



Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

Curriculum Updates for September 2026

RSHE Update - Understanding the Changes

The Department for Education (DfE) has updated its statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). Schools are expected to follow the updated guidance from **September 2026**.

Key points to explain:

- The updated guidance reflects current issues and experiences that may affect children and young people.
- As a result, we have updated our RSHE curriculum to reflect the new guidance and reviewed our RSHE policy.
- Some content is new, some content has been updated or clarified, and some content remains unchanged.
- The core curriculum content is statutory, which means that schools are required to teach it.

As a school, we are required to teach pupils about:

General
wellbeing

Online
Wellbeing

Physical health
and fitness

Healthy
eating

Drugs, alcohol,
tobacco and
vaping

Health
protection
and
prevention

Basic first aid

Developing
bodies

Personal safety

What Children Will Learn About Families

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- **The importance of families** in helping children grow up safely and happily, including the love, security and stability they can provide.
- **The characteristics of safe and happy family life**, including commitment to one another, protection and care for children and other family members, including during times of difficulty.
- **That families can look different from one another.** Children will learn to respect these differences and understand that families can be characterised by love and care.
- **That stable, caring relationships** are at the heart of safe and happy families.
- **That marriage and civil partnerships are formal, legally recognised commitments between two people**, intended to be lifelong.

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- The different ways in which families can be structured.
- Marriage and civil partnerships as formal, legally recognised commitments.

Building Healthy Friendships

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- **The importance of friendships** in helping us feel happy, secure and connected to others.
- **That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming** and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.
- **That friendships can change over time** and that children may not always have the friendships they would like. Most people feel lonely at times, and there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about these feelings.
- **The characteristics of healthy friendships**, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, and sharing interests and experiences.
- **That most friendships have ups and downs** and that difficulties can often be worked through.
- **How to manage conflict in friendships**, including the understanding that resorting to violence is never acceptable.

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- Understanding that **feeling lonely is a normal experience** that many people may experience at times.
- **Managing disagreements and conflict within friendships** in a safe and respectful way.

Treating Others with Respect

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- **How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others**, including within families and friendships.
- **The importance of setting and respecting healthy boundaries** in relationships.
- **How to communicate effectively and manage conflict** with kindness and respect.
- **That everyone has the right to be treated with respect** and the importance of respecting others, including those who may be different from us.
- **The importance of courtesy and good manners** when interacting with others.
- **The importance of self-respect** and how this can contribute to their own happiness and wellbeing.
- **Different types of bullying**, including online bullying, the impact bullying can have, and the responsibilities of those who witness it.
- **What stereotypes are** and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or harmful, and may contribute to discrimination or bullying.

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- **Recognising, communicating and respecting healthy boundaries** in relationships.
- **Understanding stereotypes**, including how they can be unfair or harmful and the impact they can have on individuals and others.

Keeping safe and recognising unsafe situations

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- What appropriate boundaries are in friendships and relationships with peers and others.
- The concept of privacy and why it is important.
- That everyone's body belongs to them, including the difference between appropriate, inappropriate and unsafe contact.
- How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter in different contexts, including online.
- How to recognise when a relationship or situation may be harmful or dangerous.
- How and where to report abuse or concerns about something they have experienced.
- How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others.

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- **Healthy boundaries and privacy** in relationships and interactions with others.
- **Recognising potentially harmful or dangerous relationships and situations.**
- **Knowing how and where to seek help and report concerns**, including concerns about experiences online or in real life.

Online safety and relationships

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- The importance of being respectful in online interactions.
- How to think critically about online relationships and information, including the risks associated with communicating with people they have never met in person.
- That social media platforms have minimum age requirements, which children should understand and follow.
- The importance of taking care when sharing personal information online.
- That online content can sometimes be inappropriate, harmful or upsetting for children.

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- **Online relationships**, including the risks associated with interacting with people children have never met in person.
- **Critically evaluating online information and relationships**, rather than assuming that everything seen or experienced online is reliable or safe.
- **Privacy and sharing personal information online.**
- **The potential for online content to be inappropriate or upsetting**, and knowing what to do if children encounter it.

Internet safety and online harms

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- **That the internet is an important part of everyday life** for many people, and that being online can have both positive and negative aspects.
- **The benefits of balancing time spent online** with other activities, and the potential risks of spending excessive amounts of time using electronic devices.
- **How their online behaviour can affect others**, including the importance of behaving respectfully online.
- **Why some social media platforms, apps, computer games and online games have age restrictions.**
- **The risks associated with online gaming**, including in-game purchases and other forms of video game monetisation, scams, fraud and other financial harms.
- **That excessive gaming can become harmful or addictive** and where to seek help and support.
- **How to think critically about what they see and read online**, including recognising that not all online information is accurate, reliable or trustworthy.
- **That abuse, bullying and harassment can take place online** and can have a negative impact on people's wellbeing.
- **Where and how to report concerns and seek support** about issues experienced online.

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- **The potential risks associated with online gaming**, including excessive or addictive gaming behaviours.
- **Financial risks online**, including in-game purchases, video game monetisation, scams and fraud.
- **The reasons behind age restrictions** on social media, apps and gaming platforms.
- **Critically evaluating online content and information**, including recognising that online content may not always be accurate, reliable or safe.

Children's Mental Wellbeing

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- **The benefits of physical activity, spending time outdoors and helping others** for their health, wellbeing and happiness.
- **The wide range of emotions** they may experience in different situations.
- **That worrying and feeling low are normal experiences** that everyone may experience at times, and that these feelings do not necessarily mean someone has a mental health condition.
- **How to recognise and talk about feelings**, using a range of vocabulary to describe their own feelings and understand the feelings of others.
- **That isolation and loneliness can affect children** and the benefits of seeking support.
- **That bullying, including cyberbullying, can have a negative and sometimes lasting impact** on mental wellbeing.
- **Where and how to seek support**, including knowing which trusted adults in school they can speak to.
- **That mental health problems are common** and that seeking support early can help.

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- **Talking openly about mental health and emotional wellbeing**, helping to reduce stigma and encourage children to seek support.
- **Recognising when they may need support and knowing how and where to seek help**, including identifying trusted adults in school and elsewhere.

Physical health and healthy eating

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

Physical health and fitness

- **The mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle.**
- **The importance of building regular physical activity** into daily and weekly routines.
- **The risks associated with an inactive lifestyle**, including obesity.

Healthy eating

- **What makes up a healthy and balanced diet**, including an understanding of calories and other nutritional information.
- **The importance of developing a healthy relationship with food.**
- **The characteristics of an unhealthy diet** and the risks associated with unhealthy eating, including obesity and tooth decay.

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- **Understanding calories and nutritional information** as part of a healthy and balanced diet.
- **The importance of a healthy relationship with food**, alongside the physical aspects of healthy eating.

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- **The facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and their associated risks**, including smoking, vaping, alcohol use and drug-taking.
- **The risks associated with nicotine addiction**, including the risks associated with nicotine products such as cigarettes, vapes and nicotine pouches.
- **That nicotine products can be addictive** and can have harmful effects on health.

New or updated content 2026

More explicit teaching about:

- **Vaping and the associated health risks.**
- **Nicotine pouches and other nicotine products.**
- **The risks of nicotine addiction**, including addiction to products that may not involve smoking.

Health prevention and personal health

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- **How to recognise early signs of physical illness.**
- **How to stay safe in the sun**, including understanding the risks of excessive sun exposure and ways to reduce the risk of sun damage.
- **The importance of getting enough good-quality sleep** for health and wellbeing, and practical ways to improve sleep.
- **The importance of dental health** and the benefits of good oral hygiene.
- **The importance of personal hygiene and understanding germs**, including bacteria and viruses, how they are spread and how some infections can be treated.
- **The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination and immunisation.**

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- **Sun safety and protecting the skin from sun damage**, including understanding the longer-term risks of excessive exposure.
- **Healthy sleep habits**, including how screen use and other behaviours can affect sleep.
- **Vaccination and immunisation**, including the scientific evidence supporting their role in protecting health.

Staying safe and basic first aid

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- **About hazards that may cause harm, injury or risk** and ways to reduce those risks.
- **How to recognise risks and keep safe** around roads, railways and water.
- **Basic first aid**
- **How to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services** when necessary.
- **Basic first aid principles**, including how to respond to common injuries and ailments, including head injuries.

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- **Recognising hazards and assessing risks** in everyday situations.
- **Knowing how to respond appropriately in an emergency**, including contacting emergency services and applying basic first aid.

Growing and changing

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- **That the body grows and changes over time**, particularly during adolescence.
- **The human lifecycle** and the understanding that puberty is a natural stage of development.
- **The physical and emotional changes** that may happen during puberty.
- **The correct names for body parts**, including the penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum and nipples.
- **That these body parts are private** and that everyone has the right to privacy and personal boundaries.

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- **Using correct anatomical vocabulary** when learning about the human body.
- **Understanding puberty as a natural part of growing and developing.**
- **Recognising and understanding the physical and emotional changes** that may occur during adolescence.

Understanding menstruation

By the end of primary school, pupils will understand:

- **The facts about the menstrual cycle**, including the physical and emotional changes that may occur.
- **That menstruation is a natural part of puberty and the human lifecycle.**
- **What to expect when periods begin**, including where to seek information, advice and support.
- **That learning about menstruation before periods begin** can help children understand what to expect and reduce worry or distress.

New or updated content

More explicit teaching about:

- **The menstrual cycle and the physical and emotional changes associated with it.**
- **Learning about menstruation before periods begin**, so that children are prepared and know what to expect.

Parents' and carers' rights

Parents and carers can request to withdraw their child from some or all of the additional sex education taught in primary school. To request this, parents/carers should write formally to the Headteacher using the school's withdrawal form.

Parents and carers cannot withdraw their child from:

- Relationships Education
- Health Education
- Science curriculum content, including puberty, reproduction and learning about the human body

If a child is withdrawn:

- Appropriate, purposeful alternative education will be provided.
- The child and family will not be stigmatised.
- Parents/carers can access resources to support learning at home.
- **The school will ensure that the child's views are heard and that their best interests are considered.**

Next steps and sharing your views

What happens next?

- Read our updated RSHE policy.
- Complete our parent survey by **24th August 2026**.
- Request to view curriculum materials at any time via the school office.
- Share your views and feedback — feedback is also welcome beyond the consultation period.

Key reminders:

- The core curriculum content is statutory and must be taught.
- We value working in partnership with parents and carers to support children's education.
- RSHE helps children stay safe, develop healthy relationships and prepare for life in modern Britain.