

# RSHE Changes for Parents: Understanding the RSHE 2026 Update

Understanding upcoming legal requirements in education

# Purpose of the meeting:

Towards the end of the summer term (2025), the Department for Education published the updated statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). This guidance will replace the current 2019 guidance, but schools will have until September 2026 to adapt their curriculum and policies to reflect these updated requirements.

Today, the main changes will be shared with you and what this means for your child at school, as well as:

- An overview of our statutory duties
- To give you an overview of why and how we deliver our RSHE lessons and how they sit within our wider PSHE Education.
- To enable you to look at coverage and ask us any questions

# School and Home Working together

The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.



# Overview of the New Statutory RSHE Guidance

## **Updated Statutory Guidance**

From 2026, schools must follow new RSHE guidance reflecting modern safeguarding and social changes.

## **Curriculum Flexibility and Requirements**

Schools have flexibility in delivery but must meet age-appropriate RSHE content and legal requirements.

## **Focus on Prevention and Skills Building**

Guidance emphasises promoting positive attitudes, resilience, and recognising unsafe situations.

## **Parental Transparency and Engagement**

Schools must communicate clearly with parents and allow access to teaching materials to build trust.



# Why the Guidance Has Been Updated

## **Changing Context and Risks**

Children face increased online harms including misogyny, scams, and harmful influencers at younger ages today.

## **Safeguarding and Prevention**

RSHE is now focused on preventing harm by helping pupils recognise risk and seek help effectively.

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Updated guidance addresses loneliness, grief, and suicide prevention with trained staff and proper support.

## **Role of Families and Schools**

Guidance emphasizes collaboration between schools and families to complement home education with age-appropriate content.

# Key Changes for Primary-Aged Children



## Enhanced Online Safety

The guidance increases focus on online safety and digital wellbeing for primary-aged children learning to identify risks and seek help.

## Body Awareness and Safeguarding

Children are taught correct names for body parts as a safeguarding measure to help clear communication and reduce stigma.

## Expanded Personal Safety

Safety education now covers practical areas such as road, rail, and water safety to help children recognize and avoid risks.

## Emotional Wellbeing and Relationships

The guidance includes teaching about emotions, change, loss, and diverse family structures emphasizing kindness and respect.

# Inclusion, Equality, and Respect



## Reflecting Diversity in Education

Schools must teach about diverse family structures and reflect modern Britain's diversity in an age-appropriate way.

## Teaching Facts and Respect


Pupils learn facts about biological sex and gender reassignment while being taught to treat everyone with dignity and respect.

## Challenging Prejudice and Discrimination

Schools address misogyny, homophobia, and harmful behaviors to protect pupils and promote safe learning environments.

## Parental Engagement and Sensitivity

Schools work with parents and faith communities to ensure teaching respects various beliefs and promotes mutual understanding.

A photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a teacher's arm is extended, pointing towards the right. In the background, several students are seated at desks, some using laptops. The room is bright with a large window on the left.

# How Schools Are Expected to Deliver RSHE

## **Age-Appropriate Delivery**

RSHE lessons must be age- and stage-appropriate, carefully sequenced, and delivered by confident, trained staff.

## **Whole-School Approach**

RSHE should be embedded in a whole-school approach to wellbeing and safeguarding, not taught in isolation.

## **Inclusive and Adapted Teaching**

Teaching must consider pupils with SEND and adapt content so all can safely access the curriculum.

## **Parental Engagement and Accountability**

Schools must be transparent with parents, explaining lesson timing, content, and safeguarding measures.

# What This Means for Your Child



## **Empowering Education**

RSHE helps children understand healthy relationships, personal boundaries, and staying safe online and offline.

## **Building Skills and Resilience**

The guidance fosters communication, critical thinking, and resilience rather than focusing solely on fear or risks.

## **Parent and Family Engagement**

Parents experience clearer communication from schools and engage in discussions with children about RSHE topics at home.

## **Preparation for Adult Life**

Older pupils gain skills and knowledge to navigate adult life, relationships, and health decisions confidently.

# Questions, Support, and Next Steps



## **Parental Engagement**

Parents should review RSHE policies, ask questions, and participate in consultations to support their child's education.

## **Addressing Concerns Respectfully**

Early respectful discussions with school leaders can clarify curriculum content and teaching approaches effectively.

## **Access to Resources**

National guidance and support from trusted organisations help parents stay informed and confident about RSHE changes.

## **Shared Commitment**

Schools and families collaborate to ensure children grow safe, healthy, and respectful in a supportive environment.

# Other Useful Updates:



- ▶ Ofsted's renewed inspection framework came into effect on the 10th November 2025.
- ▶ There is the evaluation area 'Personal Development and well-being'.
- ▶ The toolkit outlines "factors that...contribute most strongly to personal development and well-being", which inspectors will have in mind when looking for evidence, and you can see that PSHE education is central to the following:
  - ▶ promoting equality of opportunity so that all pupils can thrive together and understand that individual characteristics make people unique; this includes, but is not limited to, an age appropriate understanding of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010
  - ▶ developing pupils' confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy
  - ▶ enabling pupils to recognise online and offline risks to their well-being
  - ▶ enabling pupils to recognise the dangers of using technology and social media inappropriately
  - ▶ developing pupils' understanding of how to keep physically healthy, eat healthily and maintain an active lifestyle...
  - ▶ developing pupils' age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships through relationships and sex education
  - ▶ supporting pupils' readiness for the next phase of education, training or employment so that they are equipped to make the transition successfully, including by providing impartial careers information, education, advice and guidance for secondary-age pupils

# It's Not All About RSHE:





- ▶ With the new [DfE statutory guidance for RSHE](#) including more content on personal safety and child financial harms, statutory RSHE will constitute 80-90% of the PSHE education curriculum. And inspectors will certainly be expecting schools to provide RSHE that meets the statutory guidance. But schools must not stop short of covering the remaining 10-20%.
- ▶ To give schools a better chance of doing well in Ofsted inspection and – more importantly – to meet the needs of our pupils, the school needs the rest of PSHE education, comprising **economic wellbeing** and **careers education**.

# Specific Examples of the Changes:








- ▶ [Comparison DfE 2019 v 2025 Primary \(1\).xlsx](#)



*Additional life-skills lesson are taught throughout the year	Year 4 of RC- How am I feeling? (Y2)	Economics (Y1) Year 4 of RC- My Friends and Me (Y2)	(Y1) Year 4 of RC- Healthy Me (Y2)	Year 4 of RC- Jobs in our Community (Y2)	Year 4 of RC- My Body (Y2)	Year 4 of RC- What's the Risk? (Y2) *Bespoke SRE for Y6 pupils where appropriate
Year 3	Pressures I May Face * How to respond to external pressures (false advertising) and that are unsafe My body belongs to me – asking and giving permission	 Great Friends Think Alike * All about friendships, healthy and unhealthy. How to resolve difficulties	Looking After Me * How to maintain good hygiene, physical fitness	People in our Community * To identify community groups that we belong to, diversity and stereotypes	 We are Family * Understand that families can be different, including healthy family life	First Aid * Basic first aid, bites and stings and what to do in an emergency
Year 4	My Feelings and Me * What affects our feelings, how they change and how to manage them.	 Responsible Me *Healthy Relationships, difference between rights and responsibilities, privacy rights online, consequences of behaviour	Respecting the Individual * Conflict, opinions, stereotyping, discrimination and responding to aggression	Managing Myself and My Behaviour * Self-esteem, goals, law, taking risks, peer influence, resilience, asking for help	Collective Responsibility * Environment, pollution, animal care	Puberty * Understand human life cycle, puberty – physical and emotional changes
Year 5	Similarities, Differences and Stereotypes * What is meant by gender, identity, gender identity	Online Safety *Misleading images, rights, pressures, online addition	Careers Unit *Jobs and value of money	First Aid and Head Injuries *Recap on first aid from Year 3, head injuries, asthma attacks, 999	 Growing Up *Human life cycle, changes in relationships, menstruation and wet dreams, body image, families	What do I know about drugs? *Difference between legal and illegal, how they can be used, why people use them, addiction, asking for help
Year 6	My Mental Health & Me *Difference between physical & mental health, feelings affect mental health, poor mental health	Living in an Online World *How to stay safe online, media manipulating images, peer pressure	Choices, Choices, Choices *Differences between physical and mental health, healthy diet, drugs, peer pressure	 Changing Relationships *Loving relationships, marriages/ civil partnerships are choice, why relationships end	Reproduction *Male and female reproductive system, process, safe relationships, needs of a baby, creating a family unit	 Moving on up *Reflect on primary school, forming new relationships, secondary school

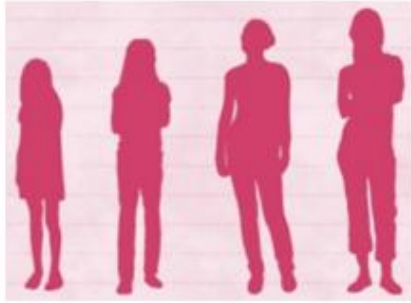
skills lesson are taught throughout the year	I feeling? (Y2)	Year 4 of RC- My Friends and Me (Y2)	Year 4 of RC- Healthy Me (Y2)	Community (Y2)	(Y2)	Risk? (Y2) *Bespoke SRE for Y6 pupils where appropriate
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Year 4	<p><b>My Feelings and Me</b></p> <p>* What affects our feelings, how they change and how to manage them.</p>	<p><b>Responsible Me</b></p> <p>*Healthy Relationships, difference between rights and responsibilities, privacy rights online, consequences of behaviour</p>	<p><b>Respecting the Individual</b></p> <p>* Conflict, opinions, stereotyping, discrimination and responding to aggression</p>	<p><b>Managing Myself and My Behaviour</b></p> <p>* Self-esteem, goals, law, taking risks, peer influence, resilience, asking for help</p>	<p><b>Collective Responsibility</b></p> <p>* Environment, pollution, animal care</p>	<p><b>Puberty</b></p> <p>* Understand human life cycle, puberty – physical and emotional changes</p>
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Year 6	<p><b>My Mental Health &amp; Me</b></p> <p>*Difference between physical &amp; mental health, feelings affect mental health, poor mental health</p>	<p><b>Living in an Online World</b></p> <p>*How to stay safe online, media manipulating images, peer pressure</p>	<p><b>Choices, Choices, Choices</b></p> <p>*Differences between physical and mental health, healthy diet, drugs, peer pressure</p>	<p><b>Changing Relationships</b></p> <p>*Loving relationships, marriages/ civil partnerships are choice, why relationships end</p>	<p><b>Reproduction</b></p> <p>*Male and female reproductive system, process, safe relationships, needs of a baby, creating a family unit</p>	<p><b>Moving on up</b></p> <p>*Reflect on primary school, forming new relationships, secondary school</p>

# Benefits of Children Taking Parts in These Lessons:

- ▶  Safeguarding and Safety:
  - ▶ Helps children understand what is safe and unsafe behaviour. Gives children language to report worries or concerns
  - ▶ Supports awareness of personal boundaries and consent in everyday situations
  - ▶ Encourages children to seek help from trusted adults
- ▶  Open Communication:
  - ▶ Creates a culture where children feel able to ask questions safely
  - ▶ Reduces confusion caused by misinformation from peers or online sources
  - ▶ Supports honest, factual conversations using appropriate vocabulary
- ▶  Healthy Relationships:
  - ▶ Teaches respect, kindness and empathy
  - ▶ Helps children understand friendship, family relationships and emotions
  - ▶ Supports recognising positive and negative behaviours in relationships
- ▶  Emotional and Mental Wellbeing:
  - ▶ Supports children in understanding feelings and changes
  - ▶ Builds confidence and self-esteem
  - ▶ Helps children manage emotions and social situations more effectively
- ▶  Preparation for the Wider World:
  - ▶ Equips children with knowledge they need as they grow
  - ▶ Helps them navigate influences from media and the internet
  - ▶ Encourages responsible decision-making over time
- ▶  Consistent, Trusted Information:
  - ▶ Ensures children receive accurate, age-appropriate information
  - ▶ Prevents reliance on myths or inappropriate online content
  - ▶ Ensures learning is inclusive, respectful and values-based
- ▶  Supports School Values
  - ▶ Reinforces respect, equality and responsibility
  - ▶ Aligns with safeguarding duties and wellbeing priorities
  - ▶ Strengthens partnerships between school, families and the community

# Year 4 H & W: Puberty

## Summer 2

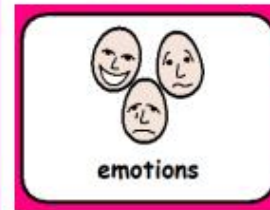
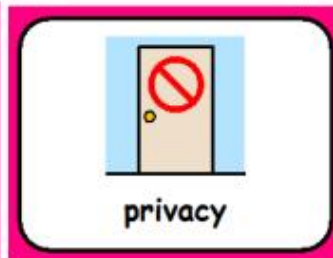
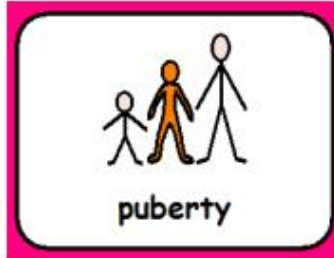


How is our body changing?



Key Vocabulary	Definition
puberty	The time when the body develops when you move from a kid to an adult.
Life-cycle	A series of stages a living thing goes through during its life.
menstruation	A discharge of bloody fluid from the uterus that usually happens each month

How are my emotion changing during puberty?



Key Outcomes
I understand key stages of the human life cycle.
I understand what <b>puberty</b> is and where it happens within the life cycle and where to get support.
I know the <b>physical changes</b> to our body that might happen during puberty.
I understand how our emotions change during puberty due to <b>hormones</b> i.e. privacy.
I know how to keep myself clean.



Key Skills
I can draw upon evidence and my own experiences.
I can show willingness to illustrate the ideas of others with own experiences.
I can identify associated concepts and explain their relevance and connections.
I can empathise with how others are feeling and thinking about things.
I know how to encourage others to join in discussion.
I can suggest reasoned conclusions.

Who Can you turn to for help and Support?	
Parents or trusted family member	Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (24 hours, every day) <a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk">https://www.nspcc.org.uk</a>
Your Doctor or Practice Nurse	Helpline: 0800 1111(24 hours, every day) <a href="https://www.childline.org.uk">https://www.childline.org.uk</a>
Teachers or School Staff	<a href="https://www.nhs.uk/live-well">https://www.nhs.uk/live-well</a>



# Growing Up

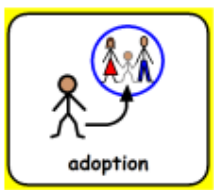
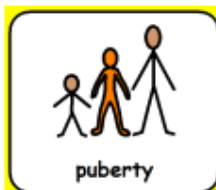
## Summer 1

How can we deal with changes in our body?



Key Vocabulary	Definition
Foster	Bring up and care for another persons child
body image	It is the way we feel about our body. Healthy body image is when you feel good about your body.
civil partnership	It is a legal relationship which can be registered by two people who aren't related to each other.
adopt	To become a parent of a child by law.
stepfamilies	A family in which one or more adult partners have children from previous relationships.
sole parenting	When one parent has full responsibility to make decisions for the child.

Do families always look the same?



Key Outcomes
<a href="https://bettyforschools.co.uk/resources/8-11-year-olds">https://bettyforschools.co.uk/resources/8-11-year-olds</a> Teachers should register for this website in <b>ADVANCE</b> to the lessons- it is free and recommended by the PSHE Association.
After recapping the human life cycle, I can understand changes in relationships due to <b>puberty</b> .
I understand the process of <b>menstruation</b> and <b>wet dreams</b> .
I understand how the media portray <b>body image</b> .
I know that families can look different but feel the same.



Key Skills
I can evaluate own evidence offered and that offered by others.
I can air feelings in a way that supports the enquiry.
I know how to encourage others to contribute to the enquiry.
I know how to show appreciation for the comments of others.
I am able to question peers to support the enquiry.
I can evaluate in some detail the range of possibilities.

### Who Can you turn to for help and Support?

Parents or trusted family member	Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (24 hours, every day) <a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk">https://www.nspcc.org.uk</a>
Your Doctor or Practice Nurse	Helpline: 0800 1111(24 hours, every day) <a href="https://www.childline.org.uk">https://www.childline.org.uk</a>
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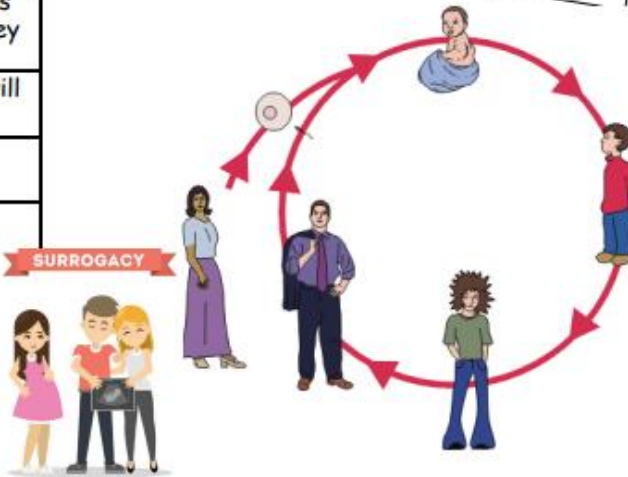
How are babies made?



What are the responsibilities of having a baby?



Key Vocabulary	Definition
reproductive system	It is a collection of internal and external organs—in females and males—that work together for the purpose of procreating.
fertilisation	It is what happens when the female's ovum joins with male's sperm and they form a zygote. Conception.
embryo	A zygote grows into an embryo. It will continue developing until the birth.
surrogacy	An arrangement in which a woman bears a child for another woman.
IVF	A technique of in vitro fertilisation that helps people to have a baby.



Key Outcomes
I can identify parts of the male and female reproductive system.
I understand the process of reproduction in humans .
I can describe a safe and loving relationship.
I understand the <b>needs</b> of a baby and how to look after them.
I understand that there are different ways of creating a <b>family unit</b> .



Key Skills
I know how to identify assumptions and evaluate their impact.
I show interest in the progress of an enquiry.
I can suggest ways in which an enquiry might move to make progress.
I can suggest and explain new and novel ideas that build on the ideas of others.
I can summarise the progress of an enquiry.
I can evaluate a range of reasoned conclusions.
I can extend my thinking beyond the PSHE lessons.

Who Can you turn to for help and Support?

Parents or trusted family member	Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (24 hours, every day) <a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk">https://www.nspcc.org.uk</a>
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Teachers or School Staff	<a href="https://www.nhs.uk/live-well">https://www.nhs.uk/live-well</a>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SK72lu8TbF4>

We go through puberty in order to prepare our bodies for having a baby **when we are older and when we are ready...**

Today we are going to learn about how a baby is made.



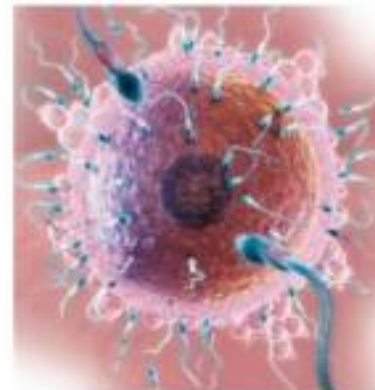
When a man and woman love each other, they might make the important decision to try to have a baby together.


To create a new life, the male and female reproductive organs come together. This is called *sexual intercourse*.

During sexual intercourse, a man and a woman lie very close together.

The man puts his penis inside the woman's vagina. This allows sperm to travel into the female reproductive organs.

Sometimes, a sperm cell and an egg cell combine to make a fertilised egg cell. A new life begins!



A high-angle photograph of four people—three adults and one child—gathered around a table, looking at and pointing to documents. The man on the left is wearing a maroon sweater, the woman on the right is wearing a black and white patterned top, and the child at the bottom is wearing a purple hoodie. The woman on the left is holding a tablet. The background is a light-colored tiled floor.

# Parents' Rights and the Right to Withdraw

## **Parental Rights on Withdrawal**

Parents may withdraw children from sex education except for science curriculum content, but cannot withdraw from relationships or health education.

## **Emphasis on Parental Engagement**

Schools must consult parents on RSHE policies and provide access to curriculum materials openly and transparently.

## **Supporting Family Values**

RSHE supports family values and recognises parents as key partners in children's education and development.

# The Bigger Picture:



- ▶ Relationships, Health and Sex Education are an integral part of our Personal, Social, and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum throughout the school. We have a responsibility to prepare our pupils for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain including recognising and being able to form healthy relationships and having skills to keep themselves safe.
- ▶ These lessons will continue to reflect our school values of Trust, Respect, Resilience, Acceptance, Kindness and Self-Worth and link with our statutory duties to actively promote British Values, comply with the Equality Act, keeping our children safe and meet the changing needs of all children in our school community.

Questions?