

RSE at Kensington Community Primary School

What is RSE?

RSE stands for Relationships and Sex Education, and is made up of three strands:

- Relationships Education
- Health Education
- Sex Education

Relationships and Sex Education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Some aspects are taught in science, and others are taught as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE).

A comprehensive programme of Relationships and Sex Education provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex, and sexual health. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline.

RSE teaches children...

- ✓ the knowledge they need to recognise and report abuse
- ✓ about boundaries and privacy
- ✓ to understand that they have rights over their own bodies
- ✓ to understand boundaries in friendships and with families, in all contexts, including online

RSE can...

- ✓ help to create a safe school community in which pupils can grow, learn and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life
- ✓ have a positive impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and their ability to achieve
- ✓ play a vital part in meeting schools' safeguarding obligations
- ✓ help children to be prepared for the physical and emotional changes that they undergo at puberty

“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.”

(Department for Education, 2021)

Won't telling my child about puberty and reproduction take away their innocence? Isn't it inappropriate? Aren't they too young?

No. The evidence suggests that high-quality RSE does the opposite: it actually delays young people's first sexual experience, it helps them become much more confident and comfortable about making informed choices, and helps them to understand their own body. **Good and appropriate RSE takes away children's ignorance, not their innocence.**

Teaching about safety and relationships as part of PSHE contributes to how schools approach the safeguarding of pupils. It helps them to recognise when they and others are at risk and equips them with the skills, strategies and language they need to take appropriate action.

This is crucial to fulfilling statutory duties in relation to safeguarding pupils as well as to meeting Ofsted expectations. Ofsted expressed concern in its 2013 PSHE report that a lack of high-quality, age-appropriate RSE in over a third of schools left young people vulnerable to inappropriate sexual behaviours and exploitation. It is clear, therefore, that PSHE plays a vital part in helping to meet school's responsibilities to safeguard their pupils, your children.

(www.jigsawpshe.com, 2020)

RSE lessons should:

- be accurate and factual, covering a comprehensive range of information about sex, relationships, the law and sexual health, in order to make informed choices.
- be positively inclusive in terms of gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, religion or belief or other life-experience.
- include the development of skills to support healthy and safe relationships and ensure good communication about these issues.
- promote a critical awareness of the different attitudes and views on sex and relationships within society such as peer norms and those portrayed in the media
- provide opportunities for reflection in order to nurture personal values based on mutual respect and care
- be part of lifelong learning, starting early in childhood and continuing throughout life. It should reflect the age and level of the learner.
- ensure children and young people are clearly informed of their rights such as how they can access confidential advice and health services within the boundaries of safeguarding.
- be relevant and meet the needs of children and young people, and actively involve them as participants, advocates and evaluators in developing good quality provision.
- be provided within a learning environment which is safe for the children, young people and adults involved and based on the principle that prejudice, discrimination and bullying are harmful and unacceptable.

(Sex Education Forum, 2020)

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

- **Be honest:** if you don't know the answer, be honest and say so. Tell them that you need to find out and you will get back to them 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 simple, matter-of-fact answer. Make sure it's at a child's level, giving opportunities to ask further questions if needed. Give yourself time to respond by asking something like, "Why do you ask?" or "What do you think that means?"
- **Keep lines of communication open:** having an open and honest relationship with your child can help make these conversations easier, so make sure you are willing to talk when your child needs to, or be able to explain why you can't and find another time when you can.
- **Use correct terminology:** it helps that children aren't confused by hints, euphemisms and innuendo; use correct terminology wherever and whenever you can, especially for naming body parts. It is hugely important for keeping them safe.
- **Respond to what they say they need:** remember that children's lives today are very different from even just five years ago. We may feel that they know too much, when actually ignorance is the enemy of innocence: children are more likely to make the safest choices when they are effectively empowered to do so.
- **Always respond.** If not, the child may feel that they are not able to talk about important issues or things that they are worried about, especially related to RSE.
- **If it all feels too personal,** try to talk about people in books, movies or TV shows to create some distance.
- **Listen, rather than judge.** Try asking them what they think.