

# Understanding RSHE

**A guide for parents and carers**

**Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education**

## Introduction

For the purposes of this information leaflet, we are going to use the term parents and carers. This means anyone who has a caring role for children. However, we are not underestimating the important part that grandparents, aunts, uncles and older siblings can play in talking to children about relationships and sex. It would, therefore, be a good idea to consider sharing this information with those pivotal people within your wider family unit.

From September 2020 Relationships Education and Health Education (RSHE) became statutory in primary schools. This means that the government has stipulated that all schools must teach these topics as part of the curriculum, just like other important subjects like English and maths.

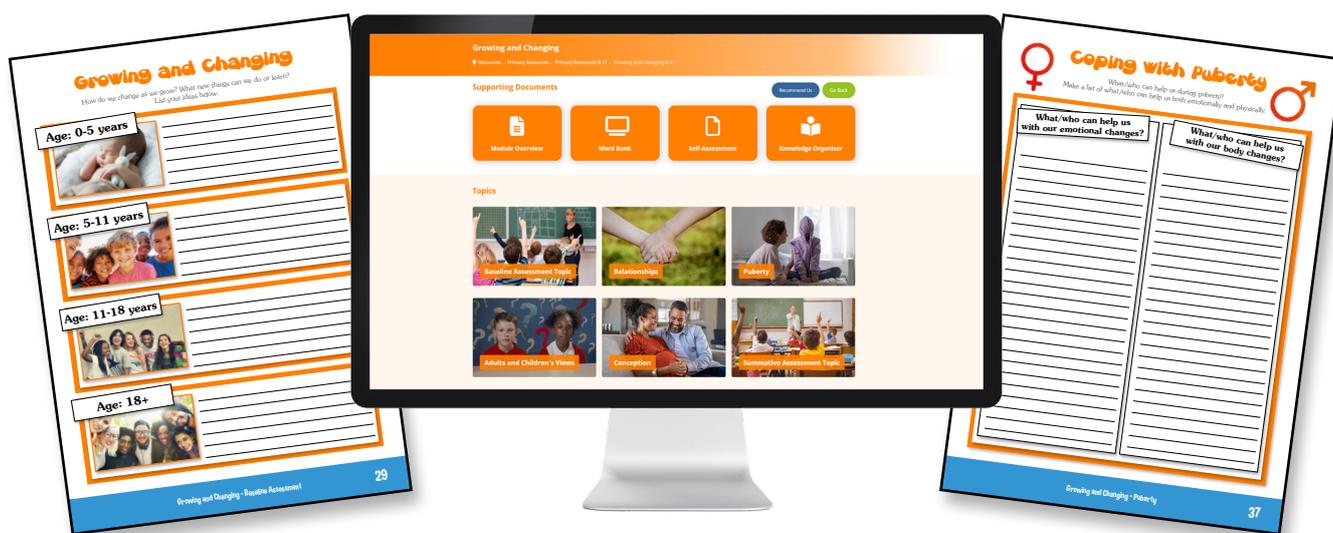
In primary, sex education is not compulsory, however, the Department for Education strongly advises that schools continue to deliver some elements of sex education to ensure that children have the skills to develop positive and healthy relationships in adolescence, whilst also understanding how to keep themselves safe from harm.

If you would like to have a look at the guidance, you can access it here: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

## Resources

All schools must have a relationships and sex education policy which explains how they plan to deliver RSHE. This must be written and reviewed in consultation with you, as parents and carers. If you would like to read a copy of your school policy, it will be displayed on the school website. Or, if you would like to be more involved have a word with the PSHE lead for your child's school. Their name will most likely be available on the RSE policy.

Your school may or may not choose to deliver sex education, this will be stated within their policy.



## Working in Partnership

For your children to have the very best relationships and sex education, the government is clear that they consider it vitally important that schools and parents and carers work in partnership to deliver key messages. You play a unique and pivotal role in talking to your children about relationships, particularly in their early years. You have an emotional relationship with your child and know them better than anyone.

You can also adopt a more spontaneous approach, when questions crop up, perhaps when you are reading a book together or when watching a TV programme. You will not be alone if you feel nervous about answering some of the more sensitive questions your child may ask. They will often ask you something at the most inappropriate time! It is okay to ask them to wait until you are in a more suitable environment or when you are feeling more composed. The most important thing is to provide them with an honest answer, pitched at their level of understanding. Please don't tell them that 'babies are delivered by storks,' or 'we found you under a gooseberry bush.' You will only have to unpick those responses later and this can be confusing for your child. Be led by them, they are often happy with a simple answer, for example if your child asks, 'why has that lady got a big tummy?' dependant on their age and level of maturity and understanding, your answer might be 'because there is a baby inside.' As your child grows and becomes more curious, guided by them, you can gradually add more detailed information.

## Delivering RSHE

The 1decision resources are designed to initiate conversations about feelings and emotions in early years, using colourful animated storybooks. In key stage 1, the programme introduces the concept of appropriate touch and teaches them the skills they need to keep themselves safe.

Your school will most likely talk to children in year 1 or 2 about the correct words to use for their external genitalia as naming body parts is covered as part of national curriculum science. They may come home using words, like penis, vulva and vagina. There is a very important reason for this. Although you may have a family name for genitals, that you feel more comfortable using, it is vital that a teacher understands immediately if a child is telling them about something that constitutes a safeguarding concern. If a child uses words like 'cookie,' or 'fairy,' something important could be missed. You can support the school by explaining the correct medical words at home and by talking to your children about what is a private area of the body. Your school may be using NSPCC Talk Pants. They also have produced a guide for parents. If you would like to know more, you can access information about the underwear rule via this link [NSPCC Talk Pants - Underwear Rule](#), or by visiting the NSPCC website and searching for Talk Pants.

As your child progresses through key stage one, the 1decision resources will cover the relationships element of the statutory guidance, using a range of videos, quizzes and interactive activities.

Before moving on to key stage 2, it might be helpful if you took a couple of minutes to reflect on how you first learnt about relationships and sex. Did you receive all the information you needed to keep yourself safe? Was it from a reliable source, or did you 'pick it up' from your friends, television, or magazines? Understandably for your children growing up today, it is predominantly the internet that they turn to for advice and guidance. Unfortunately, although the web can be a great source of information, it can also carry significant risk, and we know that the age at which young people are accessing pornography (whether intentionally or accidentally) is dropping. Whilst we don't want to overburden or frighten our children, we do need to be realistic about the pressures they are facing growing up in a digitalised society. The statutory guidance has been introduced to ensure that children are receiving consistent, accurate messages from people that they can trust, feel confident to seek help and know who to turn to if they are worried about a relationship.

Learning about how to use the internet and social media wisely and how and when to report anything that is potentially harmful, including online bullying are covered by the 1decision resources in key stage 1 and 2.

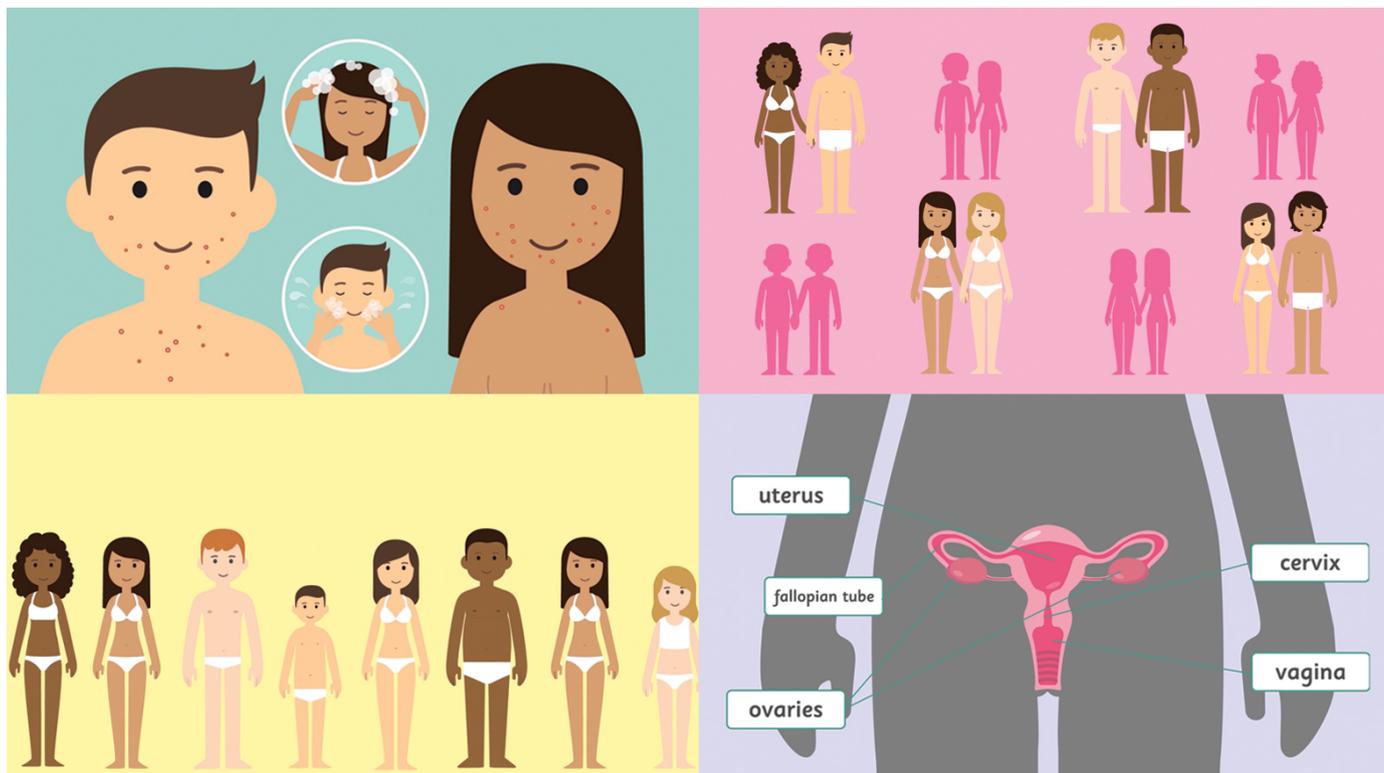
In key stage 2, your child will learn about puberty. This is now part of the health curriculum and you will not be able to withdraw your child from this element. The guidance is clear that it expects puberty to be taught to children prior to onset so that they are prepared for the physical and emotional changes that it brings. Your school may decide to introduce the topic in year 4, teach about it in detail in year 5, and consolidate learning and understanding in year 6. Every conversation will be age-appropriate, and the content will be tailored to the cohort of children in that current year group, which can change year on year. To support the delivery of this topic 1decision have produced an age-appropriate video which explains the physical and emotional changes that children will experience at the onset, and during puberty.

## RSHE and Science

Following on from puberty some schools will choose to use the 1decision video relating to different sorts of relationships the law, sexual intercourse, conception, pregnancy, and the birth of a baby. This is likely to be delivered in year 6. The aim of this lesson is to ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and have all the skills and information that they need prior to the transition to secondary school.

Some schools cover some or all of the above content within national curriculum science, which is a statutory subject. You do have the right to withdraw your child from elements of sex education covered within RSHE but not science lessons. You can check what is happening in your child's school by checking the RSE policy on the website. If it is not clear, have a word with your child's teacher.

If you would like to be prepared for the conversations that these lessons may instigate, ask your child's class teacher if they inform parents prior to the lesson being delivered. You can also visit the 1decision website at [1decision Parent Zone](#) where you can view the videos about puberty and conception, a teacher may also be able to suggest some books that you can read with your child so that messages are consolidated at home.



## The Equality Act 2010

Schools are required to comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This means that a child must not be discriminated against because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage, or civil partnership.

The guidance stipulates that all schools, when teaching RSHE, must take the religious background of pupils into account when planning teaching so that core content is appropriately handled. If you are concerned about any element of the proposed curriculum conflicting with your culture, religion, faith or beliefs, it is important that you discuss this with the school. Please make an appointment with your child's headteacher to discuss the matter further. In most circumstances, an amicable compromise can be agreed upon so that your child is receiving the information they need to keep themselves safe within approved parameters.

You may be the parents or carers of a child with special educational needs or a disability and be wondering how the curriculum will meet the individual requirements of your child. The guidance stipulates that RSHE must be accessible for all children, and lessons must be delivered in a differentiated and personalised way. This can be achieved by talking to their teacher beforehand. Request that you are made aware of the dates and times of the proposed lessons and be provided with a brief outline of the content. You can then prepare your child beforehand and be ready for any questions they may ask following the lesson.

You may also have seen on the television or read in the newspapers that some parents have been anxious about LGBT relationships being part of the statutory curriculum content. The government expects schools to ensure that LGBT content is fully integrated into their curriculum, and not taught as a standalone unit or lesson. The 1decision programme teaches all children, across both key stages, about the diverse society in which they are living and growing up in today. Throughout school, your children will learn about different types of loving, healthy relationships, different families and to respect and value differences. Your school will value every child on an individual basis and the 1decision curriculum for RSHE will be taught in an inclusive way that ensures every child in the classroom recognises themselves and their families in the content and feels valued and affirmed for who they are.

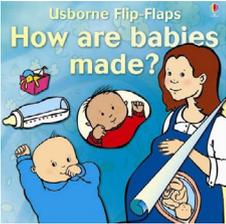
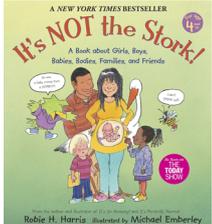
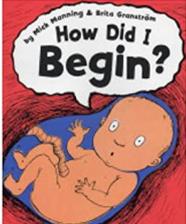
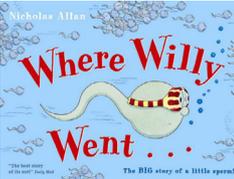
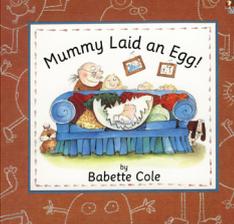
### **IMPORTANT NOTE**

**The following pages contain a list of books which may support you when discussing RSHE topics with your children at home.**

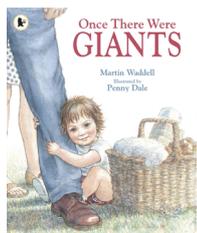
**PLEASE NOTE:** We would always recommend reading these books before sharing them with your children. You know your children best and can judge whether each book aligns with their maturity level.

## Books for Parents – All Available on Amazon

### Books about where babies come from

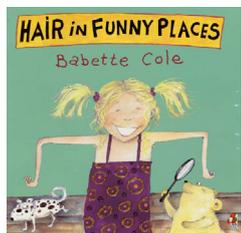
	<p><b>How are Babies Made, by Alistair Smith</b></p> <p><i>Using simple language this book explains to young children about how babies are made, how long they stay in a mummies tummy and what they can do when they are new-borns.</i></p>
	<p><b>It's Not the Stork, by Cory Silverberg</b></p> <p><i>Suitable for preschool children to age 8. This children's picture book is all about conception, gestation and birth. The text includes all kinds of children, adults, and families.</i></p>
	<p><b>How did I begin? by Mick Manning and Brita Granstroem</b></p> <p><i>A gentle introduction to human reproduction and the growth and development of a baby within the womb.</i></p>
	<p><b>Where Willy Went by Nicholas Allan</b></p> <p><i>A funny story about the facts of life for 5 to 7 -year-olds, featuring Willy, a sperm that lives inside Mr Browne. Will Willy swim faster than the 500 million other sperms to reach the egg first?</i></p>
	<p><b>Mummy Laid an Egg by Babette Cole</b></p> <p><i>Funny but informative book for young children. , This picture book communicates the facts of life in a straightforward but light-hearted way, whilst dispelling many of the silly myths that grown-ups often use to cover their embarrassment.</i></p>
	<p><b>Making a Baby. An Inclusive Guide to how Every Family Begins, by Rachel Greener</b></p> <p><i>This inclusive book, suitable for young 6 – 10, covers the different ways that a baby can be made, including sperm and egg, egg donation, IUI, IVE, surrogacy and adoption. It also covers how a baby grows in the womb and the ways a baby can be born.</i></p>

## Books about body changes and growing up



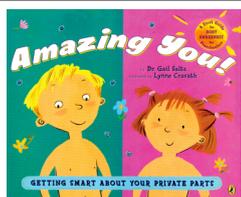
### **Once There Were Giants by Martin Waddell and Penny Dale**

*Aimed at 3 – 5-year-olds, this book explores what it must be like to be a baby, living in a world of giants. The content explores the stages of life and development through the eyes of a little girl who eventually grows up and becomes a giant herself.*



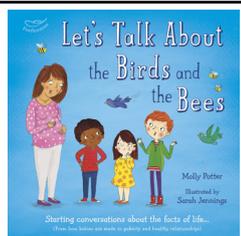
### **Hair in Funny Places by Babette Cole**

*A child-friendly look at puberty and the growth of 'hair in funny places'. This is a children's storybook looking at the lives of Mr and Mrs Hormone and the journey that is puberty.*



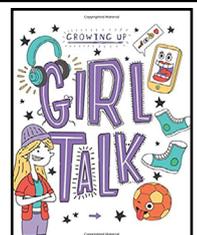
### **Amazing you. Getting Smart about your Private Parts by Gail Saltz**

*This is a picture book for young children who are becoming aware of their bodies. It presents clear, age-appropriate information about reproduction, (but not sexual reproduction), birth and the differences between girls' and boys' bodies.*



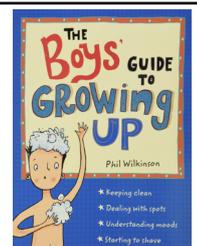
### **Let's Talk about the Birds and Bees, by Molly Potter**

*Starting conversations about the facts of life (From how babies are made to puberty and healthy relationships). Using clear honest language, this book answers the most common questions children ask about puberty, sex, reproduction and relationships.*



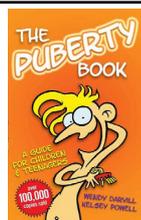
### **Girl Talk by Lizzie Cox**

*Suitable for 8–11-year-olds. A guide with covers puberty, personal hygiene, bullying, relationships and social media. This book offers practical advice to support young girls to navigate adolescence.*



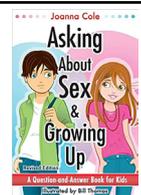
### **The Boys Guide to Growing Up by Phil Wilkinson and Sarah Horne**

*A positive guide for boys as they approach puberty. This book explains what will happen to their bodies including body hair and vocal changes, and how hormones may affect their emotions. It also covers healthy eating, self-esteem and aims to dispel myths and reassure boys about the positives associated with adolescence.*



### **The Puberty Book by Wendy Darvill and Kelsey Powell**

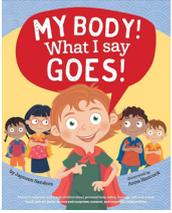
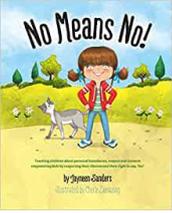
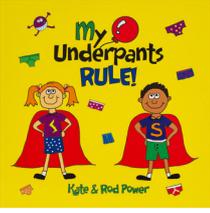
*For girls and boys aged 9 – 11. This book has been termed the classic puberty book for girls and boys. It covers the physical and emotional changes experienced in puberty and is based on the author's work with real young people and parents.*



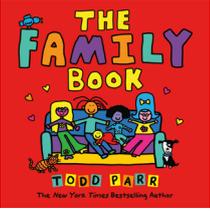
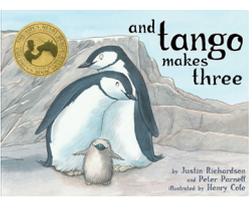
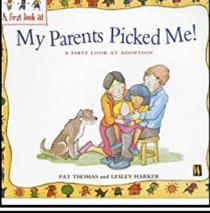
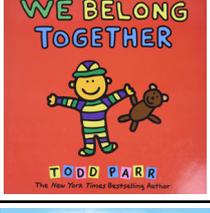
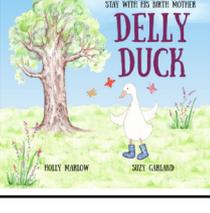
### **Asking about Sex and Growing Up, by Joanna Cole**

*Written especially for pre-teens, the author uses a question-and-answer format to offer information on a wide variety of subjects related to sex and puberty.*

## Books about personal space and keeping safe

	<p><b>My Body! What I Say Goes by Jayneen Sanders</b></p> <p><i>Helps to teach children about inappropriate touch. The book covers correct names for body parts, body safety, safe/unsafe touch, private parts, secrets/surprises, consent and respect.</i></p>
	<p><b>No Means No! by Jayneen Sanders</b></p> <p><i>This book teaches personal boundaries, consent; empowering children by respecting their choices about their bodies, and their right to say 'no!'</i></p>
	<p><b>My Underpants Rule by Rod Power</b></p> <p><i>Teaches the underpants rule through rhymes, songs and scenarios.</i></p>

## Books about families

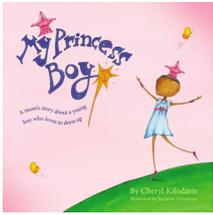
	<p><b>The Family Book by Todd Parr</b></p> <p><i>A picture book that celebrates the varieties of families whether it be two mummies, or two daddies, a messy family or a tidy one, every family is valued for its difference.</i></p>
	<p><b>And Tango Makes Three by Justine Richardson and Peter Parnell</b></p> <p><i>Based on a true story of a pair of male penguins in Bronx Zoo hatching an abandoned egg. This heart-warming story shows that all that is needed to make a family is love.</i></p>
	<p><b>My Parents Picked Me by Pat Thomas and Lesley Harper</b></p> <p><i>Suitable for small children this book is a first look at adoption. Explores issues of adoption in a simple way.</i></p>
	<p><b>We Belong Together by Todd Parr</b></p> <p><i>A bright and colourful picture book about adoption and different families aimed at 3 – 5-year-olds.</i></p>
	<p><b>Delly Duck, Why A Little Chick Couldn't Stay with His Birth Mother</b></p> <p><i>This is a foster care and adoption story book for children. This book is intended to help stimulate and support some of the discussions and questions children may ask associated with fostering and adoption.</i></p>

## Books about personal space and keeping safe



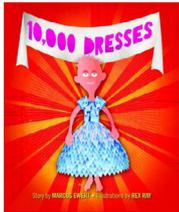
### **King and King by Linda De Haan and Stern Nijland**

*The story of a prince whose mother sets out to find him a bride. After meeting lots of princesses he eventually falls in love and marries another prince.*



### **My Princess Boy by Suzanne DeSimone and Cheryl Kilvados**

*This book is about a little boy who likes to dress as a princess. It is about love and acceptance and inspired by the author's son.*



### **10,000 Dresses by Ewart and Marcus**

*Aimed at 5 – year olds, this is about a little boy called Bailey who dreams of wearing dresses. Eventually he meets an older girl and they start making dresses together that represent Bailey's dreams coming to life.*