

# Relationships and Sex Education (SEND)

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## Introduction

Discovery Special Academy caters for children from 3-16 years who have differing degrees of learning difficulties and associated disabilities. We have children from different cultures and religious backgrounds.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of relationships and sex education taught in our academy. It should be read alongside the PHSE policy and Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing Policy.

In line with legal requirements (Education Act 1996, Learning and Skills Act 2000, Statutory Guidance 2024, KCSIE 2024), Relationships and Sex Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017) the TVED Trust Board has overseen the production and development of a relationships and sex education policy which will be made available to parents on our academy website and has decided to deliver a relationships education programme in addition to that which is part of the statutory science curriculum.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/805781/Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

The academy recognises the contribution that RE (Primary) and RSE (Secondary) can make to government health targets. Relationships education in the primary phase builds the foundations of knowledge, skills and attitudes which help young people to make positive, informed, and safe choices about their health and well-being both now and in later life. Relationships education continues into the secondary phase and a sex education programme is also introduced from year 7. Some aspects of the RE and RSE programmes will be covered through:

- Science
- Computing
- Assemblies
- Stories
- PE in the context of health and hygiene

Review of the policy will be led by SLT with support from the PSHERE Co-ordinator and will be informed by:

- staff and pupil evaluation of the programme;
- any relevant local/national issues;
- relevant changes in the law/good practice guidance;
- the results of parent questionnaires;
- new resources becoming available; and
- pupil needs.

RE and RSE is teaching and learning about the emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up. RE and RSE at Discovery will be stage-appropriate, building knowledge and life skills over time in a way that prepares pupils for issues they will soon face.

They will likely focus on:

- different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships and dealing with strangers;

- how to recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, including self-respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent, and how to manage conflict, and also how to recognise unhealthy relationships;
- how relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health; and
- healthy relationships and being safe in relationships, including safety online and offline

## **Aims**

A comprehensive RE and RSE programme provides accurate information about the body, reproduction and relationships. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and off line. The aims are to:

- equip children with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to manage the responsibilities associated with adult life and to form and maintain positive and fulfilling relationships;
- ensure effective delivery of RE and RSE at a level appropriate to each child; and
- follow the science national curriculum- where appropriate and relevant.

## **Objectives**

- To develop an awareness of the importance of relationships and enable children to practice skills that will help them to build and maintain them.
- To provide factual information on human reproduction and birth.
- To encourage respect for difference and diversity.
- To prepare young people for the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty.
- To ensure that all young people know who can support them and how to access this support.
- To work in partnership with, and support the role of, parents.
- To model positive relationships throughout the academy.
- To actively challenge stereotypes, prejudice and sexual exploitation and give children the skills to critically analyse media messages.
- To give opportunities for pupils to develop and practice decision-making skills with regard to the range of possible consequences.
- To promote, and encourage children to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- To use agreed terminology to discuss body parts throughout the academy.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

**The PHSERE Co-ordinator has the following responsibilities:**

- To lead the annual review of this.
- To ensure that resources used are relevant and appropriate to the needs of the children.
- To lead on the evaluation of the policy and programme.
- To ensure that staff have the necessary skills, confidence, knowledge, and resources in order to deliver effective relationships education and relationships and sex education.

**Trustees have the following responsibilities:**

- To ensure that an up-to-date policy is in place and is made available to parents and for inspection.
- To ensure that the policy and curriculum are in line with the DfE relationships education Statutory Guidance 2024.

- To ensure that the policy and programme reflect a whole academy approach particularly in relation to consultation.

### **Teachers have the following responsibilities:**

- To ensure that they, or anyone working in their classroom to deliver/support RE and RSE, is doing so in line with the academy's relationships education policy, and other relevant academy policies.
- To contribute to the evaluation of the programme.
- To assess children's progress against the agreed learning outcomes.
- To communicate the year group content with parents via the newsletters.

### **Working with Parents/Carers**

- We recognise that parents/carers are key partners in our delivery of a comprehensive RE and RSE programme for pupils at the academy. The RE and RSE we deliver is designed to support the important role of parents in this area.
- If parents/carers have concerns about any of the content to be covered, we ask that these are addressed to the headteacher.
- Parents and families have been consulted on the RE and RSE policy.
- We work with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of what we teach and when through the following methods:
  - Coffee morning workshops
  - Welcome packs
  - Sharing copies of the policy/content in face-to-face meetings and/ or through emails/on the website
  - Letters sent home to inform of upcoming targeted sessions.

We will, on the website, share examples of some of the key resources we use with parents/carers to reassure them of the content.

### **Parental right to request their child to be excused from sex education**

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the sex education components of RSE. That means the lessons that cover physical aspects of sexual development and intimate relationships, and sexual health.

- Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the headteacher to discuss their concerns. The headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum.
- If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this.
- We will remind parents annually that the request to withdraw is still in place and invite them to confirm whether they still want it.
- We will take care to highlight lessons that contain what we define as sex education so that we can respect the wishes of parents who have withdrawn their children from this content.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from sex education, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the pupil wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will plan to provide the pupil with sex education during one of those terms. There is no right to withdraw from other parts of Relationships and Health Education including reproduction in science.

- Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum.
- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships or Health Education.

### **Moral and Values Framework**

Through the RE and RSE curriculum, both formal and informal, and the modelling of positive relationships throughout the academy, we aim to promote and foster morals and values important to the development of relationships. These are as follows:

- Everyone has a right to express their views and be listened to.
- Everyone in the academy should behave in a way that shows care, consideration and respect for themselves, other people and things, and the environment.
- All members of the academy community are equally valued.
- Disputes and disagreements will be resolved peacefully.
- The diversity of individuals, families and relationships will be accepted and celebrated.
- Love, commitment, trust, loyalty, respect are important attributes needed in close relationships.

### **Equality and inclusion**

Discovery Special Academy encourages respect for all regardless of gender and gender identity, ethnicity, ability, faith, culture, sexuality, sexual orientation, disability, home background or other personal circumstance. Within our provision of RE and RSE we will ensure that resources used, and teaching styles employed reflect and support the diversity of our pupils and wider society. All members of the academy community will feel safe, valued and respected (see Equality Policy).

Throughout the academy there will be consistent challenging of homophobic attitudes, behaviour and language and our curriculum is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes and sexism and sexual harassment in schools. We seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

\*\*We recognise that children at the academy come from a range of family backgrounds, these include: children whose parents are not married; children whose parents have divorced or separated; children in public care; children living with foster parents, grandparents, parents of different ethnicities, disabled parents, same-sex parents and single parents. We will endeavour to ensure that children see these family groupings and relationships represented and affirmed within the relationships education curriculum, academy resources and displays.

In planning the relationships and sex education programmes we have used learning outcomes from the Statutory Guidance (2024), and suggestions by Ofsted in their report on SRE (2002). These incorporate the statutory elements of sex education that come within the Science curriculum. We have also given due regard to the SRE guidance issued by the DfE in 2000 and Sex and Relationships Education for the 21st Century - PHSE Association and Sex Education Forum 2014.

Planning has taken account of the diverse needs of pupils and sessions will be differentiated as appropriate fully acknowledging the SEND code of practice 2014.

## **Provision**

RE and RSE will be delivered to all pupils at an appropriate level through the following themes:

- Similarities and differences
- Feelings
- Keeping safe
- Keeping yourself clean and healthy
- Someone to talk to
- Friends
- Families of all kinds
- Growing and changing
- Male and female/body parts, reproduction and birth
- Choices and consequences

Content and delivery will be matched to the age, maturity, understanding and needs of the pupils in each year group. We will use various methods at the beginning of each year to assess children's current knowledge, understanding and skills in order to ensure that the content of the programme is relevant.

In order to promote common understanding amongst the children, we make use of the correct terminology to discuss sexual body parts in the academy. Whilst we acknowledge that children have different family names for sexual parts we teach and encourage the use of the scientific names. Children need to learn the correct biological/medical names for the genitalia and reproductive organs. Having the right language to describe the private parts of their body – and knowing how to seek help if they are being abused – are vital for safeguarding. The words we will use include: penis, vagina, clitoris, testicles, breasts, nipples. This language is reflected in the resources used to deliver relationships education.

In November 2013, the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) completed an inquiry into child sexual exploitation (CSE) which has raised awareness of the prevalence of this issue and the urgent need to tackle it. Younger pupils should learn that their body belongs to them and that they can say who has access to it. This is a key element in the academy's approach to safeguarding. Learning to respect boundaries – their own and other people – helps children to understand the need to obtain consent and that everyone has the right to offer or withhold their consent for any activity, sexual or otherwise. (Sex and Relationships Education for the 21st Century - PHSE Association and Sex Education Forum 2014).

## **Delivery**

RSE should ensure that all children:

- Develop confidence in thinking and communicating about feelings and relationships
- Are aware of parts of the body and describe how their bodies work where appropriate
- Can protect themselves and ask for help and support where appropriate
- Are made aware of puberty.

Puberty and menstruation will be taught in year 5/6 where appropriate. Children will be taught in small groups of mixed or single gender, covering topics appropriate to their ability. There may also be

occasions when an issue arises that has to be dealt with on an individual basis, in line with the safeguarding policy.

RSE in secondary will show clear progression from what has been learned in primary and will seek to ensure that the young people have the information needed to help them to develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds. Concepts will be introduced in accordance with stage of pupils development/ understanding and never before the age outlined in the DFE Statutory guidance 2024 (Appendix 1 and 2).

Adults involved in the teaching of RE and RSE will have had guidance and will feel comfortable in their ability to teach the subject.

The formal RE and RSE programmes for primary and secondary respectively will be delivered in each year group through PSHERE sessions. It will also be delivered through other curriculum subjects, for example Science, PE, English and Religious Education. There will also be opportunities for more informal teaching through assemblies, circle-time, story-telling, pretend play. Children will be encouraged to recognise and apply the knowledge and skills they learn in PSHERE to other contexts both within, and outside of, the academy setting.

We recognise that RSE sessions require the use of a range of teaching and learning strategies in order that children have the opportunity to develop skills, explore attitudes and values and acquire knowledge. The range of teaching and learning strategies employed include watching videos, discussion, role-play, quizzes, drama, case studies, matching exercises, drawing, and debates. Individual teachers will ensure that all pupils are able to access the activities to be employed. Appropriately differentiated activities will be provided.

Children will be made aware of the intended learning outcomes of each lesson/topic so that they can assess their own development and make progress.

Relationships education will be delivered by class teachers. We ensure that both male and female pupils receive information on the emotional and physical changes of the onset of puberty in both genders. This information will be taught in class groups. In Year 5 and 6 whilst most sessions will be delivered to class groups, some of the sessions on puberty may be delivered to gender groups so that the children have the opportunity to ask questions that they might feel less comfortable asking in a mixed gender group.

## **Resources**

Resources are chosen by the PSHERE Co-ordinator who ensures that they reflect the needs of children within the academy. The PSHERE Co-ordinator consults national and local guidance on appropriate relationships education resources and then judges their suitability for use with our children.

We will remain flexible in our choice of resources and teachers will adapt resources to fully address the needs of all children within their class.

## **Answering Children's Questions**

Children are naturally curious and we believe that if a child asks a question they require an honest and factual answer. This is true of questions asked in all curriculum areas and at other times during the academy day.

All staff in the academy will answer children's questions around relationships issues in line with the following guidance:

- Questions will be answered in a factual manner without any personal bias and with reference to the age and understanding of the child / children following the DFE guidance 2024
- If the answer to a question isn't known the class teacher will suggest that the class do some research to find out the appropriate information
- In some situations, staff will sensitively turn the question back on the pupil to establish what they already know, for example "that's a very interesting question, I wonder why you are asking that" or ask the rest of the class whether they know the answer "Does anyone else know the answer to that question?"
- Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way and consider whether a parent/carer has requested their child to be removed from sex education lessons.
- If it is felt that it is not appropriate to answer a question in a whole class setting the teacher will explain this sensitively and will give an answer to the child individually at the end or refer the child to their parents/ carer

### **Assessment, recording and reporting**

Assessment on the science elements of Re and RSE will be evident through curriculum books and electronic learning journals. Assessment within other areas of the programme can be difficult.

However a range of methods, including class learning journals, have been produced to record pupils' responses and development within the different areas. Where appropriate and dependent on the topic, photographs and pupil statements will reinforce these. As part of the child's annual report the activities covered and progress made in science are reported to parents.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

At the end of each lesson teachers will use a range of methods to give pupils the opportunity to reflect on their learning and development.

Throughout each topic a range of methods will be used to assess the extent to which pupils are achieving the intended learning outcomes. Pupils will be assessed on the following three areas: knowledge acquisition; clarification and exploration of attitudes and values; skills development.

We regularly monitor our curriculum to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, that the curriculum is meeting the new national requirements under the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance, and that learning outcomes are reflective of pupil need.

This policy will be reviewed by the academy's leadership team in conjunction the PSHERE coordinator as required (at least annually). If significant changes due to updated national guidance are needed, members of staff, parents/carers and pupils will be consulted and any subsequent changes made clearly communicated.

### **Staff development**

Staff training on relationships/ sex education is co-ordinated by SLT. Training requirements will be identified through the policy review process or through a teacher expressing individual needs to the headteacher. Appropriate training will then be sought to fulfil the needs of the staff member. Anybody who attends training will be required to provide an outline of any relevant information to other staff members via a future staff meeting.

### **Safeguarding children, confidentiality and child protection**

All staff members at Discovery have a duty to safeguard the well-being of children.



At Discovery we recognise that the open discussion associated with RE and RSE education may lead to children making disclosures about things that they are worried about or about abuse. There may also be occasions when a teacher may hear things or observe activity/behaviour that may raise concerns of a child protection issue. In these situations, the teacher will consult the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will then work in line with the relevant academy policies in terms of any further action that may be taken. This includes the mandatory reporting duty regarding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Staff should use safeguarding procedures if they suspect a child is at risk and should personally report to the police cases where they discover an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. FGM is illegal under the FGM Act 2003 and is a form of child abuse. Under Section 5B of the 2003 Act (as inserted by Section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) a mandatory reporting duty was introduced for Teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM from 31st October 2015 – please see the Child Protection Policy for more information.

Where a staff member has to disclose information to another party, this will be done following discussion with the pupil if this is possible and appropriate. Sensitive information is only disclosed internally or externally with careful attention to the rights and needs of individuals.

For more detailed information on the processes for child protection please consult the academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies which are available on the academy website.

### **Provision for young women's menstruation needs**

Sanitary disposal units are available in the staff and in some pupils' toilets in upper Key Stage 2 and older. All female pupils from Year 5 upwards and their parents are informed that sanitary protection and spare underwear can be obtained from the office and from teachers in the event of a pupil starting menstruation when at the academy. Supplies are kept within the academy to deal with emergencies. However, parents are expected to send pupils to the academy with adequate sanitary protection for the day and these can be kept in a private agreed place. Both male and female pupils are educated about periods through the relationships education curriculum to encourage empathy and understanding.

### **Working with visitors and external agencies**

From time-to-time we may invite external experts and visitors to deliver parts of our RE and RSE curriculum.

External visitors (such as nurses) will be selected to enrich and supplement our RE RSE by bringing skills, methods and expertise to the classroom and the whole school.

Any outside agency or speaker will be DBS checked and supervised. A teacher will always be present throughout these lessons to build on the pupil's learning after the session/s as well as answer any questions the pupils may subsequently have.

Any external visitor will be expected to comply with this policy and other related policies, including the school's confidentiality and child protection policy.

Parents/ carers will be notified of the visitor and the purpose of the presentation will be outlined.

### **We will also ensure that:**

- There is appropriate planning, preparatory and follow up work for the session.
- The visitor understands the cohort of children involved, including the different ability levels and diversities in identities across protected characteristics. They will also be made aware of any specific issues relating to child protection.

## **Information for parents**

It is hoped that pupils will feel able to approach parents or staff with any concerns or worries that they may have regarding relationships. Academy staff will always encourage pupils to discuss issues with parents.

It is our policy to answer children's questions as they occur, naturally and at a level appropriate to the child. As outlined in this policy, consideration is given to the needs of individual pupils regarding their cultural and/ or religious background.

When pupils are at an appropriate stage to be taught about puberty and menstruation as set out in the science curriculum (usually in years 5 or 6), a letter will be written to parents so that they are aware and can support their children at home, e.g. answer any questions children may ask.

## **Complaints**

If you have a question regarding the delivery or content of RE and RSE, please speak to your class teaching team in the first instance.

For all complaints regarding RE and RSE, please refer to the trust complaints policy which can be found using the following link.

<https://www.teesvalleyeducation.co.uk/policies>

## **Equal Opportunities**

All children have equal access to the curriculum regardless of their gender, ethnicity or learning difficulty. This is monitored by analysing pupil performance throughout the school to ensure that there is no significant disparity between groups.

## **Links to other relevant policies**

The relationships education policy links to the following academy policies:

- Equality
- PSHCE
- Physical health and mental wellbeing
- Safeguarding (Including Child Protection)
- Curriculum
- Trust general complaints policy

## RSE and Health Education Statutory Guidance (2024)- Curriculum Content

**By the end of primary school:**

<p><b>Families and people who care for me</b></p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that families are important for children growing up because they provide love, security and stability.</li> <li>2. the characteristics of healthy family life, including commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.</li> <li>3. that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.</li> <li>4. that stable, caring relationships are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up.</li> <li>5. that marriage<sup>1</sup> represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.</li> <li>6. how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.</li> </ol>
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<sup>1</sup> Marriage in England and Wales is available to both opposite sex and same sex couples. The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 extended marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. The ceremony through which a couple get married may be civil or religious.

## **Caring friendships**

Pupils should know

1. how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
2. that through no fault of their own, not every child will have the friends they would like, that most people feel lonely at some point and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it.
3. the characteristics of healthy relationships that lead to happiness and security, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties.
4. how to recognise relationships that are less positive
5. that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.
6. that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, how to manage conflict, and that resorting to violence is never right.
7. how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, how to handle these situations, and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.

<p><b>Respectful relationships</b></p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.</li> <li>2. practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.</li> <li>3. the conventions of courtesy and manners.</li> <li>4. the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.</li> <li>5. that they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show respect to others, including those in positions of authority.</li> <li>6. about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult), and how to get help.</li> <li>7. what a stereotype is, how stereotypes can be unfair, negative, destructive or lead to bullying and how to challenge a stereotype.</li> <li>8. the importance of respecting boundaries, including understanding permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Online relationships</b></p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that people sometimes behave differently online, and that this can lead to dangerous situations. For example, someone pretending to be someone they are not, or an adult presenting as a child, to get another person to do something for them that they don't want to do, or shouldn't do.</li> <li>2. that children should be respectful in online interactions, and the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including when we are anonymous.</li> </ol>

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|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them.</li><li>4. how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met.</li><li>5. how information and data is shared and used online, including the risks of sending images and information (without discussing details of sexual imagery).</li><li>6. about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be circulated online and that once a picture or words has been circulated there is no way of deleting it everywhere and no control over where it ends up.</li><li>7. that there is a minimum age for joining social media sites (normally age 13) in part to protect children from inappropriate content or unsafe contact with older social media users, who may be strangers, including other children and adults.</li><li>8. the importance of avoiding putting pressure on others to share information and images online, and strategies for resisting peer pressure. This should be covered without discussing details of sexual imagery.</li><li>9. who to go to for advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online. Pupils should understand what they should do if they see something online that makes them feel worried. Pornography should not be referenced in primary education.</li></ol> |
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<b>Being safe</b>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). This can include learning about boundaries in play and in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources and so on.</li> <li>2. about the concept of privacy and its implications for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.</li> <li>3. that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe contact, including physical contact.</li> <li>4. how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online), including those they do and do not know.</li> <li>5. how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult.</li> <li>6. how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.</li> <li>7. how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.</li> <li>8. where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.</li> </ol>
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### Sex Education (Primary)

71. The aim of teaching aspects of sex education in primary is not to prepare pupils for sexual activity in later life. It should only focus on giving pupils the information they need to understand human reproduction and for their own safety. To ensure the content does not go beyond this, schools should take account of the age restrictions set out in the secondary RSHE curriculum tables, which are clear that some topics should not be taught before secondary school.

72. Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, but the Department recommends that primaries teach sex education in years 5 or 6 (this should be taught no earlier than year 5) in line with what pupils learn about conception and birth as part of the national curriculum for science. The national curriculum for science includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. Schools may also cover human reproduction in the science curriculum, but where they do so, this should be in line with the factual description of conception in the science curriculum.

73. Primary schools should consult parents about the detailed content of anything that is to be taught in sex education. This process should include offering parents support in talking to their children about sex education and how to link this with what is being taught in school.

## RSE and Health Education Statutory Guidance (2024)- Curriculum Content

**By the end of secondary school:**

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

<b>Families</b>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.</li> <li>2. how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.</li> <li>3. what marriage is, including its legal status, e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.</li> <li>4. why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and that forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 is illegal.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>5. the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.</li> <li>6. how families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.</li> <li>7. the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development.</li> <li>8. how to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.</li> </ol>
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<sup>2</sup> [Age of Marriage Act 2023](#)



<p><b>Respectful relationships, including friendships</b></p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the characteristics of positive and healthy relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.</li> <li>2. that fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed.</li> <li>3. the practical steps they can take to improve or support respectful relationships.</li> <li>4. how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice).</li> <li>5. that they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show respect to others, including people in positions of authority, as well as tolerance of other people’s beliefs.</li> <li>6. about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.</li> <li>7. the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal.</li> <li>8. what constitutes harmful sexual behaviour and why, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it. <b>This should not be taught before year 7.</b></li> <li>9. that some types of behaviour, including within relationships, are criminal, including violent behaviour and emotional abuse, such as controlling or coercive behaviour.<sup>3</sup> <b>Schools should not, however, teach about the details of violent abuse before Y9 as it is important that pupils are not introduced to distressing concepts when they are too young to understand them.</b></li> </ol>
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<sup>3</sup> [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

<p><b>Online and media</b></p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.</li> <li>2. about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be circulated online and that once a picture or words has been circulated there is no way of deleting it everywhere and no control over where it ends up.</li> <li>3. not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others.</li> <li>4. what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>5. about circulating images and information and how to safely report to trusted adults the non-consensual creation or distribution of an intimate image. Pupils should understand that making, keeping or sending naked or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of asking for naked, semi-naked or sexual images, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. <b>This topic should not be taught before year 7.</b></li> <li>6. the impact of viewing harmful content, including pornography, that presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others, and can negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. <b>The risks of inappropriate online content can be discussed in an age-appropriate way from year 7, however, the details of sexual acts should not be discussed before year 9.</b></li> <li>7. how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.</li> <li>8. the characteristics of social media, including that social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online.</li> </ol>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. that websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (i.e. to enable targeted advertising).</li> <li>10. that criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society.</li> </ol>
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<sup>4</sup> For example, see Report Remove. [Report Remove \(iwf.org.uk\)](http://iwf.org.uk)

## Being safe

Pupils should know:

1. how to recognise, respect and communicate boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) such as kissing or touching.
2. the concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, including sexual harassment, revenge porn, upskirting and taking/sharing intimate sexual photographs without consent, public sexual harassment, and unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching. **This should not be taught before year 7.**
3. The concepts and laws relating to sexual exploitation and abuse, grooming, stalking, and forced marriage. **This should not be taught before year 7.**
4. The concept and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault. **Whilst it's important for pupils to understand the key principles around sexual offences and violence, for example the importance of understanding what consent means, schools should not teach about this in any sexually explicit way before year 9.**
5. the physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, or fail to protect a person under 16 for whom someone is responsible from FGM, or to take girls who are UK nationals abroad for FGM, regardless of whether it is lawful in that country. **This should not be taught before year 9, except for where schools have identified a greater risk of FGM at an earlier age or have pupils who have been affected by FGM and need support.**
6. the concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour<sup>5</sup>. **Schools should not teach about the details of violent abuse before year 9 as it is important that pupils are not introduced to distressing concepts when they are too young to understand them.**
7. how to seek support for worrying or abusive behaviour in themselves or others, including information on where to report abuse.

<sup>5</sup> The [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) recognised children who see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse, and are related to either the victim of the abusive behaviour, or the perpetrator, as victims of domestic abuse in their own right (part 1 section 3). The [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory](#) guidance is designed to support statutory and non-statutory bodies working with victims of domestic abuse, including children.

<p><b>Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health</b></p>	<p><b>Explicit discussion of the details of sexual acts should not be taught before year 9 and should only take place insofar as it is necessary to teach the topics below.</b></p> <p>Pupils should know</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex.</li> <li>2. about sexual consent and their capacity to give or withhold consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values.</li> <li>3. that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.</li> <li>4. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful and that there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding sexual pressure, including from peers, and how to avoid putting sexual pressure on others.</li> <li>5. the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.</li> <li>6. that there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help.</li> <li>7. how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.</li> <li>8. about the prevalence of STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.</li> <li>9. how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour.</li> <li>10. how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.</li> </ol>
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