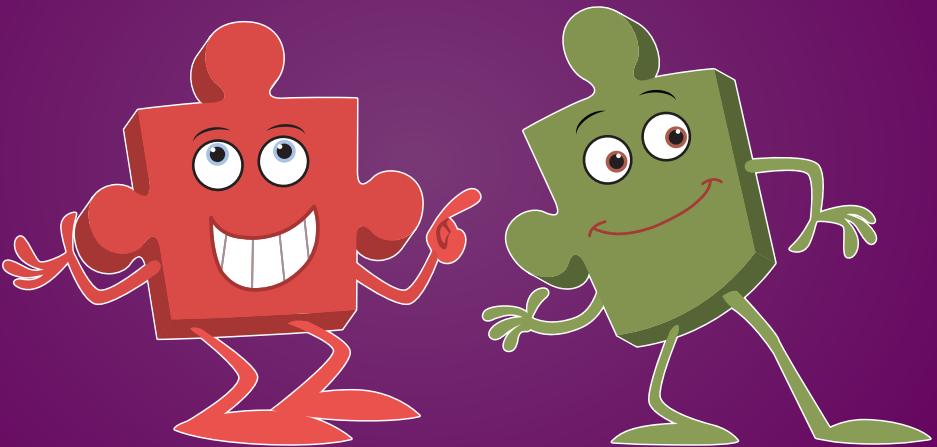




The mindful approach to PSHE

# Relationship and Sex Education in the Primary School

A Guide for Parents and Carers



## What is Relationship and Sex Education?

The Government's definition is this:

**"It is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching."** *(Department for Education and Employment, SRE Guidance, 2000)*

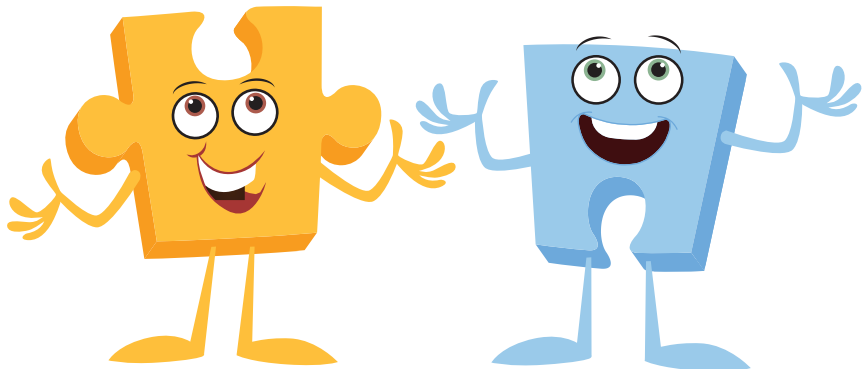
Currently, PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education) remains a non-statutory subject, and section 2.5 of the National Curriculum framework document states that:

'All schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice.'

However, from September 2019 Relationships Education will become statutory in Primary schools in England, with government guidance being offered during 2018 as to the expected content of this curriculum.

## Why is RSE needed?

- More than ever before, children are exposed to representations of sex and sexuality through the media/ social media and the social culture around them, so we need to present a balanced view of RSE and help them to be discerning and stay safe.
- Rates of sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) and teenage pregnancy in the UK are relatively high – as is the regret felt by young people after early sexual experiences.
- Research shows that most parents say they want the support of schools in providing RSE for their children.
- Research consistently shows that effective RSE delays first sexual experience and reduces risk-taking.
- Surveys of children and young people, as well as Ofsted, have repeatedly told us that RSE tends to be "too little, too late and too biological".



## What are the aims of RSE?

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

- To enable young people to understand and respect their bodies, and be able to cope with the changes puberty brings, without fear or confusion
- To help young people develop positive and healthy relationships appropriate to their age, development etc. (respect for self and others)
- To support young people to have positive self-esteem and body image, and to understand the influences and pressures around them
- To empower them to be safe and safeguarded

## Won't telling my child about human reproduction take away their innocence?

No. The evidence suggests that high quality RSE does the opposite: it actually delays young people's first sexual experience, and it helps them become much more confident and comfortable about making informed choices. **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.

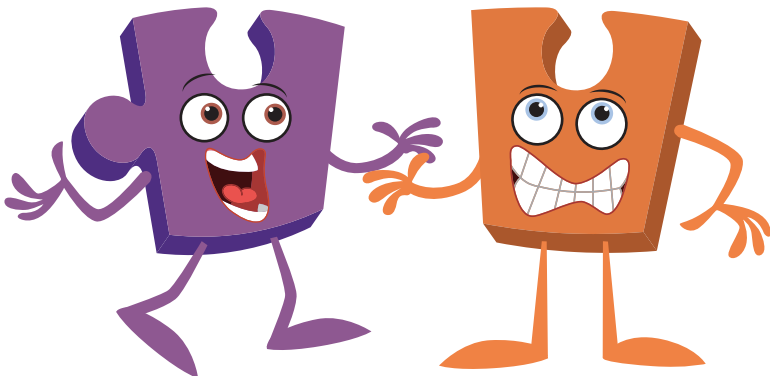
## **I've heard that I can take my child out of PSHE lessons on RSE. Is this true?**

Yes, it is. Currently, parents/carers have the legal right to withdraw their children from the RSE included in the PSHE curriculum (as that is a non-statutory subject). But they are not permitted to withdraw their child from the Sex Education included in the National Curriculum Science Orders, as Science is a statutory subject. When Relationships Education becomes statutory we expect the parental right of withdrawal to be retained.

If you are considering taking your child out of RSE lessons within PSHE , please consider the following:

- All the other children in your child's class will have been taught this information and may well talk to your child about it, perhaps in the playground... and potentially mislead them or confuse them as a result. It may prove far better to allow experienced and sensitive teaching staff to teach your child in a progressive, developmental way that is grounded in research.
- They will be learning about reproduction in Science lessons. The RSE in PSHE will echo this and will concentrate on teaching children how to enjoy healthy, appropriate relationships, improve self-esteem and self-confidence, and make healthy, informed choices. When viewed this way, it is hoped that RSE won't be seen as contentious or a cause for concern, but rather as helpful.
- Attend an information session at the school to fully understand the rationale behind and the content of this work.
- Talk to your child's teacher, the head teacher, or the teacher in charge of PSHE . Often, when parents and carers find out what is in the PSHE curriculum, their fears are allayed as they can appreciate it is in the best interests of their child's lifelong learning.

RSE should be a partnership between the school and the parents.carers, working for every child's safety and benefit.



## What is Jigsaw, the mindful approach to PSHE?

Jigsaw PSHE aims to support schools to work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure appropriate, relationship and sex education in the context of the PSHE curriculum.



### The Jigsaw starting point

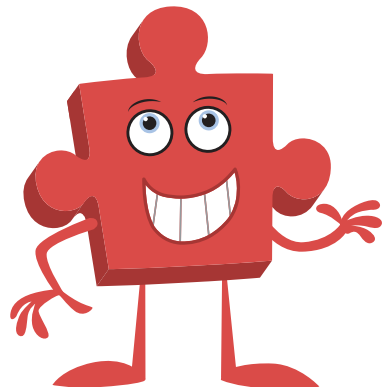
- Most parents/carers want the best for their children.
- Most parents/carers want to protect their children and to keep them safe.

**Jigsaw PSHE** is a comprehensive and completely original Scheme of Work (lesson plans) for the whole primary school, from Year F1 to Year 6 (3-11 year olds). Created by Jan Lever (teacher and psychotherapist) and her dedicated team of experienced teachers, the Jigsaw teaching materials integrate PSHE, emotional literacy, social skills and spiritual development in a whole-school approach.

The Jigsaw PSHE relationship and sex education units of work 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 to allay embarrassment and fear and helps children to cope with change, including puberty and to learn about families, friendships and healthy relationships. Jigsaw aims to build the positive.

### Some of the key aspects covered in the course of Key Stages 1 and 2 are:

- Life cycles
- How babies are made
- My changing body
- Puberty
- Growing from young to old
- Becoming a teenager
- Assertiveness and self-respect
- Friendship and family life
- Safeguarding
- Family stereotypes
- Self and body image
- Attraction
- Relationship skills e.g.conflict resolution
- Accepting change
- Looking ahead
- Moving/transition to secondary school



## What will my child actually be taught in Sex Education?

The 'Changing Me' unit is taught over a period of 6 weeks in the second half of the summer term. Each year group will be taught appropriate to their age and developmental stage. 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 his/her parents or carers at home, and the question will not be answered to the child or class if it is outside the remit of that year group's programme.

**Foundation** Growing up: how we have changed since we were babies

**Year 1** Boys' and girls' bodies; naming body parts

**Year 2** Boys' and girls' bodies; body parts and respecting privacy (which parts of the body are private and why this is)

**Year 3** How babies grow and how boys' and girls' bodies change as they grow older

**Year 4** Internal and external reproductive body parts, body changes in girls and menstruation

**Year 5** Puberty for boys and girls, and conception

**Year 6** Puberty for boys and girls and understanding conception to birth of a baby

All lessons are taught using simple, child-friendly language and pictures, which help children understand changes more effectively.

The key concepts that children learn in Jigsaw are inner strength, self-esteem and resilience. These are really important as they help keep children safe and it helps them make healthy decisions later in life.

Accurate information is important but only part of the picture: help them now by building their inner resilience, so they become mindful children, mindful teenagers, and mindful adults.

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

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

- We all want children to feel safe and to be happy and healthy
- We need to consider their needs
- We need to normalise talking about relationships, puberty and human reproduction so taboos don't need to exist
- We might need to challenge our own ways of thinking
- We have choices: we can avoid it or we can communicate openly and honestly with children – they need us!

### 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, allowing our brains to fill up with all the possible horrors that an innocent question could be about, when actually a child just wants (and needs) a very simple, 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 time and time again that children want and need RSE that is age- and stage-appropriate, that teaches them about relationships and emotions, and that is returned to consistently throughout their education. We may feel that they know too much, when actually ignorance is the enemy of innocence: we believe effective RSE delays sexual activity, ensures children are safer and empowers them to make their own healthy choices.

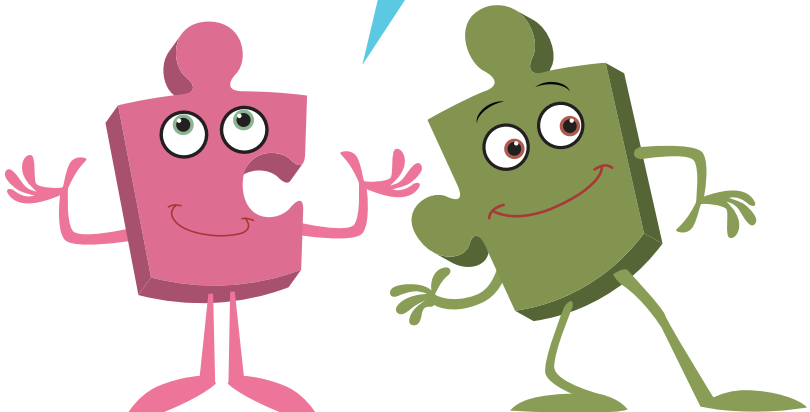
- **Answer questions and don't be afraid to say:** 'I really don't know – let's work it out or look it up together'. Have a phrase for awkward moments, such as: 'That's a good question, and let's talk about it once we get home' (then make sure you do!).
- **Always respond:** if you don't, she or he may 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 raise the subject.
- **If it all feels too personal,** try talking about people in books, films and favourite television programmes.
- **Listen rather than judge.** Try asking them what they think.
- **Enjoy it.** Laugh with each other.
- **Work in partnership** with the school.
- Most parents/carers want their children to be healthy and happy.

**Schools do too... and high quality RSE is part of this.**

For more information about PSHE and RSE issues or to find out about the Jigsaw teaching programmes (including Jigsaw Families) you are welcome to visit the website or contact us at the Jigsaw HQ.

We hope this information is helpful.

The Jigsaw Team



[www.jigsawpshe.com](http://www.jigsawpshe.com)

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