

Changes to RSHE from September 2026

Relationships, Sex and Health Education | A summary of what is changing and what it means for your child

What is RSHE?

RSHE stands for Relationships, Sex and Health Education. It is the part of the school curriculum that helps children develop the knowledge, skills and values they need to live healthy, safe and fulfilling lives. The Department for Education (DfE) published updated statutory guidance in July 2025. From September 2026, all primary schools in England are required to follow this new guidance.

Most of what we already teach remains exactly the same. The changes are focused on making the curriculum more relevant to children's lives today — particularly around online safety, body awareness and emotional wellbeing.

The full guidance can be found here: [DfE Statutory Guidance](#)

What is staying the same?

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| ✓ Families and friendships — learning about different types of families and caring relationships | ✓ First aid — basic life-saving skills appropriate for primary age |
| ✓ Being safe — recognising unsafe situations and knowing how to get help | ✓ Puberty — remains statutory within Health Education for all pupils |
| ✓ Physical health and fitness — including healthy eating and exercise | ✓ Online safety — understanding risks online — now expanded and strengthened |
| ✓ Mental wellbeing — understanding emotions and knowing when to seek support | ✓ Drugs and alcohol — now includes vaping and nicotine addiction |

What is new or changing?

Correct names for all body parts

- The guidance now includes learning the correct names for all body parts, including genitalia. This is established best practice for safeguarding — giving children the language to identify and report abuse while reducing stigma. Many primary schools already teach this.

Expanded online safety

- Children will learn about online financial harms such as gaming, scams and fraud, as well as age restrictions on websites and social media. They will also develop skills to critically assess what they see online and understand their rights around privacy, consent and personal data.

Personal safety in everyday life

- New content covers fire, road, rail and water safety — helping children recognise and reduce risk in everyday situations.

Change, loss and bereavement

- Children will learn that loss and grief can cause a range of feelings and that everyone grieves differently. This will be taught sensitively and with care.

Relationship skills

- There is a greater emphasis on skills as well as knowledge — including communicating effectively, being assertive, and managing difficult emotions such as disappointment, frustration and loneliness, including in online contexts.

Sex Education and Parental Right to Withdraw

Is Sex Education compulsory?

Sex Education is not compulsory at primary level. However, the DfE recommends that it is taught in Year 5 and/or Year 6.

Can I withdraw my child?

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory elements of Sex Education — but not from Relationships Education or Health Education (including puberty), which are statutory and cannot be withdrawn from.

How will I be told?

We will notify you in advance of any Sex Education sessions delivered by our specialist RSE Consultant in the Summer Term, and you will be given the opportunity to discuss or exercise your right to withdraw at that point.

Can I see the materials?

Yes. You can view the overview of our RSHE curriculum on the school website. If you wish to see specific teaching materials, please contact the SEBCO (Miss Samantha Taylor) and these will be made available within a reasonable timeframe.

Liaising with Parents/Carers

The new guidance emphasises that RSHE should be positive, age-appropriate and taught with care. At Abbey Gates, we are committed to:

- ✓ Sharing this policy and any key changes annually, followed by a two-week consultation period
- ✓ Giving parents and carers the opportunity to ask questions and view teaching materials at any point
- ✓ Teaching all content in a safe, sensitive and age-appropriate way
- ✓ Using our whole-school approaches — including No Outsiders, AREP (Anti-Racism Education Programme), Zones of Regulation and the Healthy Relationships Toolkit — to support children's wellbeing throughout the year

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via the school office or speak to the RSHE Lead directly.

Based on the DfE statutory guidance (July 2025, effective September 2026) and PSHE Association guidance for primary schools | Abbey Gates Primary School