



## Relationships and Sex Education Policy

### Riverside Federation

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This policy is in support of the Riverside Federation's vision:  
Small schools providing opportunity, delivering challenge, building respect.

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## **1. Context**

### **1.1 Relationships Education in our school**

We believe Relationships Education is learning about emotional, social and physical aspects of our lives, about ourselves and our relationships. It enables pupils to develop essential life skills for building and maintaining positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships. It equips pupils with information and skills they need to understand about themselves, their peers and people they meet in the wider community. It explores risks, choices, rights, responsibilities and attitudes. It will help pupils to develop skills to keep themselves and others safer, physically and emotionally, both on and off line. Relationships Education enables pupils to explore their own attitudes and those of others respectfully.

Relationships Education makes a major contribution to fulfilling our school’s vision statement which is providing opportunities; delivering challenge and building respect.

### **1.2 Context of Wider PSHE**

We deliver Relationships Education as part of our wider provision of Personal, Social, and Health Education (PSHE), which also includes statutory Health Education.

The aims of Relationships Education are further supported by interventions, extracurricular and enrichment activities we provide.

### **1.3 Intent of Our Relationships Education Curriculum**

Through the delivery of Relationships Education we intend to further our school’s aims of providing a curriculum which is relevant to the needs of pupils, both now and in the future. It will enable pupils to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes which enhance their personal development and wellbeing. This will have a direct, positive effect on their progress and achievement in school.

All adults in school will work towards achieving these aims for Relationships Education. We seek to enable our children to:

- develop interpersonal and communication skills
- develop positive, personal values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions and behaviour
- respect themselves and others, their views, backgrounds, cultures and experiences

- develop respectful, caring relationships based on mutuality, reciprocity and trust
- develop their ability to keep themselves and others safe, physically and emotionally, both on and off line
- develop their understanding of a variety of families and how families are central to the wellbeing of children
- recognise and avoid coercive and exploitative relationships
- explore relationships in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development
- value, care for and respect their bodies
- build confidence in accessing additional advice and support for themselves and others.

## **2. Implementing Our Policy**

### **2.1 Inclusion**

In relation to those with special educational needs or disability, we ensure our Relationships Education programme provides for those with additional needs. We recognise that those with SEND are often more vulnerable to sexual harassment and abuse and that we need to ensure that children are supported to develop appropriate strategies and attitudes to keep themselves safer. We consider:

- their level of vulnerability to coercion and pressure
- their previous experience of negative behaviours in peer or child-adult relationships
- their need to learn and demonstrate appropriate behaviour
- their need to develop self-esteem and positive body image
- the need to involve all staff, including ancillary staff and parents/carers, in policy development, planning and training
- the management of personal care
- clarity about sources of support for pupils.

### **2.2 Equality**

The [Equality Act 2010](#) has special resonance in Relationships Education. Through this area of learning we seek to develop key interpersonal skills such as respect and empathy which enable pupils to understand the rights and responsibilities we all have towards one another.

The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We will ensure that our provision of Relationships Education is not only equally accessible and inclusive for all pupils with protected characteristics, or who have family members with protected characteristics, but also that it reduces discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and encourages good relations between different groups.

In order to ensure that Relationships Education meets the needs of all:

- We will reflect a range of lifestyles and family structures so that all children see themselves and their families reflected back in the lessons.

- We will ensure that the law in relation to, for example, marriage, online behaviours, sexuality, gender and violence are explained in age appropriate ways.
- Where there are different cultural or religious views about families, relationships or behaviours, we will share these to ensure children see their family views represented.
- We will not seek to gain consensus, but will accept and celebrate difference.
- We will, as appropriate, ensure that a variety of views and beliefs are reflected back to pupils.
- In order to ensure that children of all genders can access information they need, we will teach in mixed gender groups wherever possible.
- We will encourage respect and discourage abusive and exploitative relationships.
- We will not ask children to represent the views of a particular religious or cultural group to their peers, unless they choose to do so.

We support children in developing their knowledge about and attitudes towards diversity throughout units of work including:

- Diversity and Communities
- Family and Friends
- Beginning and Belonging

### **2.3 Safeguarding**

We understand the importance of high quality Relationships Education as we fulfil our statutory safeguarding duties. Relationship Education enables pupils to understand about mutual, consensual and reciprocated relationships in all their forms. Whether the children are learning about friendships, families, relationships in school or the wider community, they will be developing essential skills which underpin their ability to recognise abusive relationships. Teaching about 'Family and Friends' and 'Anti-bullying' enables us to fulfil our statutory duty to prevent 'peer-on-peer' abuse.

In the case of RSE and Personal Safety, we recognise that effective teaching may alert children to what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour (including inappropriate sexual behaviour) and that there is an increased possibility that a disclosure relating to abuse may be made. RSE and Personal Safety enable us to fulfil our duty to prevent Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). All staff are aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and will report disclosures or concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

### **2.4 Development of the Policy**

This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers. The consultation period followed the provision of information about the duties and statutory elements which have to be included in Relationships Education. It has also included gathering views on needs and priorities for the school community.

All views expressed by pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers about the policy have been considered. Consultation did not give a veto to individual members of the school community. The

final decision on policy and delivery has been made by the school, having listened to the needs and views of the school community.

## **2.5 Consulting on our Policy**

Before consultation activities, parents/carers, pupils and other stakeholders have been given information about Relationships Education and associated duties in ways which are accessible to them. They have been asked for their views about appropriate ages for particular topics, to share relevant views and beliefs and to consider the suitability of the school's aims for Relationships Education.

Some parents/carers and pupils have been consulted directly through *surveys*. Parents/carers and pupils have also been represented by a parent/carer forum and parent/carer governors.

Further consultation with parents/carers and pupils will be carried out when the policy is reviewed, which happens at least every 3 years.

## **3. Involving the Whole School Community**

### **3.1 Working with Staff**

Teaching Relationships Education can be very rewarding, but we understand that, in order to feel confident, staff need opportunities to develop their own knowledge, skills and attitudes. We recognise that every adult has different personal beliefs and attitudes, but that all teachers must understand and comply with their duties connected with safeguarding, equality and inclusion.

Teachers have a duty to deliver statutory areas of the curriculum and all teachers will be supported to develop their skills in delivering non statutory areas such as sex education. We will discuss relevant issues and staff concerns and, where appropriate, arrange training to enable staff members to feel confident in delivering the various aspects of Relationships Education. We will also encourage the sharing of good practice. We may also use team teaching to develop confidence.

Those with special responsibility for the development of Relationships Education will be offered opportunities to consult with advisors and attend external training courses.

### **3.2 Engaging with Pupils**

We will involve pupils in the evaluation and development of their Relationships Education in ways appropriate to their age. We will seek opportunities to discuss children's views about the content of their PSHE lessons.

- We will refer to local/countywide/national data e.g. Health Related Behaviour Survey for our school/district.
- We will engage the pupils in assessment activities to establish their development needs, for example 'Draw and Write' activities.
- We will encourage pupils to ask questions as they arise by providing anonymous question boxes.

- We will ask pupils to reflect on their learning and set goals for future learning.

### **3.3 Working with Governors**

This policy has been developed with governor involvement, so that the governors are able to fulfil their statutory duties.

It is the responsibility of the governors to ensure, through consultation, that the Relationships Education Policy reflects the needs and views of our community.

In order to facilitate this process, the Relationships Education Policy will appear annually on the agenda of one governors' meeting. The policy will be available on the school's website. A link governor for PSHE (including Relationships Education) will be nominated.

It is the role of governors to ensure that:

- pupils make progress in Relationships Education in line with the expected educational outcomes
- the subject is well led, effectively managed and well planned
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- teaching is delivered in a way which is accessible to all
- clear information is given to parents/carers
- the subject is resourced and taught in a way which enables the school to fulfil statutory requirements.

### **3.4 Communicating with Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are the first educators of their children about relationships, emotions, empathy, respect and growing up. We recognise that many children like to receive information about relationships from their parents/carers in addition to their learning in school. Therefore we seek to work in partnership with parents/carers when planning and delivering Relationships Education. We will encourage this partnership by:

- Sharing details of our curriculum on our website
- Informing parents/carers by newsletter or leaflet of forthcoming Relationships Education topics e.g. Personal Safety, Anti-bullying and RSE
- Inviting parents to learn more about the approach used in Relationships Education and RSE
- Informing parents/carers about PSHE, Relationships Education and RSE programmes as their child joins the school through the website
- Providing supportive information about parents' role in Relationships Education
- Inviting parents to discuss their views and concerns about Relationships Education on an informal basis
- Signposting parents/carers to sources of support to help them address the needs of their child or build their own confidence in talking about relationships with their children.

### **3.5 Working with External Agencies and the Wider Community**

We believe that all aspects of Relationships Education are most effectively taught by those who know our pupils well and are aware of their needs. We encourage visitors to our school, who may enhance, but never replace, our planned provision. We will work closely with visitors to ensure that the needs of our pupils are met.

We will follow this Code of Practice when working with visitors:

- The care and management of pupils is the responsibility of the school at all times.
- In class teaching situations, visitors will not be asked to work alone with pupils, but will be supported by a member of staff.
- The school will know whether visitors are DBS checked and arrangements will be made to accompany them as appropriate.
- All visitors will be made aware of the content and principles of this Policy, prior to their visit.
- All lessons will be planned in direct liaison with the PSHE Co-ordinator/Class teacher, taking account of the age and needs of the group and the context of the work within the Relationships Education programme.
- Visitors will be reminded that, whilst contributing to Relationships Education in a classroom setting, they must adhere to the same confidentiality code as staff members. Class teaching must be seen as separate from health or other targeted interventions to support wellbeing.
- Any resources which a visitor wishes to use or distribute will be discussed and agreed with the PSHE Co-ordinator/Class Teacher / Executive Head Teacher beforehand.
- The contributions of visitors will be regularly monitored and evaluated.

## **4. Curriculum Organisation**

Our Relationships Education Curriculum (available on school website) is wholly consistent with the DfE statutory requirements for Relationships Education and Health Education (2020), National Curriculum (2014), other DfE and OfSTED guidance. It also reflects best practice described by the Sex Education Forum and PSHE Association. We consider Relationships Education to be a continuous process of learning, which begins before the children enter our school and continues into adulthood. We have planned a curriculum appropriate to each age group with a spiral of progression. All adults working with children have a part to play in supporting the delivery of Relationships Education.

Relationships Education is learning about:

- Families and People who care for me
- Caring Friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online Relationships
- Being Safe

Our PSHE topic structure does not separate delivery of Relationships Education from Health Education and wider PSHE. We deliver topics which, taking the lead from children's lived experiences, consider related themes including development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in an integrated way. The topics where Relationships Education is a significant driver are:

- Anti-bullying
- Digital Lifestyles
- Diversity and Communities
- Family and Friends
- Managing Change
- My Emotions
- Personal Safety
- Relationships and Sex Education

Also: Working Together, Beginning and Belonging, Rights, Rules and Responsibilities

Relationships Education will be taught in:

- PSHE through designated lessons, circle time, focused events, health weeks
- Other curriculum areas, especially Science, English, RE, PE and computing
- Enrichment activities, especially our assembly programme, growth mindset approaches, involvement in school trips and adventurous activities.

#### **4.1 Teaching Methodologies**

Our aim is that teachers use a range of teaching methodologies where skills such as communication, compromise and negotiation are practised in classroom situations and where attitudes such as respect and empathy are modelled and discussed. We encourage teachers to ensure that group work, debate, taking other people's view points and working together are practised in all PSHE lessons and across the wider curriculum. Our Relationships Education lessons are not simple opportunities to give information, but to explore views and perspectives and develop possible solutions through discussion and interaction.

In keeping with this approach we base our curriculum on a series of questions children will have the opportunity to engage with, rather than banks of knowledge they will acquire.

**Ground Rules:** Relationships Education is taught in a safe, non-judgemental environment where all adults and children are confident that they will be respected. Specific ground rules will be established at the beginning of any Relationships Education work, in addition to those already used in the classroom. They will cover the following areas:

- appropriate use of language
- the asking and answering of personal questions
- strategies for checking or accessing information.

Appendix 1 includes details of the age appropriate language that will be taught.

**Distancing Techniques:** In order to protect children's privacy, we will employ teaching and learning strategies which enable them to discuss issues without disclosing personal experience. For example, we will use fiction, puppets, case studies, role-play, videos, theatre in education to enable children to share ideas and opinions and to practise their decision-making skills in a safe learning environment.

## **4.2 Anti-bullying and Friends and Family**

Please refer to the Anti Bullying Policy

## **4.3 Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)**

Our topic, RSE, combines elements of Relationships Education (e.g. learning about families, personal safety and emotional wellbeing) with aspects of Health Education (e.g. learning about the spread of illnesses and the changing adolescent body). This combination offers the best location for our provision of non-statutory sex education. Although 'RSE' as a subject is not statutory at primary level, many aspects of our RSE topic are statutory parts of Relationships Education and Health Education. Some elements of our RSE topic are part of the statutory National Curriculum for Science (e.g. the biological aspects of puberty, reproduction and the spread of viruses).

We will ensure that children receive teaching about puberty at Y5 and Y6 in order to prepare them for the physical, emotional and social changes they are approaching or undergoing. We will review the age at which puberty is introduced depending on the needs of each cohort.

We understand that at times children will benefit from varying methods of delivering the RSE curriculum. For example, we may use single-sex groups or small group teaching where this will help us to meet the needs of particular children more effectively, we will use team teaching where this enables us to best use teacher expertise. We will ensure there are positive educational reasons for each method of delivery.

## **4.4 Curriculum Materials and Resources**

We will primarily use the Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme and the resources recommended within it when planning and delivering Relationships Education. We will avoid a 'resource-led' approach, instead focussing on the needs of the children and our planned learning objectives. We will carefully select resources which meet these objectives. We will evaluate teaching resources thoroughly before using them. We will select resources which:

- are consistent with our curriculum for Relationships Education
- relate to the aims and objectives of this policy
- are suitable to the age, maturity, needs, linguistic proficiency and ability of the children
- appeal to adults and children
- are up-to-date in factual content
- are produced by a reputable organisation
- do not show unfair bias e.g. towards a commercial product, religious view point

- avoid racial, gender, sexual, cultural and religious stereotyping and heteronormativity
- encourage active and participative learning
- conform to the statutory requirements for Relationships Education.

#### 4.5 Safe and Effective Practice

In our school we have a clear Confidentiality Policy, which is shared with staff, pupils and parents/carers. This policy is communicated to parents/carers in the School brochure/website. The policy states that:

- Staff are unable to offer absolute confidentiality.
- We will reassure children that staff will act in their best interests and that this may involve sharing information if the child is at risk of harm.
- Children will be told if information is to be shared (taking special care with very young children or those with significant special needs) and will be offered appropriate support.

Professionals, such as school nurses and youth workers, are bound by their professional codes of conduct when offering advice and guidance to individual pupils. This often involves offering a greater level of confidentiality than school staff are able to give. However, in a classroom and other teaching situations, when they are contributing to our planned Relationships Education programme, they will follow the school's Confidentiality Policy. Health professionals will ensure that children are aware of the boundaries of confidentiality when beginning work with classes.

**Answering Questions:** We acknowledge that sensitive and complex issues will arise in Relationships Education, as pupils will naturally ask questions. When spontaneous discussion arises, it will be guided in a way which reflects the stated school aims and curriculum content. As a first principle, we will answer questions relating to the planned curriculum for that age group or below to the whole class. We will answer questions relating to areas beyond the planned curriculum for that age group, in a sensitive and age appropriate way, only to the pupil/s who have asked the question. Teacher may decide to inform families about questions which go beyond the planned curriculum, in order to further home/school partnerships. If a member of staff is uncertain about the answer to a question which goes beyond the curriculum, or indeed whether they wish to answer it, they will seek guidance from the PSHE leader/Designated Safeguarding Lead. In some cases the question will reach beyond the planned curriculum for Y6 and the question will not be answered in school. The child will be asked if they would like support to ask their questions at home or to another trusted adult.

When answering questions, we shall ensure that sharing personal information by adults, pupils or their families is discouraged. Where the question indicates the need for pastoral support, the conversation will be deferred to a time outside the teaching session and other colleagues may be involved. Where a question or comment from a pupil in the classroom indicates the possibility of abuse, coercion or exploitation, teachers will pass this information to the DSL in line with the school Safeguarding policy.

**Sexually Active Pupils:** There are extremely rare occasions where a primary-aged child, who is sexually active or contemplating sexual activity, approaches an adult. If this occurs in our school, it

will be viewed as a child protection issue. The designated member of staff will follow Safeguarding Procedures and seek advice from the DSL.

#### **4.6 Assessment, Recording, Reporting**

Relationships Education will be assessed in a variety of ways, including the use of self-assessment and teacher assessment. Guidance provided in the Cambridgeshire Primary PDP will be used.

From time to time the PSHE leader will ask staff to reflect on the effectiveness of learning in particular units of work, using the RAG rating sheets in each unit.

We will also use a class record book to record whole class discussions and group work in PSHE. In some cases, we will ask the children to record key learning activities in a PSHE Book, which follows them through school, to show their development and progress.

### **5. Sex Education Policy**

#### **5.1 Definition of Sex Education**

Following guidance from the DfE, we define Sex Education as learning about 'how a (human) baby is conceived and born'.

This extends the learning about sexual reproduction in 'some plants and animals' required through the Science national curriculum. It also complements the statutory requirement to teach about puberty as part of Science and Health Education, as understanding sexual reproduction in humans enables children to understand the processes of puberty.

#### **5.2 Consultation about Sex Education**

We have taken into account the DfE's recommendation that all primary schools have a Sex Education programme and we understand that this is not statutory. We understand that our teaching in sex education must be tailored to the needs and physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.

Parents/carers, governors and pupils have been consulted about this and our school has decided that we will offer content in Sex Education in the context of Relationships Education and RSE.

#### **5.3 Content of Sex Education**

The content of our Sex Education programme will be gradually developed in an age appropriate way. The children will not learn about human sexual reproduction until Y5/6.

Y1/2 will learn that human babies grow inside their mothers alongside learning in Science that adult animals produce offspring like themselves. (Cats have kittens. Cows have calves etc.)

Y5/6 will learn about human sexual reproduction and other ways that eggs and sperm are joined (eg IVF) in age appropriate detail. They will learn about vaginal birth and caesarean section in age appropriate ways, reflecting the experiences of children and families they know.

#### **5.4 Teaching Methodologies**

In Sex Education there is a certain amount of knowledge which has to be imparted. Teachers will give the facts in an accessible way using a range of approaches, such as picture books and scientific descriptions. We will avoid resource-led approaches which rely on worksheets or lengthy audio visual resources. Pupils will be asked to consolidate their learning in ways which enable them to develop skills to discuss sexual body parts and functions confidently.

#### **5.5 Delivery of the Sex Education Curriculum**

Sex Education will be delivered as part of our topic called Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) by a teacher, who knows the needs and natures of the children. The teacher is best placed to tailor the learning to the needs of the pupils.

Parents/carers will be informed by letter/email/via the school website about the content of the curriculum in advance of teaching and will be invited to talk to staff if they have questions.

Teachers will be offered support to develop their skills and to learn from others where needed.

#### **5.6 Right to be excused from Sex Education**

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be excused from some or all of Sex Education delivered as part of statutory Relationships Education. Before granting any such request the Executive Head Teacher will discuss the request with parents/carers (and if appropriate with the child) to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The educational, social and emotional benefits for the child of being part of the lessons will also be discussed. We will record the discussion and the outcomes.

We will consider compromise arrangements which will enable the child to receive Sex Education at school (e.g. same sex teacher, same sex teaching group).

If a pupil is excused from Sex Education, we will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

The parents/carers will be asked to reconfirm their decision to withdraw their children from Sex Education each time a Sex Education element is planned for their child.

### **6. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**

Monitoring, review and evaluation of the Policy is the responsibility of the PSHE leader/head teacher. The governing body will ask for information relating to the effectiveness of the policy when it is monitored every year. Information will be gathered from the Executive Head Teacher, the PSHE Leader parents/carers and pupils to inform judgements about effectiveness.

The policy will be comprehensively reviewed with engagement from members of the school community every three years, or sooner if an issue or incident occurs which warrants it.

Information gathered to inform the comprehensive review may include information about pupil progress and attainment, feedback from the teachers about the curriculum provision and staff confidence, views of parents/carers, parent/carer comments and concerns, level of parent/carer withdrawal from Sex Education.

## **7. Appendices**

### **7.1 Our Relationships Education Curriculum**

Can be found on the school website.

### **7.2 Linked National Documents**

[RSE and Health Education](#)

[Children and Social Work Bill 2017.](#)

[Sex and Relationships Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'.](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

### **7.3 Our Charter: Working Together in RSE**

We are all committed to working towards the implementation and development of the following entitlements.

Children and Young People are entitled to:

- Be valued and respected for who they are, taking into account their background, culture, faith, identity and needs
- Accurate, up-to-date, useful and age-appropriate information delivered in a way that meets their individual needs
- A well-planned, well-delivered RSE programme, which is flexible to cater for their changing needs over time
- Know where and how to access information, support and local services
- Be informed about confidentiality and how it affects them
- Have their views and ideas received in a respectful and non-judgemental manner
- Be involved in developing and evaluating the content, delivery and timing of their RSE programme as appropriate.

Adults working with children are entitled to:

- Access to high quality, up-to-date, accurate information, resources and training

- Mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to the planning and delivery of RSE
- Contribute their views and ideas in support of the development of RSE for their pupils
- Professional guidance and support
- A clear understanding of school policy relating to RSE.

Parents, carers and other adults in the community are entitled to:

- Accurate, up-to-date, information about RSE policy delivered in an accessible way
- A safe learning environment for their children
- Information on how and when their children are taught RSE
- Understand their right to withdraw their child from the aspects of the curriculum defined as 'sex education' and the process for expressing this right
- Have their views and needs listened to in a respectful, non-judgemental manner.

## **Appendix 1 - Riverside Vocabulary in Relationships and Sex Education**

### **Why name sexual parts?**

School is a place where all children should be able to develop good communication skills, confidence, positive body image and strong personal safety skills. RSE is one vehicle for enabling children to develop these skills in a safe and supportive environment. We know that having names for things is a way we can comfortably bring them into our experience and feel connection with them and a certain amount of control over them.

For many adults (teachers, parents, carers and governors included) the use of vocabulary to describe the human body and in particular the sexual parts of the human body is a sensitive topic. Many people personally feel uncomfortable using particular words and are anxious that teaching scientific words for sexual parts to children may challenge their innocence. However, this paper seeks to illustrate how the sensitive, age-appropriate use of scientific vocabulary for sexual parts can contribute to positive body image, open discussion and questioning and the development of strong personal safety skills.

Each school will have developed its own aims for RSE as part of the Relationships Education Policy. But, all schools hold in common some very basic aims that children will learn to value themselves and their bodies, communicate their feelings and emotions, engage in positive and rewarding relationships and to keep themselves safe. The sensitive, age appropriate use of scientific vocabulary for sexual parts supports these aims.

The basic skill of being able to confidently name parts of our own bodies without feelings of embarrassment or shame is one of the key building blocks needed to achieve each of these aims. Feeling connection and confidence with our own bodies contributes to a positive body image, a feeling of ownership and control and is the basic mechanism for being able to communicate about our bodies.

The DfE Guidance for Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education (2019) states that as part of primary Relationships Education children should learn the following as part of the 'Being Safe' area of work:

### **How to reports concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so**

It is therefore part of the statutory curriculum for all schools that children learn the names of body parts and how to talk confidently about these to trusted adults. Learning the names for sexual parts is a protective factor.

The following extract from the Sex Education Forum's publication, 'RSE for Primary Aged Children' 2020 describes the importance of using agreed, 'scientific' terms when describing parts of the body:

'Research with children has shown that they are often confused in their understanding of their bodies and how they work. It is important that teachers use correct terms when introducing new topics. Family names or common names (for sexual parts) can be acknowledged, but it is good practice to use words such as ovum and sperm (new terms for new concepts). Early and accurate naming of children's body parts is vital.

If children haven't been equipped with the words for parts of their bodies and have picked up the message that adults don't talk about them either, how can they be expected to describe them to an adult if they need to? This has serious implications for child protection.

Boys' genitals do generally get named, even if the words used are family names or slang, at least it is acknowledged that they exist. In comparison, girls' genitals often don't get named. This absence deprives girls of a comfortable language about themselves. If they are to develop a positive sense of their bodies as a source of pride and pleasure, sexual as well as reproductive body parts should be part of their vocabulary.'

**Key Message: The consistent use of age-appropriate scientific vocabulary throughout the school contributes to positive body image, open discussion and questioning and the development of strong personal safety skills.**

### **Which words should we use and when?**

When deciding which scientific words to use as part of RSE, it is essential that each school and individual teaching team discusses and agrees the words which will be used. The words chosen should be those needed to deliver the learning objectives for each age group. When a new concept is introduced, then new parts of the body will need to be explained and therefore new vocabulary is required.

### **Vocabulary for the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1**

The age appropriate vocabulary for male parts is fairly straightforward. As young children learn about the external parts of their bodies, the words required for male parts are 'penis' and either 'testicles' or 'testes'. ('Testicles' and 'testes' are essentially interchangeable words, so one should be chosen and used consistently.)

The age-appropriate words to be used for female sexual parts need more careful thought. Again, as children learn about their own external body parts at this age, the key vocabulary which is commonly used for female parts is 'vagina' and 'vulva'. (See definitions below) You might also choose to introduce the term 'clitoris', as some young girls have already discovered a pleasurable sensation when they touch/rub their clitoris.

The 'correct' scientific term for the external female sexual parts is 'vulva'. However the term 'vagina' is commonly used as a generic term for female genitalia and may be more familiar to teachers and parents. However, to ensure consistency and avoid later confusion, we suggest that the terms "vulva" and "vagina" are used specifically and accurately with children. They should be used consistently and when children start to learn about the internal structures, the difference between the terms 'vulva' and 'vagina' can be explained more fully without confusion.

Young children will, of course, use familiar words from home to describe their body parts. These words should be acknowledged and used alongside the scientific words until children are able to use the scientific words confidently. When children use words for sexual parts which are offensive, their offensive nature should be explained and the situation monitored, *e.g. 'That word does describe the penis, but lots of people find that word rude and they are upset when they hear it. Can you think of another word which is not rude?'*

## A table of words

The following table shows the range of vocabulary which might be taught in each of the RSE units of work in the Primary Personal Development Programme. The Riverside Staff Team have discussed these words and edited the table to reflect the language that we will use. In each case the list of words is cumulative i.e. the word penis is included in the foundation stage list: it should be used in all following lists.

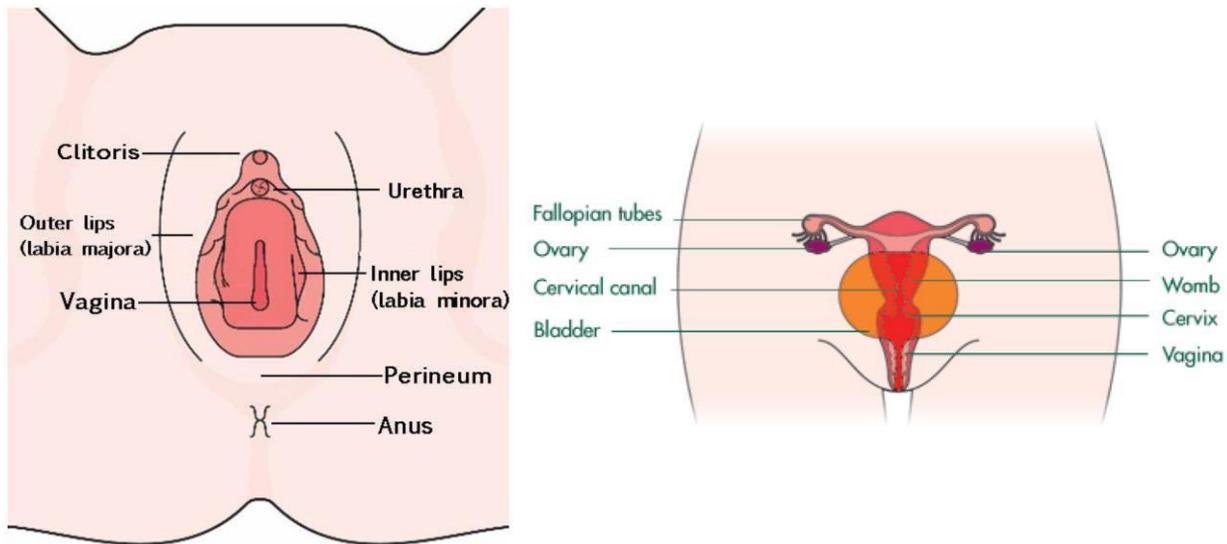
	Key areas of learning	Feelings/relationships	Body parts and processes	Other
<b>Foundation</b>	External body parts	Range of feelings words e.g. happy, pleased, calm, sad baby child girl boy	Size Shape range of simple external body parts e.g. hands, head, teeth, penis, testicles, vulva vagina, bottom <b>breast</b> (added in)	range of action words e.g. run, jump growing up germs
<b>KS1 Year 1/2</b>	External body parts	same similar different unique special responsibility	birth death range of more specific external body parts e.g. stomach, chest	male female man woman teenager adult
<b>KS2 Year 3/4</b>	External body parts Differences between male and female	love dependent independent	Breast, nipple, anus <b>scrotum</b> (will not be taught)	toiletries bacteria infection hygiene
<b>KS2 Year 5/6</b>	Puberty Sexual reproduction Internal body parts	commitment marriage stable relationship	Puberty, Period Menstruation Cervix <b>Labia</b> (will not be taught) fallopian tube <b>clitoris</b> (will not be taught) ovary/ ovum, vulva, vagina uterus/womb sperm/sperm duct urethra, pubic hair, voice breaking, <b>arousal</b> (will not be taught) erection, sexual intercourse, sex, ejaculate conception, pregnancy, ovulation	sanitary towel tampon body odour deodorant

## What do the words mean?

These explanations, definitions and diagrams are intended for the use of adults in school, to confirm understanding. They are not intended for direct use with children.

## Female sexual parts

The diagrams below are courtesy of [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk) ; for additional 3D diagrams of the female sexual parts visit [www.3Dvulva.com](http://www.3Dvulva.com)



**Breasts** - In females, the breasts are primarily for feeding babies. The fatty deposits protect the glands that produce breast milk, which is the healthiest first food for a baby. They are sensitive to touch. The nipple is the end point of the breast and all the milk producing tubes end up at the nipple.

**Cervix** - This is the structure which forms the neck of the womb. It is a muscular ring which opens and closes especially during birth. During pregnancy it holds very tightly shut to keep the baby safe in the uterus.

**Clitoris** - The clitoris is a small pea-shaped bump and joining point of the inner labia. It is highly sensitive to touch and is associated with sexual pleasure in females. It has between 6,000 and 8,000 sensory nerve endings, which is more than any other organ in the human body including the penis and the testicles.

**Fallopian tube** - There are two fallopian tubes. Each one connects an ovary to the womb. This is the tube down which the egg travels from the ovary.

**Labia** - This word means lips. The labia are folds of skin which protect the opening to the vagina. They enlarge during puberty. There are both inner and outer labia as shown in the left hand diagram.

**Ovary** - There are two ovaries in each female reproductive system. They release eggs into the fallopian tubes, which in turn guide the eggs into the womb. Ovulation is the process of releasing an egg from the ovary.

**Ovum** - (ova-plural, ovum-singular). The ovum, or egg, is an amazing structure and can live for up to 24 hours. The egg is the largest cell in the human body and is much bigger and heavier than sperm. Even though a woman is born with between 1-2 million eggs, she'll only release about 400 in her lifetime. Sometimes a woman releases a second egg when she ovulates, but it's always within 24 hours of the first.

**Perineum** - This is the skin between the opening of the vagina and the anus. It can tear during child birth.

**Urethra** - This tube, found in both males and females carries urine from the bladder out of the body. The opening of the tube does not have a different name and is also called the urethra.

**Uterus** - This is the organ of the female body where the fertilised egg begins to grow. It is the place where the foetus grows and develops throughout a pregnancy.

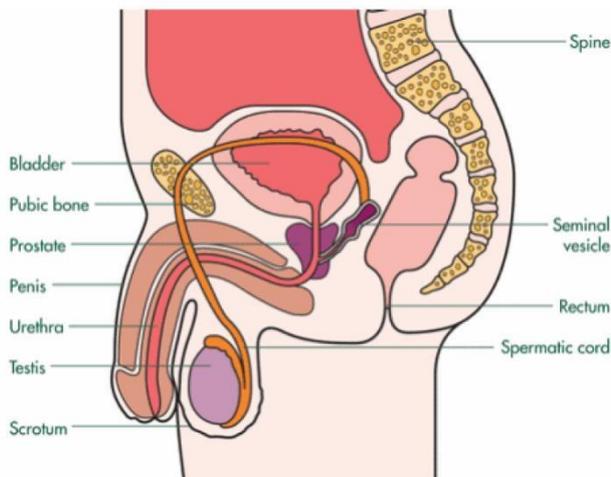
**Vagina** - The vagina is also called the birth canal. Technically it is an internal structure. However the term is commonly used to refer to the external sex organs of females.

**Vulva** - The vulva is the correct term for the parts of female genitalia that can be seen from the outside. It includes the labia (lips), clitoris and the vaginal opening. The urethra (wee tube) is in this area as well, but is not technically part of the vulva. This vulva is often commonly (but incorrectly) called the vagina.

**Womb** - See Uterus

## Male Sexual Parts

The diagram below is courtesy of [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)



**Ejaculation** - This is the contraction of muscles in the penis which pushes semen from the testes and out of the penis. In each ejaculation there are approximately 300 million sperm contained in 2-5ml of semen. The sperm travel at about 10 miles per hour.

**Penis** - The penis performs two functions in males. It passes urine through the urethra from the bladder. The penis is the main sexual organ and sperm is passed through the urethra during ejaculation. The body of the penis consists of blood vessels which fill with blood

when the man is aroused. This forms an erection.

**Scrotum** - This is the pouch of skin which holds the testicles. During puberty the scrotum enlarges so that the testes hang away from the body where it is the right temperature for sperm production. When the testes are exposed to cold the scrotum contracts and moves the testes closer to the body.

**Semen** - The whitish fluid that carries sperm and is ejaculated from the body during an orgasm.

**Seminal vesicle** - This is the small sack which contains a liquid which is added to sperm to make semen.

**Sperm** - This is the male reproductive cell which is capable of fertilising an egg. It is carried in semen into the female uterus following ejaculation. Sperm can live with in the female body for up to 7 days after ejaculation. Really healthy sperm can travel up to 19cm an hour, once inside the female body, although the average is closer to 9cm an hour. There are 1,500 sperm in a dot the size of a full stop.

**Sperm duct** (spermatic cord) - These long tubes connect each testicle to the seminal vesicle, so the sperm can pass along.

**Testicle /Testis** (testis-singular, testes-plural) - The male reproductive organ where sperm is produced. Once sperm is produced it is stored in the testicles for 2-3 weeks. If it not used (ejaculated), it is reabsorbed into the body, ensuring a fresh supply of sperm. During puberty the testes drop away from body so that the testes can maintain a temperature lower than body temperature. The terms 'testicles' and 'testes' are essentially interchangeable.

**Urethra** - This tube, found in both males and females, carries urine from the bladder out of the body. In the male, it also carries semen.