

## LIVING SWITCHED ON

From special journeys to everyday commutes, the rail network helps get us where we need to be. Even if we're not travelling, the railway is switched on 24/7 and we need to be Switched On to the risks the rail environment can pose.

**We can all enjoy life's adventures when we spot signs of danger, look out for our friends and always stay Switched On.**

Young people often make responsible choices around the tracks but there can be times when independent decision-making can be compromised. Living Switched On has been designed to help young people aged 12-16 explore a range of themes such as peer pressure, the perils of group mindset and how at times accidents happen as a result of small bad decisions rather than one big mistake.

Living Switched On encourages young people to gain the knowledge that could keep them safer around the tracks, whilst also exploring the impact ripple that rolls out across communities and the rail industry workplaces when accidents happen.

Although safer behaviour and better decision making are the desired outcomes of this resource, at its heart is a clear examination of young people's vulnerabilities. In the safety of the classroom, we encourage educators to discuss what makes their students 'tick' – particularly when they're out and about as part of a friendship or peer group. Through this process, potential vulnerabilities for flawed decision-making can be identified, explored, and corrected in readiness for real world challenges.

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## CURRICULUM LINKS

### KS3 & KS4

- **PSHE**  
Health and wellbeing: Self concept, Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco, Managing risk and personal safety. Relationships: Relationship values, Social influences
- **Citizenship**
- **English**  
Reading, Spoken English

### S1-S5

- **PSE**  
Health and Wellbeing: Self Concepts, Drugs, Alcohol. Managing Personal Safety and Risks, Relationships. Social Influences
- **Citizenship**
- **English**  
Reading and Talking
- **Science**  
Physics

These resources can also be used within SMSC planning and delivery.

## WHY IS THERE A NEED TO INCORPORATE RAIL SAFETY INTO YOUR TEACHING?

There are 20,000 miles of track, 30,000 bridges, tunnels and viaducts plus thousands of signals, level crossings and stations across our rail network. There are more than 19,000 trespass incidents on the tracks every year.

Learning to hazard spot and address potentially dangerous behaviour is crucial at any age. Schools have recognised the importance of teaching about a range of safety behaviours through PSHE and Citizenship lessons in school. The rail industry wants to support this vital work.

## HOW TO RUN THE ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL

This resource has been designed to be flexible and easy to use with a range of options for delivery. This teacher guidance document contains tips for delivery and a loose script that can be adapted by educators to best suit the needs of their learners.

Teachers may decide to:

- Deliver the assembly within the normal timetable
- Run the assembly across a topic focus week e.g. Rail Safety Week

## HOW TO RUN THE ACTIVITIES IN OTHER SETTINGS

We're aware that youth groups and families may also want to use the materials. Specific guidance has been provided where appropriate within the lesson plans.

## RESOURCE OVERVIEW

NAME OF RESOURCE	FORMAT	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Living Switched On Assembly	Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can identify, describe, and demonstrate safety signs and behaviours at a train station</li><li>• I can explain reasons for safety signs and behaviours at a train station, and consequences of disregarding these, for myself and others</li><li>• I can describe and explain safety signs and behaviour at a level crossing</li><li>• I can recognise unsafe behaviours in online social media content</li><li>• I can identify reasons for rail safety rules and behaviours, and consequences for disregarding these, for oneself, others and the wider community</li><li>• I know that taking risks around the railway can end in serious injury or death, which can have an impact on others, the wider community and myself.</li></ul>

## GETTING STARTED

- Resources can be accessed via the [Switched On website](https://www.switchedonrailsafety.co.uk). Living Switched On also incorporates films and activities from You vs Train, an existing Network Rail resource warning about the risks of trespassing on the railway
- Living Switched On hosts a range of resources from films to quizzes and group discussions we recommend that educators familiarise

themselves with the content and plan an appropriate approach for their students

- Some resources explore dangerous behaviour and we recommend sharing trigger warnings i.e. let students know the nature of the content and give them the opportunity to opt out if they feel it might trigger difficult emotions

## LIVING SWITCHED ON ASSEMBLY

### Overview

This teacher guide will walk you through the delivery of the Switched On assembly for 12 – 16 year olds, giving key prompts and questions for each section

### Learning outcomes

- I can identify, describe, and demonstrate safety signs and behaviours at a train station
- I can explain reasons for safety signs and behaviours at a train station, and consequences of disregarding these, for myself and others
- I can describe and explain safety signs and behaviour at a level crossing
- I can recognise unsafe behaviours in online social media content

- I can identify reasons for rail safety rules and behaviours, and consequences for disregarding these, for oneself, others and the wider community
- I know that taking risks around the railway can end in serious injury or death, which can have an impact on others, the wider community, and myself

### Supporting resources and equipment required

- Living Switched On Assembly slides

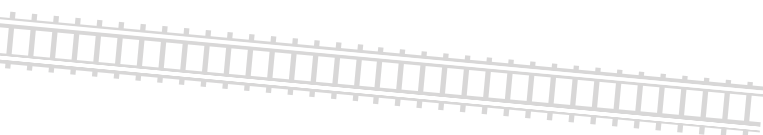
### Timing

15 – 20 minutes

SLIDE NUMBER	SLIDE	QUESTION OR INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS (RED – QUESTION) (BLUE – INFORMATION)	PARTICIPATION OR INSTRUCTION
INTRODUCTION			
1	Title slide	<i>Please use this slide to prepare learners to engage in our assembly.</i>	
2	The modern train	<p>How many of you have travelled on a train in the UK in the last year?</p> <p><i>Share a story (as an adult) of one of the last times you used the railway, where you were going, how quickly you were able to get there, what you noticed about the modern features of the trains.</i></p>	Students to participate by raising hands around their use of the railway.
3	The impact of high speed rail on our lives	<p>There have been some significant advances to the UK railway over the last 20 years; this data from 2024 demonstrates the significance of the railway.</p> <p>So let's consider together – In what ways do trains and the railway benefit your life or the lives of others?</p>	Students to think independently initially and then (if appropriate) discuss ideas with a partner in response to the question.

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4	Positive impacts of the high speed rail network in the UK	<p>There are a number of positive benefits of the UK rail network on our current lives and our future possibilities.</p> <p>So let's consider a trickier question. Are there ways that trains, and the railway, could have a negative impact on your life or the lives of others?</p>	<p>Use the slide to compare answers given by students – tick off any that are seen on the slides compared to their answers. Take volunteers for any different ideas than those that appear on the screen.</p> <p>Students to think independently initially and then (if appropriate) discuss ideas with a partner in response to the question.</p>
5	Possible negative impacts of the rail network on someone's life	<p>Some of these first few negative impacts of the trains and railway might feel frustrating at the time, but in reality, these emotions soon pass, when we get home to our families or friends.</p> <p>But if you knew someone who was in a railway accident, that is not a feeling that would disappear quickly.</p>	
6	Statistics	<p>There are 20,000 miles of track, 30,000 bridges, tunnels and viaducts plus thousands of signals, level crossings and stations across our rail network. There are more than 19,000 trespass incidents on the tracks every year.</p> <p>By paying attention to the signs around us and considering our actions, we can stay Switched On around the railway.</p> <p>But is it always as simple as making a decision, and taking the right action? Today, we are going to explore some of the scenarios that young people have found themselves in around the railway, so we can reflect on where things went wrong, and how they ended up being switched off instead of Switched On.</p>	

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7	Recognising the signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which of these signs do you recognise?</li> <li>What information is each sign telling you?</li> <li>Where might you find this sign?</li> </ul> <p>Recognising the signs can help us to make more responsible choices when we are interacting with the railway.</p>	<p>Students to discuss with, talk to a partner, or think independently about what they think signs 1-6 are.</p> <p>Check for understanding of the signs, and see what prior knowledge students may have by taking volunteers, cold calling or allowing for self-assessment – which ones did they feel comfortable of their knowledge of?</p> <p>For reference – sign meanings are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop when lights show – This is an advanced warning, instructing level crossing users that they must stop when the lights show as a train is due to pass over the crossing.</li> <li>This sign alerts people to the overhead electrical hazard.</li> <li>This sign warns there is a level crossing ahead which doesn't have a gate or barrier</li> <li>This indicates that there is a level crossing ahead that uses either automatic barriers or gates.</li> <li>Before crossing over the tracks you should Stop, Look and Listen to ensure a train isn't approaching. Once you have checked thoroughly that a train isn't approaching, carefully cross over the tracks.</li> <li>You can't go further than this sign as it's unauthorised and dangerous. There is an electric rail, and you should not go near the railway track.</li> </ol>
8	Recognising the signs	<p>We find these signs at some of the potentially most dangerous parts of the track:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level crossings</li> <li>Overhead line equipment, powering the trains</li> <li>The electric rail</li> </ul> <p>We are going to delve deeper by exploring these 3 key aspects of the railway.</p>	



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LEVEL CROSSINGS			
9	Recognising level crossings	<p>Let's start by exploring the level crossing.</p> <p>What is a level crossing? Has anyone seen one before?</p> <p>If you know what one is – what are some indicators that may indicate we are at a level crossing?</p> <p>Different level crossings will have different signs present. Each sign is designed to help you stay safe when crossing the railway.</p>	<p>Use volunteers to gather information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The purpose of a level crossing</li> <li>Where you would find a level crossing</li> <li>The most recognised aspects of a barrier level crossing (flashing lights, barriers coming down, warning sounds, gates, red/green lights)</li> </ul> <p>Ensure students understand that there are two types of level crossings: level crossings with barriers and level crossings without barriers. Depending on which type of level crossing you are at will depend on the type of safety signs you see.</p>
10	Level crossings with barriers	<p>We have mentioned that we might see lights, sounds, and barriers at certain level crossings – in this case, we would most certainly see the 'stop when the lights show' sign, nearby.</p>	
11	Level crossings without barriers	<p>There are a number of level crossings that do not have a barrier, lights, gates or sounds.</p> <p>Are people likely to be less Switched On at a level crossing without barriers, lights and sounds?</p> <p>Is it more or less likely that people will put themselves in a dangerous position without these interventions?</p>	<p>Ask students to discuss in pairs or groups why people may be less Switched On at a level crossing without barriers, lights or sounds.</p> <p>Call on students to share their responses.</p> <p>Emphasise that even if there isn't a barrier, light or audible alarm we must be Switched On to the signs present.</p>
12	Example of interaction with a level crossing	<p>So how about this scenario? How are the people in this scenario being switched off?</p> <p>We might initially think this is a good location to take some photos but actually this is the kind of scenario where people are not being Switched On.</p>	<p>Call on students to gather responses.</p> <p>Some answers could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They are sitting on the railway which could make it difficult to get away quickly if a train did come</li> <li>You should never stop on a level crossing</li> <li>Even if a train isn't coming, they travel very quickly and the pair could only realise a train is approaching when it is too late</li> </ul>
13	Scenario – level crossing	<p>Let's explore a scenario that could take place at a level crossing.</p> <p>Should you try to influence others, including people that you don't know, to be more Switched On?</p>	<p>Students to write or discuss the dangers of the scenario at the level crossing, and the challenges of interacting with people we don't know. Is it right to still warn them about the dangers? Ensure that students know they can help protect others, but must also keep themselves safe.</p>



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OVERHEAD LINE EQUIPMENT			
14	Overhead line equipment	Let's take a look at another part of the railway – the overhead line equipment.	
15	Facts about the overhead line equipment	<p>Here are some significant pieces of information about the overhead line equipment...</p> <p>Does any of this information feel surprising to you?</p> <p>The electrical current running in the overhead equipment (or wires) is so strong it can jump, or arc, from the wires to a person or an object. This information might contradict scientific investigations that you have previously conducted, where the circuit has to be complete for electrical energy to pass through. The electric current in the wires is so strong, that objects or students can act as conductors and the current can jump to that conductor.</p> <p>Going back to your earlier notes / thoughts about the signs...</p> <p>Which sign would be visible to warn you about the dangers of the overhead line equipment?</p>	<p>Discuss with students any facts that may be surprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That the overhead line equipment (or wires) are always on</li> <li>That the electrical current can reach you without touching</li> </ul> <p>N.B. If you are interested in exploring the strength of the current in the overhead line equipment, you can use our resource <a href="#">In-classroom science experiments</a>. This allows students to delve deeper into the electricity that runs in the overhead line equipment and electric rail through a series of science experiments.</p> <p>Students to revisit notes they made about the six signs earlier to see which they identified as related to the overhead line equipment.</p>
16	Sign – overhead wires	We would most definitely see this sign in numerous areas surrounding the railway, warning us about the overhead line equipment. It could be on the station platform, on fencing near the railway, or at level crossings where the overhead line equipment (or wires) travel over the road or footpath.	<p>N.B. If you are interested in exploring the topic of the overhead line equipment further with your students, why not use our <a href="#">overhead line equipment gameshow resource</a>, where students play a game-show style activity where they answer a series of rail-related questions, make crucial decisions and compare their answers to peers.</p>

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ELECTRIC RAIL			
17	Electric rail - signage	<p>Are all electric trains powered by the overhead line equipment?</p> <p>If we look at these example signs, we might notice there is a similar warning to the overhead line equipment signage, but actually it is describing the dangers of a live electric rail.</p> <p>You must always follow the signs and use the level crossing correctly.</p> <p>You must always follow the signs.</p> <p>If you see this sign at a level crossing the crossing is safe to use, as long as you stay on the crossing and use it correctly.</p>	
18	Electric rail	<p>Does anyone already know what the electric rail is?</p> <p>It's quite obvious to see when the trains are powered by electricity from the overhead line equipment, because we can see the cables, we can see the pylons, and how the electricity is connected to the top of the train.</p> <p>We might assume that a railway without the overhead line equipment means the trains are powered by fuel such as diesel. However, this may not be the case.</p> <p>On a track with a live electric rail, the trains are powered by electricity running through an additional third rail, as you can see in this image. Contact with this electric rail would leave you with severe life changing injuries, if you survived. You should never make an assumption that there is or isn't an electric rail. Walking on the track is trespassing and always unsafe. You should always stick to the designated areas either at a station or level crossing.</p>	Opportunity to take volunteers if, there are any.



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19		<p>With this knowledge about the two different ways the railway might be powered by electricity, lets explore a scenario...</p> <p>Within your answers, ensure that you think about the dangers in relation to the electric rail and the overhead line equipment</p> <p>Why are the young people risking the danger of trespassing on the railway? What could be causing a lack of Switched On thinking?</p> <p>Peer pressure and lack of consideration may be some of the ideas that came up in your discussions. One of the newest influencing factors that rail industry are finding is the relationship between the railway and social media / online presence.</p>	<p>Students to write or discuss the dangers of the scenario – using the terms overhead line equipment (or wires) and electric rail. Answers may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As it is dark, you may not know the track is electrified – you might not see the wires or the electric rail warning signs.</li> <li>Possibility of stepping on the electric rail – chance of electrocution</li> <li>Chance that you might get hit by a train</li> <li>Possibility of tripping and landing on the track or getting stuck, increased danger in the dark</li> </ul> <p>Students to discuss influencing factors in their opinions. Take volunteers for ideas.</p>
<b>SELFIES AND INFLUENCERS</b>			
20	Influencing photos	What is your initial reaction when you see this photograph?	Students to share any initial reactions to the photo.
21	CCTV photo – photos on the railway	<p>What about this photo?</p> <p>Highlight that this photo is taken from CCTV highlighting people taking selfies / photos on the live railway</p> <p>Does the influence from social media affect our decisions about how to act Switched On around the railway?</p>	<p>Call on volunteers to share their response.</p> <p>If you wanted to steer this activity further you may want to ask the follow up question below:</p> <p>Do you think there is a risk people might copy something they've seen on social media (even if it is unsafe)?</p> <p><i>N.B. If you are interested in exploring the topic of how social media is impacting young people's decision making further with your students, why not use our <a href="#">Challenging Influencers</a> resource, where students explore the dangers of mimicking unsafe behaviours around the railway, shown on social media posts.</i></p>
22	News story	<p>Take a moment to read this news story from Wales, which includes a statement from Network Rail.</p> <p>It shows the number of increases of trespassing on the railway (note how this particular point is at a level crossing, making it easier for people to access the railway) caused by generating social media content.</p>	

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23	Scenario – social media	Let's explore another scenario, where the influences of social media might be impacting your friends decisions around being Switched On.	Students to write or discuss the dangers of the scenario, and how they might challenge their friends to stay Switched On.
<b>THE RIPPLE EFFECT</b>			
24	The ripple effect	In all of these scenarios we have discussed today, there is a chance that the outcome could have ended with tragic consequences. Not only for the person who makes the error in judgement, but for the people around them too. This is called the ripple effect – the consequence is most serious for the person in the middle, but the ripples spread outwards, affecting people surrounding the event.  Let's watch Dan's story as an example of such an event.	Dan's story explores dangerous behaviour. You may want to take a moment before sharing the video to share a trigger warning with your students i.e. let students know the nature of the content and give them the opportunity to opt out if they feel it might trigger difficult emotions.
25	Dan's story	Video – Dan's story  What signs might have Dan and his friends chosen to ignore?  What motivated their decisions that day? Were they being Switched On?  If Dan could rewind his decisions that day, what might have affected his thinking?	Students to discuss the signs they chose to ignore, drawing on knowledge from this assembly. Then to discuss what affected their decisions and things he might have changed.
26	Impact on others	Who are the different people who could have been affected in Dan's scenario?  Hopefully learning from Dan's scenario and others today can help us all to stay Switched On around the railway, even when we are faced with tricky dilemmas.	Students can use the template image (taken from <a href="#">Consequences: Switched On for split second decisions</a> ) to capture the impact on others and what this might be.
27	Thanks for living Switched On!	Please use this slide to close the assembly	