



## Senior School Policy

### Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Action	Policy to be reviewed annually		
	Committee	Date	Completed
Reviewed	Head of PSHE	28 August 2024	✓
Reported	Safeguarding Steering Committee	07 November 2024	✓
Approved	Board of Governors	02 December 2024	✓
Next Review	Head of PSHE	October 2025	

## **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Gresham's**

This policy covers our whole school approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). We believe that RSE is vital for the personal, social and emotional development of our pupils. It equips our young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, respectful and enjoyable relationships and empowers them to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

At Gresham's, we believe that all children and young people have a right to holistic, inclusive and needs-led RSE. We believe that through providing high quality RSE, we are upholding the ethos and values of our school and its commitment to equality and celebration of difference.

This policy complies with our statutory obligations to deliver RSE under Sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and has due regard for the updated DfE's Statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance (2024)

[https://consult.education.gov.uk/rshe-team/review-of-the-rshe-statutory-guidance/supporting\\_documents/Draft%20RSE%20and%20Health%20Education%20statutory%20guidance.pdf](https://consult.education.gov.uk/rshe-team/review-of-the-rshe-statutory-guidance/supporting_documents/Draft%20RSE%20and%20Health%20Education%20statutory%20guidance.pdf)

It is updated annually to ensure that it is in line with current Government guidance and legislation and to ensure that the RSE programme continues to meet the needs of our pupils.

The RSE policy is a working document which provides guidance and information on all aspects of RSE at Gresham's and aims to provide a secure framework within which staff can work. It is aimed at:

- Staff
- Parents/Carers
- Governors
- Visitors to the School

The RSE policy is also linked with:

- Y12 Well-Being Programme
- PSHE and Wellbeing Rational and Plans 2024/25 (which includes schemes of work)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Drug Policy
- Online Safety Policy

The Governor with responsibility for RSE in the school is Susan Rubin.

## **What is Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)?**

We define relationships education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human relationships, including friendships, intimate, sexual and committed relationships and family life.

We define sex education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections and sexual health.

We take the approach that Relationships and Sex Education are best approached in an integrated way, using a gender equity and human rights framework.

### **Why Should RSE Be Taught?**

Effective RSE is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. It helps support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. It helps young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

### **The RSE Programme**

To cover the curriculum content outlined in the DfE Statutory Guidance, we aim to equip our pupils to build positive and respectful relationships online and offline and provide our young people with:

- Relationships skills which prepare them for the challenges of the teenage years.
- Opportunities to explore their own values and develop their own moral framework.
- Opportunities to understand and accept difference and diversity.
- An understanding of their own bodies.
- Knowledge of where to seek help and advice.
- Positive self-esteem, self-awareness and emotional health.
- An awareness of the right they have over their own body.
- The skills to be assertive.
- Good communication skills.
- The skills to make positive and informed choices.
- The ability to respect the right of others to hold opinions that may differ from their own as long as these views do not impact on the right of others.
- The ability to take responsibility for and accept the consequences of their own actions.

We believe that high quality, comprehensive RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation but in fact builds young people's confidence and self-esteem and helps them understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Evidence shows that effective RSE plays a role in behaviour change, including reducing unprotected or unwanted sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

### **The Content**

Gresham's RSE programme meets the learning objectives and content outlined in the DfE Statutory Guidance. It is embedded in our wider PSHE programme, 'Jigsaw PSHE'. All content will be delivered in a timely way and will be age and developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of our pupils, including those pupils with SEND. There is scope for flexibility within the content and where appropriate it may respond to topical issues in the school community or at a wider national level in order that the provision is current and relevant to our pupils.

The programme aims to include the following content:

### Respectful relationships, including friendships:

- Identifying positive and negative relationships
- Consent
- Boundaries – saying ‘no’ and being assertive
- Stereotypes
- Bullying
- Equality and discrimination (particularly the ‘protected characteristics’ as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- Challenging homophobia

### Families:

- Marriage and long term commitment
- Different kinds of families
- Parenting

### Online and media:

- Understanding and recognising online risks and staying safe online
- Managing online relationships
- Understanding pornography
- Sharing images
- Body image and self esteem

### Being safe:

- Consent
- Sexual exploitation and abuse
- FGM, forced marriage and honour-based violence

### Sexual relationships and sexual health:

- Responsibilities, choices and consequences
- Pressure
- Impact of alcohol and drugs
- STIs including HIV, and where to access advice
- Sexuality
- Pregnancy, birth and miscarriage
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Sex and the law

## **Moral Values and Framework**

We teach RSE within the SMSC framework that supports/engenders:

- Self-respect
- Respect and tolerance towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, feelings, views and sexuality.
- An awareness of the way others feel.
- Mutual support and cooperation.
- Honesty and openness.
- The right not to be abused or taken advantage of by other people.
- The right to accurate information about sex and relationship issues.

## **Equality, inclusion and social justice**

Gresham's School is committed to the provision of RSE to all of its pupils. Our programme aims to respond to the diversity of pupils' sexuality, cultures, faiths and family backgrounds.

We believe that RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. Our RSE is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes and sexism and sexual harassment in schools. We take these issues seriously and ensure that we embed content on gender equality throughout the curriculum.

We are also committed to an RSE that makes every pupil feel valued and included and is relevant to them. This means we are committed to providing an LGBT+ inclusive and SEND inclusive curriculum. An inclusive RSE at Gresham's will seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

Gresham's is also committed to ensuring that pupils who are not able to access the full curriculum due to mental ill health and/or long-term absence from school will still have access to RSE information and resources online.

### **Safeguarding**

Gresham's acknowledges that RSE is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the school and for meeting our statutory obligations as outlined in the DfE's Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

RSE helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing, or have experienced, abuse. We recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSE covers some pupils could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory training around child protection and will follow the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

We also recognise that some young people may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes in their personal life. For those young people, additional support will be given to prevent them being adversely affected by the planned lesson content.

While Gresham's wants to create a learning space that feels safe for young people to disclose, we also want to protect the individual's privacy. In our RSE lessons we do this by setting ground rules via a working agreement, aimed at establishing a respectful, safe and welcoming environment.

The following ground rules are agreed at the start of each lesson:

Everyone has the right to:

- Participate or pass
- Listen and speak
- Privacy
- An opinion
- Learn

Everyone has the responsibility to:

- Allow others to participate or pass
- Listen and allow others to speak
- Maintain privacy
- Respect difference of opinion
- Allow others to learn

## **Pupil Voice**

Pupil voice is central to the culture and ethos of Gresham's RSE. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and express their views on the range of topics and issues that RSE covers and to listen to other opinions and evidence, reflect on their own perspectives and take a broader view. We want to ensure that all pupil voices are heard but that those views that are hurtful, offensive or exclusionary do not dominate and are addressed. We want to ensure a culture where human rights, social justice, inclusion and diversity are promoted.

## **Answering Questions**

RSE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from pupils. We view questions as a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others. As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group.

There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class. Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way.

School staff will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their students that could make either party vulnerable.

We believe that an open approach to answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and older students. We believe exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSE. Importantly, we believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they are able to discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

## **Resources**

RSE resources are reviewed annually. They are chosen and checked for:

- Being inclusive - including different types of sexuality
- Positive, healthy and unbiased messages
- Age appropriateness
- Promoting positive values
- Accuracy

## **Organisation**

RSE lessons are:

- delivered/supported by a specialist teaching team: Mrs Mary Myers (MJM), Miss Lyndsay Fielding (LAF), Mrs Lizzie Alexander (EAA), Mr Chris Oates (CO), Mrs Claire Stevens (CS) and Ms Charlotte Heal (CH).
- embedded in the PSHE curriculum in Years 9, 10 and 11 and Y12 Well-Being programme and Y13 Enrichment Lecture programme.
- enhanced by extra sessions/special events/outside speakers.
- delivered to mixed classes.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is as central to effective teaching and learning in RSE as it is in any other subject. Effective use of assessment allows pupils and teachers to reflect on the learning that has taken place, increasing motivation for learning and helping to demonstrate impact. It takes the form of:

- Baseline assessments – used to gauge prior knowledge and understanding
- End-point assessments – used to measure progress

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation of our programme is crucial to ensure that we can continue to improve our provision and teaching effectiveness. The evaluation process involves structured and informal evaluation via:

- student feedback - via discussion and questionnaire
- teacher evaluation informing future planning
- Parent feedback – via questionnaire and parent consultation

### **Working with visitors and external agencies**

Occasionally, appropriate and suitably qualified/experienced external agencies/speakers may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE. Gresham's has a code of practice for using visitors to support the delivery of PSHE:

- visitors are invited into school because of the particular expertise or contributions they are likely to make.
- visitors are made familiar with and understand the school's RSE Policy and work within it.
- all additional input to RSE lessons are part of a planned programme.
- all visitors are supervised/supported by a member of staff at all times.
- visitors will be made aware of any specific issues relating to child protection.
- the input of visitors is monitored and evaluated by staff and pupils. This evaluation informs future planning.

### **Specialist Staff and School Based Sexual Health Services**

MJM is the RSE co-ordinator and has completed a range of NHS sexual health courses run by the Terence Higgins Trust. Appropriate additional CPD has also been undertaken by MJM, LAF, EAA, CO and CS.

A sexual health clinic run by a specialist sexual health nurse operates in the school's Health Centre on Mondays 6.30 - 7.30pm. In addition, school nurses-are qualified to:

- counsel young people on sexual health issues.
- register individuals on the C-Card scheme and distribute condoms.

### **Working with Parents/Carers**

We believe that the successful teaching of RSE involves parents/carers and school, working together. Before any year group embarks on its RSE programme, parents/carers are invited to discuss the content of the course and contribute their views.

Parents/carers can play an important role in the RSE of their children through discussions at home exploring themes that have been visited in RSE lessons. We welcome dialogue with parents to support these conversations at home.

For further information on our RSE provision, please see the appendix “Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education – A Brief Guide” from Jigsaw PSHE.

### **Parental right to withdraw**

As outlined within the DfE Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSE.

Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from relationships education, health education, or sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum.

All children will have the right to opt into sex education three terms before they turn 16 and the school will make arrangements for this to happen. In practice, this means that when a child turns 15 they have the right to be taught sex education if they wish.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from all or part of sex education lessons, it is our aim to encourage parents to see the value of RSE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice.

Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the headteacher to discuss their concerns. The headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns regarding the curriculum. If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this.

We will remind parents annually that the request to withdraw is still in place.

### **Dissemination**

The RSE policy can be viewed by parents, staff and pupils here:

[Relationships and Sex Education Policy](#)

Reviewed by Mary Myers – RSE, PSHE and Well-Being Co-ordinator August 2024

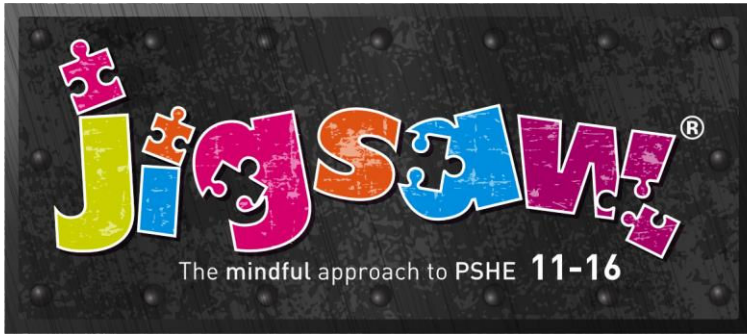
Next review: October 2025

### **Appendix 1**

Please see below the Jigsaw PSHE leaflet “Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education – A brief guide”:



# Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education - A brief guide



In September 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) made Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools, and Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools in England. Independent Schools were already mandated to deliver PSHE including Health Education (*Independent School Standards, DfE, 2019*).

At secondary school, teaching builds on what children learnt at primary school and develops their understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas like drug use. Many schools teach the compulsory content within a wider programme of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education, and this is what Jigsaw PSHE provides for schools.

## Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education – A brief guide

This

Ages  
11-16

leaflet sets out what Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education look like for students in KS3 (ages 11-14); why RSE is important; what parents and carers can do; and how Jigsaw PSHE ensures students receive the education they deserve.

**The Jigsaw 11-16 programme comprises:**

- A comprehensive and completely original scheme of work for 11- to 16-year-olds
- PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education), resilience, mental health, emotional literacy, social and employability skills, British values, and SMSC (spiritual, moral, social, cultural development)
- Inclusive philosophy including Relationships and Sex Education
- The Jigsaw Approach, underpinned by mindfulness philosophy and practice and is compliant with statutory RSHE requirements (England, DfE, 2019).

Puzzles (units)

The Jigsaw 11-16 Programme includes six units of study (Puzzles), each with six lessons (Pieces), designed to be taught sequentially throughout the school year, one per term, as follows: Puzzle (Unit)

1. Being Me in My World
2. Celebrating Difference
3. Dreams and Goals
4. Healthy Me
5. Relationships
6. Changing Me

The content is student-driven and is in line with the most recent national guidance from the DfE. Jigsaw 11-16 remains a universal, core programme that will be added to and updated regularly to accommodate changing needs and contexts.

The main aim of PSHE is to empower young people to understand themselves and their minds in order to combat stress, pressure and influences that may cause them harm, and know how to lead healthy, happy, fulfilling lives.

The Jigsaw Approach is underpinned by mindfulness. Mindfulness practice enables them to observe their own thoughts and feelings, regulate them and make conscious decisions about their learning, behaviour and lives. It helps them to remain focused on the present moment and thrive in it, allaying and managing stress and anxiety.

The latest guidance recommends that schools need to teach social and emotional skills. These skills are too important to only be learnt by osmosis, which is why Jigsaw 11-16 develops them in a structured and developmental way throughout every age group. A programme like Jigsaw is so helpful to schools because it sets out exactly how students learn best and how to teach skills that lead to better social, emotional and mental health, which, in turn, has a positive impact on learning.

Schools can be confident that a focus on well-being and mental health not only enables them to provide healthy and happy school environments for students and staff, and prepare the citizens of tomorrow with sound character and values, but also directly supports their more immediate mission, which is shared by Jigsaw: the promotion of effective learning.

### **What does Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in KS3 look like for students and schools?**

The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship.

It also needs to cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have

on their mental well-being, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

Parents and carers should be assured that effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity.

Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time for them.

Knowledge about safer sex and sexual health remains important to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This needs to be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for students to ask questions in a safe and positive learning environment. Many teachers use approaches such as distancing techniques, setting ground rules with the class to help manage sensitive discussion and using question boxes to allow pupils to raise issues anonymously - approaches advocated by Jigsaw PSHE 11-16 teaching materials. RSE in KS3 needs to demonstrate clear progression from what is taught in Relationships Education at primary school, and as students grow up, at the appropriate time teaching is extended to include lessons on intimate relationships. Alongside this, students are also taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming an adult. This will enable students to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful. This applies to online and offline relationships.

This is what every school with KS3 students in England is expected to adhere to.

How they teach it is up to each individual school.

In Jigsaw PSHE, students will have the opportunity to learn in RSE...

- About families, long-term relationships like marriage, parenting and their associated laws
- About respectful relationships, including friendships, about trust, stereotypes, bullying, difference, illegal behaviour in relationships and where to find help
- About relationships within the context of the media and online – and most crucially the laws that are there to protect them and others
- About safety in relationships, including what to do if they don't feel safe in a relationship
- About intimate and sexual relationships, and their sexual health – and how the choices they make can have a long-term impact
- About the protected characteristics in the Equality Act

It is all in the context of the whole PSHE curriculum and underpinned by the value system of the school, i.e. valuing inclusion and respect for each other, and so on. The emphasis is on changes that students will experience as they grow up: what those changes look and feel like, why they happen and how to manage them positively.

The Jigsaw Sex Education Pieces (lessons) aim to give students their entitlement to information about puberty, human reproduction, sexual health and consent, as appropriate to their age and stage of development. It is treated in a matter-of-fact manner to allay embarrassment and fear and includes sources of support and advice.

### **Why is RSE taught in secondary schools?**

There are many reasons why RSE is taught in secondary schools, including these:

- More than ever before, students are exposed to representations of sex and sexuality through the media and the social culture around them, so their education needs to present a balanced view of relationships and sex.
- Rates of sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) and teenage pregnancy in the UK are 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 shows consistently that effective RSE delays first sexual experience and reduces risk-taking, despite what many people still believe to the contrary.
- Surveys of children and young people have repeatedly reported that RSE tends to be too late in their education, too focused on the biological aspects, and not enough information on building relationships.
- It is part of the statutory curriculum (DfE, England, 2020).

### **What is the purpose of RSE?**

At Jigsaw PSHE, we believe there are four main aims for teaching RSE within the context of PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) Education and they are crucial for students to learn about. High quality RSE is taught...

- To enable young people to understand and respect their bodies, and be able to cope with the changes that puberty brings, without fear or confusion.
- To help young people develop positive and healthy relationships appropriate to their age, development, and so on (in other words, respect for self and others).
- To support young people to have positive self-image and body image, and to understand the influences and pressures around them.
- To help young people to make informed choices if and when they are consider starting a sexual relationship, so that they keep themselves safe and don't have an unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection.

### **Won't telling students about sex make them do it sooner?**

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. We believe effective RSE takes away ignorance, not innocence.

Teaching about safety and relationships as part of PSHE Education 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 report on PSHE that the 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 Education plays a vital part in helping to meet school's responsibilities to safeguard their pupils.

### **Parents' right to take students out of PSHE lessons on RSE**

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE (but cannot withdraw their child from Relationships or Health Education). School leaders should discuss this with parents: good practice is likely to include the head teacher discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child.

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

Parents/carers are not permitted to withdraw their child from the Sex Education included in the National Curriculum Science, as this is a statutory subject.

If a pupil is removed from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. Please note that there is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education for any student.

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

- All the other students in your child's class will have been taught this information and may well talk to your child about it 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 sex and reproduction in Science lessons. The RSE in PSHE Education will echo this and will concentrate on teaching young people how to enjoy healthy 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.
- Talk to your child's teacher, the head teacher, or the teacher in charge of PSHE Education. Often, when parents and carers find out what is in the PSHE Education curriculum, their fears are allayed as they can appreciate it is in the best interests of their child's lifelong learning.

## What about Health Education?

Students are taught about physical health and mental well-being to give them the information that they need to make appropriate decisions about their own health and well-being. It needs to enable them to recognise what is normal and what is a problem in themselves and others and, when issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

A vital part of health education in KS3 is teaching on puberty and this includes menstruation (which follows on from what is taught in primary school). Health education should ensure all students are prepared for changes they and their peers will experience.

In Jigsaw PSHE, students will have the opportunity to learn in Health Education...

- About mental well-being, emotions, concerns and when/where to seek help
- About the internet, how to stay safe and what harms exist, including gambling, bullying and advertising
- About physical health and fitness, how to stay well and manage stress, as well as other potential health concerns
- About healthy eating, and what constitutes a balanced and appropriate diet
- About drugs, tobacco and alcohol, the law, the physical risks and dependency
- About protecting health and preventing illness, and the importance of sleep in this • About basic first aid
- About how bodies change over time, particularly in adolescence

Where can parents/carers get more information?

Parents and carers can speak to their child's head teacher, read the school's RSHE (PSHE) Policy, and find out more information about Jigsaw PSHE through [www.jigsawpshe.com](http://www.jigsawpshe.com). The DfE guidance on Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education is available from [www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education - rse-and-health-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education)