

What Is Relationships Education?

'Relationships' is one of three core themes in the primary Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) curriculum; the other two core themes being 'Health and Wellbeing' and 'Living in the Wider World'. Education about relationships is covered throughout many elements of the primary PSHE curriculum.

Relationships education is considered most effective in terms of safeguarding pupils when it is taught as part of a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme. However, elements of sex education that are not included in the statutory guidance will remain non-statutory and, as such, parents will still have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from part or all of the sex education. Parents do not have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from the relationships education.

What is the Purpose of Relationships Education?

The purpose of relationships education is to equip children with the understanding, knowledge and skills they will need in their everyday lives. These are important life skills about communicating and interacting with others. Teaching about relationships will enable children to safely negotiate making new friendships, recognise potential threats to their wellbeing and develop meaningful relationships with others throughout their lives.



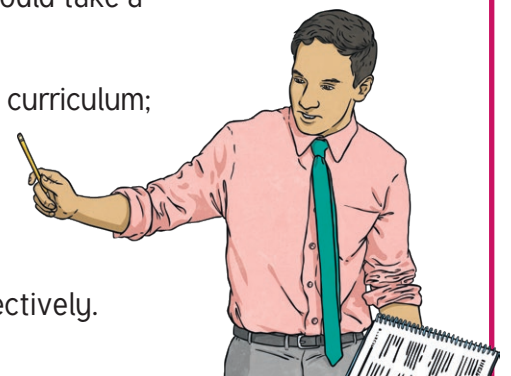
Why Must We Teach Relationships Education?

Relationships education will soon be a mandatory requirement for all primary schools (September 2020), but what does relationships education actually mean in terms of a whole school curriculum? Schools should ensure that all aspects of the statutory guidance for relationships education is sufficiently covered once this is published. Draft guidance was published in July 2018.



How Can We Ensure Our School Is Prepared to Deliver Statutory Relationships Education?

- Primary schools must have a PSHE leader in place, as well as a linked governor to oversee the changes necessary to meet the statutory requirements;
- Assessing the current provision the school has for relationships education is the first step to addressing coverage;
- Use local data and relevant information gathered from consultations with other Headteachers, LA guidance and peers, to ensure provision is tailored to meet the needs of all children;
- Refresh appropriate school policies to ensure it reflects the school's ethos and values, as well as the aims for relationships education (and RSE as a whole);
- Develop and continually review the curriculum being provided - it should take a developmental approach and be fully inclusive;
- Address the training needs of all staff involved in delivering the RSE curriculum;
- Put systems in place to ensure the RSE curriculum is being effectively monitored and evaluated;
- Communicate information about RSE to the the whole school community (staff, governors, parents), continuously, clearly and effectively.



Which Topics Are Covered in Relationships Education?

In key stage 1, children should be taught about: special and important people in their lives; similarities and differences; different families; friendship and fairness; cooperation and teamwork skills; feelings and emotions; communicating effectively with others; consent and bullying behaviours.

In key stage 2, children should extend their learning on the themes covered in key stage 1 and build on their knowledge about: different types of families and loving relationships; who their support network consists of; unhealthy and healthy relationships; dares, risks and peer pressure; personal boundaries and secrets; techniques for resolving disputes; collaboration, compromise and sharing responsibilities and the consequences of our actions.

How Can We Work with Parent, Carers and the Wider Community?

Up-to-date, accessible and relevant information can be provided most effectively to parents, carers and the wider community via newsletters and the school's website. Workshops for parents and carers also offer an excellent opportunity to explain the school's RSE provision and address any concerns they might have. Engaging parents and carers in RSE and explaining how they can support the PSHE curriculum at home, can be done by sharing useful websites or providing useful leaflets and other literature to use at home with their children.



How Should We Deliver Relationships Education?

The knowledge and skills covered in relationships education need to be explicitly taught and explained. As with all elements of the primary PSHE curriculum, this topic needs to be taught in a safe, honest and open environment, where children feel comfortable to ask questions and explore new concepts. Thought needs to be given to the learning environment, the ground rules and the use of distancing techniques in this often sensitive area of PSHE. Consideration also needs to be given to how children's questions will be answered and how potentially controversial or sensitive issues will be managed.

Often, RSE within PSHE will link to other curriculum areas, such as science, citizenship or religious education. Establishing meaningful links will aid pupils' understanding of RSE in a range of contexts. However, it is essential that relationships education is timetabled to ensure adequate coverage.

A whole school RSE curriculum, as part of the PSHE curriculum, is the best way to provide effective coverage. A spiral approach, whereby children revisit topics and themes, works best as it enables children to build on their knowledge and skills, therefore ensuring progression.

Ensuring lesson content and resources are age and stage-appropriate and are of a high standard, is paramount. Differentiation will need to be taken into account, as and when appropriate, and delivering RSE via a range of teaching methods and interactive activities will support children's varied learning styles. It is also useful to consider supporting resources which can be highly effective, such as film clips, books and websites.

