Handout - Tips for saying 'no'

Body language
Remember that your body language is very important when communicating.
Stand tall, keep your head up and maintain eye contact. Believe in yourself!

Plan the conversation
Decide what you want to say beforehand. This helps you feel in control of the conversation. Use short, clear sentences. This prevents you from losing your train of thought and rambling.

Time and place
If possible, think of a place and a time that you would feel comfortable having this conversation and arrange to have it there. It will be easier to communicate your point clearly if there are no distractions around, but it is also important to stay within easy reach of other people if you have concerns about your safety.

Say something positive first
It is not necessary in all cases but, if it is appropriate and factually correct, you may want to begin the conversation by saying something positive first. For example:
   "I really like you, but…"
   "You are my friend, but…"

You do not need to give a reason
Avoid being manipulated into giving further explanations. If the person requests a reason, repeat a short, clear statement, such as:
   "Because I said I don't want to."
   "Because, as I told you already…"

Do not make it worse
Do not accuse the other person or blame them for anything. Simply state your views and wishes. Listen to what they say and acknowledge their point of view:
   "Yes, I hear what you are saying, but I am not going to…"

Expect them to accept what you are saying
If this person cares about you, they will accept what you are saying and will not continue to pressurise you. In situations where you are not being heard, or where your safety is under threat, get support from a trusted adult.