence, puberty, reproductive anatomy, menstruation, safety and gender expectations.

Grade 6

Grade 6 should revisit the essential Grade 5 body and puberty lessons before moving further into body image, gender and relationships.

#	Lesson	Type
1	5.1 The journey of growing	Catch-up
2	5.2 Sexual and reproductive anatomy	Catch-up
3	5.3 Story of our birth	Catch-up
4	6.2 Rethinking beauty and body image	Own grade
5	2.5 Feeling safe + 3.5 Seeking help + selected parts of 5.5	Combined
6	3.3 Teasing, bullying, harassment + 4.3 Taking a stand	Combined
7	5.7 Breaking gendered boxes	Catch-up
8	4.2 Figuring out friendship	Catch-up

FOCUS OF THE YEAR

The emphasis shifts from simply understanding bodily changes to thinking about body image, social expectations, gender and relationships.

Grade 7

Grade 7 brings together puberty, anatomy, consent, attraction, gender and pleasure.

#	Lesson	Type
1	5.1 + 5.2 Changes in puberty + sexual and reproductive anatomy	Combined
2	5.3 Story of our birth	Catch-up
3	6.2 Rethinking beauty and body image	Catch-up
4	6.4 Consent: it goes with everything	Catch-up
5	5.5 Your body, your rights	Catch-up
6	6.6 Let's talk about attraction	Catch-up
7	6.7 Gender: biological or social?	Catch-up
8	7.6 Pleasure, guilt and shame	Own grade

FOCUS OF THE YEAR

The priority is to ensure students have a strong foundation for adolescence: understanding their changing bodies, consent, rights, attraction, gender and the ways social expectations influence sexuality.

Grade 8

Grade 8 moves into relationships, identity, sexual orientation, abuse awareness and online safety.

#	Lesson	Type
1	5.1 + 5.2 Puberty + anatomy + selected parts of 5.3	Combined
2	7.1 So, THAT'S how babies are made!	Catch-up
3	8.3 Healthy vs. unhealthy relationships	Own grade
4	6.6 Let's talk about attraction	Catch-up
5	8.5 + 8.6 Warning signs: sexual abuse and assault + online safety	Combined
6	6.7 Gender: biological or social?	Catch-up
7	8.2 Gender identity and sexual orientation	Own grade
8	7.6 Pleasure, guilt and shame	Catch-up

FOCUS OF THE YEAR

Students need a coherent foundation for navigating relationships, attraction, identity, online interactions and safety.

Grade 9

Grade 9 builds on the Grade 8 foundation and adds pregnancy and contraception.

#	Lesson	Type
1	5.2 + 5.3 Anatomy + menstruation	Combined
2	7.1 + 9.3 How babies are made + pregnancy and contraception	Combined
3	8.3 Healthy vs. unhealthy relationships	Catch-up
4	6.6 Let's talk about attraction	Catch-up
5	8.5 + 8.6 Warning signs + online safety	Combined
6	6.7 Gender: biological or social?	Catch-up
7	8.2 Gender identity and sexual orientation	Catch-up
8	7.6 Pleasure, guilt and shame	Catch-up

FOCUS OF THE YEAR

The programme should help students connect knowledge about bodies and reproduction with relationships, decision-making, contraception, safety and respect.

Grade 10

Grade 10 is different because this may be the only year the school has to provide SAHAJ to this group.

#	Lesson	Type
1	5.2 + 5.3 Anatomy + menstruation	Combined
2	7.1 + 9.3 How babies are made + pregnancy and contraception	Combined
3	9.2 + 10.2 Understanding HIV + RTIs/STIs	Combined
4	8.3 + 8.4 Healthy vs. unhealthy relationships + healthy break-ups	Combined
5	8.5 + 8.6 Warning signs + online safety	Combined
6	6.7 Gender: biological or social?	Catch-up
7	8.2 Gender identity and sexual orientation	Catch-up
8	7.6 Pleasure, guilt and shame	Catch-up

FOCUS OF THE YEAR

Grade 10 should prioritise the knowledge and skills students are most likely to need as they move beyond school: relationships, consent, reproductive health, contraception, HIV and STIs/RTIs, online safety, gender, identity and decision-making.

6. What each lesson is trying to do

The lesson plans contain detailed learning objectives. Educators should use those objectives when preparing a session, but they should **not treat them as a checklist that every student must demonstrate by the end of the session**.

A SAHAJ session may aim to:

Introduce a new idea	Correct a misconception	Give students language to describe an experience	Help students practise a skill
Create an opportunity for reflection	Make students more comfortable asking questions	Challenge an assumption or stereotype	Help students know where to seek support

These are different kinds of learning. For Year One, it is more useful to ask:

MORE USEFUL TO ASK

"What do these students most need to take away from this session?"

rather than

LESS USEFUL TO ASK

"How do I make sure every objective is completed?"

6.1 How to use the lesson-plan objectives

When preparing a session:

1. Read the full lesson plan.
2. Identify the central idea or purpose.
3. Look at the listed objectives to understand what the lesson is designed to build.
4. Consider what is realistic for this particular group.
5. Select the most important concepts and activities.
6. Adapt the language, examples and pace to the students.
7. For combined lessons, remove repetition and retain a coherent flow.

The lesson objectives should therefore function as a **guide for the educator**, not as a test for students.

7. Creating the right environment for Year One

The quality of SAHAJ depends not only on which lesson is selected but also on how the classroom is prepared.

Students may laugh, whisper, become quiet or appear embarrassed when sexuality-related topics are introduced. This is normal, particularly when the programme is new.

Start by creating psychological safety

Early sessions should establish:

Respect for different experiences and opinions	Confidentiality within appropriate limits	The right to pass on an activity
No requirement to disclose personal experiences	Permission to ask questions	Freedom from ridicule
Clear boundaries around what the group can and cannot discuss		

Ground rules should be introduced in language appropriate to the age group.

Use calm, accurate language

Educators should use correct terminology consistently and without embarrassment.

If students laugh, there is no need to scold them. Acknowledge that the topic may feel funny or uncomfortable and continue calmly.

The educator's comfort often becomes the students' cue for how comfortable they can be.

Do not turn SAHAJ into a disclosure exercise

Students should never be asked to share personal experiences of abuse, sexual behaviour, relationships or other sensitive experiences in front of the group.

Activities should be based on fictional situations, characters, examples or general discussion wherever possible.

> **IF A STUDENT CHOOSES TO DISCLOSE SOMETHING**
> Follow the school's safeguarding and reporting procedure rather than trying to investigate the situation within the classroom.

8. Preparing the school before starting

Year One should begin with preparation, not with the first classroom session.

The implementation experience documented by Prayas also emphasises exploration with the school, parent orientation, educator preparation and continued engagement rather than treating SAHAJ as a stand-alone classroom intervention.

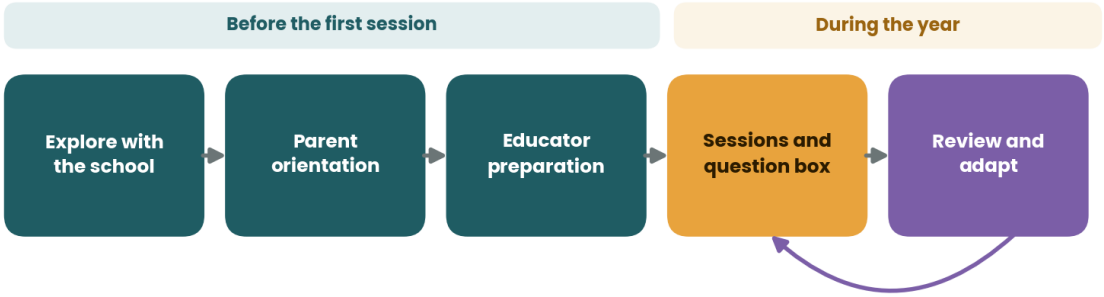


Figure 6. Year One is a cycle of preparation, teaching and review.

Before beginning, educators and the school should discuss:

With school leaders	With teachers and counsellors	With parents / caregivers
• Why is the school introducing SAHAJ? • What does the school want students to gain? • What concerns or priorities does the school have? • What existing programmes or policies overlap with SAHAJ? • How will the programme fit into the timetable?	• What are students currently asking about? • Are there concerns about bullying, relationships or online behaviour? • Are there students who may need additional support? • Who are the trusted adults students can approach?	*Parents should receive clear information about:* • what SAHAJ is • why the school is introducing it • the age-appropriate nature of the programme • the broad themes that will be discussed • how parents can support conversations at home • whom they can contact with questions

The aim is not simply to obtain permission. It is to create a supportive environment around the student.

9. Responding to students' questions

A question box can be especially useful during Year One. Students can submit questions anonymously before and between sessions.

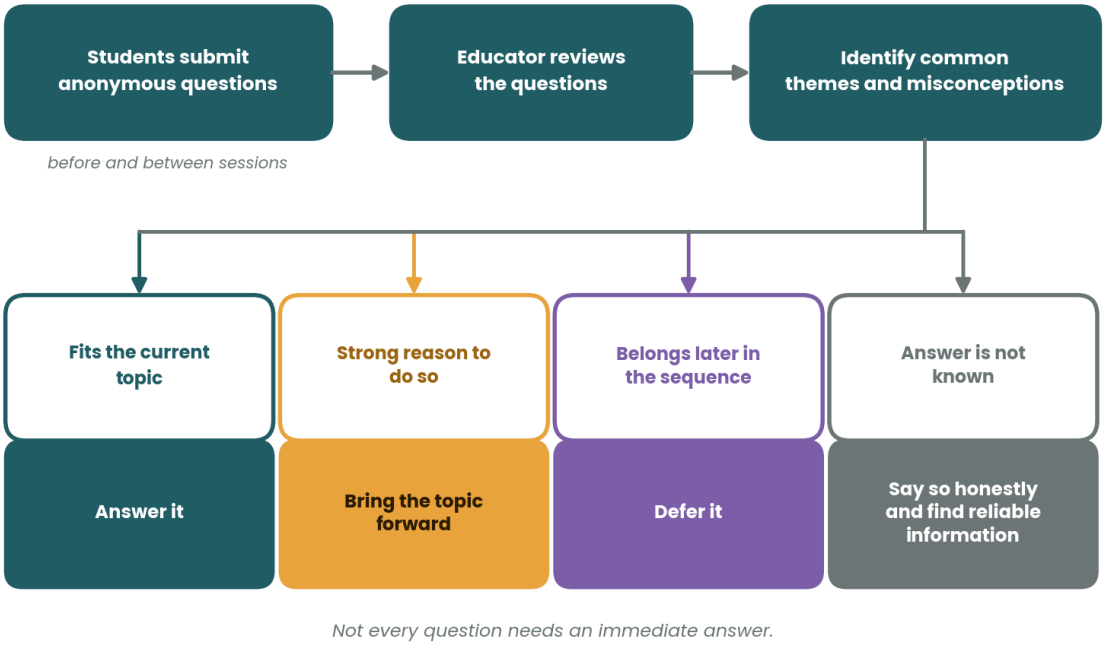


Figure 7. What to do with students' questions.

Not every question needs an immediate answer.

> **THE IMPORTANT MESSAGE**
>
> **Questions are welcome, and students will be treated with respect when they ask them.**

10. Review and adaptation during the year

Year One should be treated as a learning year for the school as well as for students.

After every few sessions, educators should pause and ask:

About students	About the sessions	About the school
• What are students engaging with? • What are they still confused about? • What questions keep coming up? • Are there important myths that need to be addressed? • Are students becoming more comfortable participating?	• Which activities worked well? • Which were too difficult or too easy? • Was there enough time for discussion? • Did the session try to cover too much? • Could two activities be combined or one removed?	• Are teachers noticing changes in student behaviour or questions? • Are new concerns emerging? • Does the school need additional support? • Are there gaps in referral or safeguarding processes?

THE PURPOSE OF REVIEW

The purpose of review is not to judge whether the programme was "completed." It is to improve the next session and strengthen the programme for the following year.

11. Grade 10: a special planning consideration

Grade 10 requires a different approach because it may be the only year in which the school can provide SAHAJ to that particular group. The school should therefore discuss the format early.

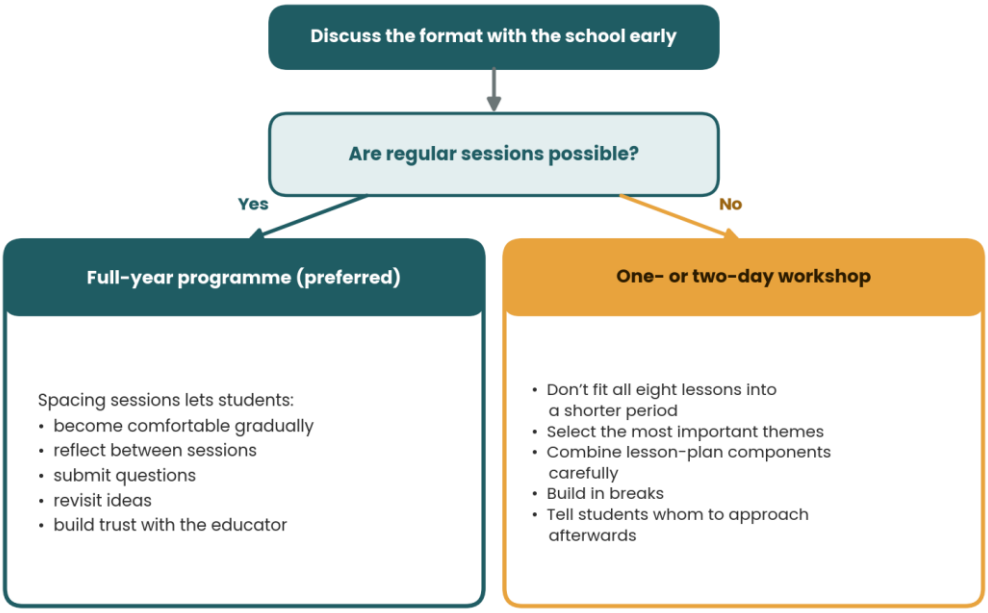


Figure 8. Planning Grade 10: the format depends on whether regular sessions are possible.

If regular sessions are not possible, the school and educator can decide which topics to prioritise based on:

Student needs	School priorities	Developmental relevance
Time available	What students have already encountered	Available follow-up support

Breaks should be built into longer workshops, and students should know whom they can approach afterwards if a session raises questions or concerns.