

RSE Guidance

and information for parents



What are the aims of Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education?

The opening paragraph of the Department for Education guidance states: "Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way." (DfE, 2021, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education)

What must schools teach in Relationships Education, Health Education and Sex Education?

Relationships and Health Education are compulsory in all primary schools in England. For primary aged children this includes curriculum content under two headings (DfE 2021):

Relationships Education

Families and people who care for me
Caring Friendships
Internet safety and harms
Respectful Relationships
Online Relationships
Being safe

Health Education

Mental wellbeing
Physical health and fitness
Healthy Eating
Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
Health and prevention
Basic first aid
Changing adolescent body

The DfE recommends, 'that all primary schools should have a Sex Education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.'

Why is this RSE curriculum needed?

There are four main aims for teaching RSE within the context of PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education):

- More than ever before, children are exposed to representations of sex and sexuality through the social culture around them. The unregulated content on the internet or social media, can mean children may be exposed to dangerous, confusing or scary content. We can prepare them for this by presenting a balanced view of positive and healthy relationships to help them to be discerning and to stay safe.
- There is much independent research showing most parents and carers value the support of schools in providing Relationship and Sex Education for their children. Parents and schools want children to be safe and happy.
- A range of independent research consistently shows that effective Relationship Education delays first sexual experience and reduces risk-taking in young people.
- Surveys of children and young people, as well as Ofsted, have repeatedly said that Relationship and Sex Education tends to be "too little, too late and too biological". This is one of the many reasons why the Department for Education made Relationships and Health Education compulsory in primary schools, with an emphasis on Relationships Education.

Children's safety and wellbeing is paramount and as a school, we must fulfil our statutory duties.

If you have any questions:

We would welcome any discussions with you, as parents. You are welcome to meet with your Form Teacher, Head of Year, the Head of PSHE or Deputy Head. Often, when parents and carers find out what is in the curriculum, their fears are allayed as they can appreciate it is in the best interests of their child's lifelong learning and safeguarding.

What about LGBT+ issues?

There has been much mis-information in the media about how LGBTQ+ issues are to be taught within the Relationships, Health and Sex Education curriculum in schools. St Neot's firmly stands by its position that EVERY child is valued and special. For more information on where and how these concepts are covered: please see [How does Jigsaw approach Gender Identity](#)

More about Jigsaw, the mindful approach to PSHE?

The Jigsaw teaching materials integrate Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE), emotional literacy, social skills, mindfulness, and spiritual development in a whole-school approach. The expectations of the DfE Relationships and Health Education guidance are woven throughout Jigsaw but specifically covered in the Relationships and Healthy Me Puzzles (units), with puberty and human reproduction being taught in the Changing Me Puzzle. The PSHE lessons aim to give children their entitlement to information about relationships, puberty and human reproduction, appropriate to their ages and stages of development. This work is treated in a matter-of-fact and sensitive manner and helps children to cope with change, including puberty, and to learn about healthy relationships.

There are six Puzzles (units):

- Being me in My World
- Celebrating Difference
- Dreams and Goals
- Healthy Me Relationships
- Changing Me

At St Neot's, the Relationships and Changing Me Puzzles are taught in the Spring Term.

What will my child actually be taught about puberty and human reproduction?

Jigsaw's 'Changing Me' unit is taught over a period of approximately 6 weeks. Each year group will be taught appropriate to their age and developmental stage, building on the previous years' learning. Please note: at no point will a child be taught something that is inappropriate; and if a question from a child arises and the teacher feels it would be inappropriate to answer, (for example, because of its mature or explicit nature), the child will be encouraged to ask their parents or carers at home. The question will not be answered to the child or class if it is outside the remit of that year group's programme.

The Changing Me Puzzle is all about coping positively with change and includes:

- Nursery, Reception (Ages 3-5) Growing up: how we have changed since we were babies.
- Year 1 (Ages 5-6) Boys' and girls' bodies; correct names for body parts.
- Year 2 (Ages 6-7) Boys' and girls' bodies; body parts and respecting privacy (which parts of the body are private and why this is).
- Year 3 (Ages 7-8) How babies grow and how boys' and girls' bodies change as they grow older. Introduction to puberty and menstruation.
- Year 4 (Ages 8-9) Internal and external reproductive body parts. Recap about puberty and menstruation. Conception explained in simple terms.
- Year 5 (Ages 9-10) Puberty for boys and girls in more detail including the social and emotional aspects of becoming an adolescent. Conception explained in simple biological terms.
- Year 6 (Ages 10-11) Puberty for boys and girls revisited. Understanding conception to the birth of a baby. Becoming a teenager.
- Year 7 (Ages 11-12) Facts around pregnancy, including miscarriage. Choices relating to pregnancy. How to get further help and advice regarding reproductive and sexual health.
- Year 8 (Ages 12-13) Focus on relationships, peer on peer abuse, how to keep oneself safe including access to pornography.

Further information can be found here:

- [Overview Map for Nursery to Year 6](#)
- [Overview Map for Year 7&8](#)

How can I talk to my child about relationships, puberty and human reproduction?

What children learn at school is only part of the curriculum, and children can continue to learn from you at home. For some parents, it can feel totally natural to discuss relationships, puberty and human reproduction with their child, while for others it can seem uncomfortable. Either way, it is important to remember these key points:

- We all want children to be safe, healthy and happy.
- We need to consider their needs and the world they inhabit.
- We need to normalise talking about relationships, puberty and human reproduction to ensure that children feel they can talk to parents/carers about any concerns or worries they may have.
- We may need to challenge our own ways of thinking about how we feel about relationships and sex education.
- We have choices. We can avoid talking about relationships and puberty or we can communicate openly and honestly with children.

Here are some tips for talking to your child:

- Be honest. If you don't know the answer to a question, be honest and say so. Tell your child that you will need to find out and that you will get back to them with more soon.
- Remember that children are curious and want to know and understand. We tend to place our adult perspective on children's questions and comments, when actually a child just wants (and needs) a very simple, age-appropriate, matter-of-fact answer. This answer will not involve an 'adult' understanding of a topic – it needs to be at a child's level, with opportunity given for the child to be able to ask further questions if needed. Give yourself time to respond by asking something like, "What do you think that means?" or "Why do you ask?"
- Keep lines of communication open. Having an open and honest relationship with your child can really help make conversations easier, so make sure that you are always willing to talk when your child needs you; if you can't, explain why and find another time when it is more mutually convenient.
- Use correct terminology. It helps that children aren't confused by hints, euphemisms and innuendo; use correct terminology whenever you can, especially for body parts. This is hugely important for safeguarding too.
- Respond to what children say they need. Bear in mind that children's lives today are very different from even five years ago. Therefore, the education they receive needs to reflect this. Research shows us that children want and need to understand relationships, puberty and human reproduction, and want to be able to talk with parents about this when they have had lessons at school.
- Answer questions and don't be afraid to say, 'I really don't know – let's work it out or look it up together'. Have a phrase for awkward moments, such as, 'That's a good question, and let's talk about it once we get home'.
- Always respond. If you don't, they may think it is wrong to talk to you about relationships, puberty or human reproduction and as a result you may find your child clams up when you want to raise the subject, now or in the future.
- If it all feels too personal, try talking about people in books, films and favourite television programmes.
- Enjoy it. Laugh with each other!
- Work in partnership with us at St Neot's

All lessons are taught using correct terminology, child-friendly language and diagrams. If you would like access to more details or information, this can be requested.

As a school, we appreciate that these can be difficult topics for some families and education in this area has changed enormously over the years. We welcome feedback and further discussions where necessary. Further information can be found in our RSE Policy, which is available on our website. This includes information on how to withdraw your child/ren from Sex Education lessons, where applicable. (This applies to select lessons within the Spring Term of Year 4, Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7)

We thank you for entrusting your child's education, particularly in this area, to us.