



Year-by-year Sex and Relationships Education progression map

This map follows the PSHE Association's 2026 spiral-curriculum approach, with age-appropriate learning building from relationships and kindness in EYFS and KS1 to puberty, consent, boundaries and preparation for adolescence in KS2. The PSHE Association's published Programme of Study specifies learning opportunities by key stage; the year-group sequence below is our suggested school-planning framework.

This document was produced in consultation with Staff and Parents.

Early Years safeguarding and relationships progression

Nursery

Exploring feelings, relationships and personal boundaries

Relationships

- Building trusting relationships with familiar adults.
- Beginning to play alongside and with other children.
- Learning to share, take turns and show kindness.
- Recognising familiar people who care for them.

Consent and respect

- Beginning to recognise personal space.
- Learning to ask before taking toys or joining another child's play.
- Expressing preferences and beginning to say "no" or "stop".
- Learning that other children may have different feelings and wishes.

Bodies and growing up

- Naming basic body parts using appropriate vocabulary.
- Recognising similarities and differences between people.
- Beginning to understand that bodies grow and change.
- Learning about privacy in simple, age-appropriate ways.

Safety and help-seeking

- Identifying familiar adults who can help.
- Beginning to communicate when upset, uncomfortable or worried.
- Learning to tell an adult when something hurts or does not feel right.
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Reception

Developing respectful relationships, boundaries and help-seeking

Relationships

- Describing what makes someone a good friend.
- Developing cooperation, empathy and turn-taking.
- Recognising and talking about different feelings.
- Understanding that families and caring relationships may look different.

Consent and respect

- Communicating personal preferences and boundaries.
- Understanding that “no” and “stop” should be respected.
- Asking permission before touching others or using their belongings.
- Recognising that people can change their minds about playing or physical contact.

Bodies and growing up

- Naming body parts correctly and confidently.
- Understanding that everyone grows and develops.
- Learning simple concepts of privacy and appropriate boundaries.
- Developing positive attitudes towards differences between people.

Safety and help-seeking

- Identifying trusted adults at home and in school.
- Practising how to ask for help when worried or uncomfortable.
- Understanding that they can tell a trusted adult if someone breaks a personal boundary.
- Learning simple ways to keep themselves safe in familiar environments.

Progression at a glance

Theme	Nursery	Reception
Relationships	Builds trust and plays alongside others	Develops friendships, cooperation and empathy
Consent	Expresses preferences and begins to say “no”	Understands and respects personal boundaries

Respect	Begins to recognise others' feelings	Demonstrates kindness and respect for differences
Bodies	Names body parts and notices differences	Uses appropriate vocabulary and understands privacy
Growing up	Notices that people change	Talks about growth and development
Safety	Seeks help from familiar adults	Identifies trusted adults and practises help-seeking

Years 1- 6

	<u>Relationships education</u>	<u>Consent and respect</u>	<u>Puberty and growing up</u>
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different people who care for us. • Features of positive friendships. • Kindness, sharing and cooperation. • Identifying and expressing feelings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting personal space. • Asking before touching or taking belongings. • Recognising when someone does not want to participate. • Understanding that people have different feelings and preferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising similarities and differences between people. • Understanding that people grow and change. • Identifying trusted adults who can answer questions.
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different types of family and caring relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saying no and expressing preferences. • Listening when others say no. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising that growing up happens at different rates.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualities of a good friend. • Resolving disagreements fairly. • Recognising bullying and exclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting physical boundaries. • Understanding that unwanted touch or behaviour should be reported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding basic changes throughout life. • Developing positive attitudes towards differences.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and maintaining friendships. • Recognising healthy and unhealthy friendship behaviours. • Managing conflict and repairing relationships. • Understanding how words and actions affect others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating preferences and boundaries clearly. • Understanding that agreement should be freely given. • Recognising pressure, exclusion and unfair treatment. • Respecting others' choices, feelings and differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring how bodies change as people grow. • Understanding physical, emotional and social development. • Knowing that changes occur at different times for different people.
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising the characteristics of respectful relationships. • Understanding trust, loyalty and mutual support. • Responding to bullying and discriminatory behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying consent and boundary-setting to everyday situations. • Recognising manipulation and pressure. • Understanding that silence does not necessarily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding puberty as part of human development. • Exploring emotional and physical changes. • Recognising that puberty can start at different ages. • Challenging embarrassment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring how relationships can change. 	<p>mean agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practising respectful communication and listening. 	<p>and stereotypes about growing up.</p>
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding how friendships and family relationships develop. Recognising respectful and disrespectful behaviour. Managing peer pressure and disagreement. Understanding privacy and appropriate behaviour in relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying consent, bodily autonomy and boundaries to more complex situations. Recognising coercion, manipulation and unwanted attention. Understanding that consent can be withdrawn. Respecting differences, identity and individual choices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning about physical changes during puberty. Understanding menstruation and menstrual wellbeing. Exploring emotional changes, self-esteem and body image. Knowing how to access reliable information and support.
Year 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying knowledge of healthy relationships to changing friendships and new environments. Recognising harmful relationship patterns and seeking help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying consent and boundaries in face-to-face and online contexts. Recognising pressure, harassment and coercive behaviour. Understanding the importance of freely given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidating understanding of puberty and individual variation. Understanding how physical and emotional changes may affect relationships. Building confidence in managing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding respect, equality, privacy and mutual care. • Preparing for relationships and social changes at secondary school. 	<p>agreement and respecting refusal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practising assertive responses and appropriate help-seeking. 	<p>change and asking questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for adolescence with reliable information and support.
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Key progression across the three themes

Relationships education

Year 1–2

Recognise caring relationships, kindness, friendship and feelings.

Year 3–4

Develop trust, communication, conflict resolution and recognition of unhealthy behaviours.

Year 5–6

Apply understanding to peer pressure, changing relationships, harmful behaviour and transition to secondary school.

Consent and respect

Year 1–2

Understand personal space, saying no and respecting others' preferences.

Year 3–4

Communicate boundaries, recognise pressure and understand freely given agreement.

Year 5–6

Apply consent to more complex situations, including online interactions, and recognise coercion and harassment.

Puberty and growing up

Year 1–2

Recognise growth, change and individual differences.

Year 3–4

Introduce physical, emotional and social changes associated with growing up and puberty.

Year 5–6

Consolidate understanding of puberty, menstruation, emotional wellbeing, body image and sources of support.

Puberty talk progression: Year 5 and Year 6

The aim is to build pupils' knowledge, confidence and readiness for adolescence in a safe, inclusive and age-appropriate way. Year 5 should establish understanding of puberty and its changes; Year 6 should consolidate this knowledge and help pupils apply it as they prepare for secondary school. NB To ensure that pupils are taught age-appropriate content, they will be separated into single year groups where necessary.

The progression below is a suggested teaching sequence aligned with the PSHE Association's approach to Health and Wellbeing and Relationships Education. It is not a verbatim list of the Association's lesson objectives.

Suggested teaching sequence

Year 5 — Understanding puberty

Build knowledge

Suggested focus: physical changes, biological changes and preparation.

Learning intentions

Pupils will be able to:

- Explain what puberty is and why it happens.
- Identify physical changes that may happen to all bodies, including growth spurts, body hair, skin changes, sweating and body odour.
- Understand biological changes, including periods, erections, wet dreams and changes to reproductive organs.
- Explain that puberty begins at different ages and progresses at different rates.
- Describe personal hygiene routines and how to manage changes, including period products.
- Identify trusted adults and reliable sources of information.

Key vocabulary: puberty, hormones, adolescence, menstruation, period, vulva, vagina, penis, testicles, erection, wet dream, body odour, hygiene.

Suggested activities

1. Puberty sorting activity: sort changes into physical, emotional and hygiene-related categories.
2. Myth or fact: address misconceptions about when puberty starts and what changes are normal.
3. Preparing for change: create a personal-care checklist or a puberty questions box.

Year 6 — Managing puberty and preparing for adolescence

Apply knowledge

Suggested focus: consolidation, wellbeing, practical strategies and transition.

Learning intentions

Pupils will be able to:

- Recall and explain the physical and biological changes associated with puberty.
- Describe how hormones and puberty may affect emotions, confidence and relationships.
- Explain the menstrual cycle and identify ways to manage periods and menstrual wellbeing.
- Recognise individual differences in development and challenge teasing or body-related stereotypes.
- Identify strategies for managing hygiene, body image and emotional changes.
- Know how to seek advice or support from trusted adults and appropriate health professionals.
- Apply their understanding to prepare for the transition to secondary school.

Key vocabulary: consolidate Year 5 vocabulary, including menstrual cycle, hormones, mood changes, self-esteem, body image and menstrual products.

Suggested activities

1. Puberty scenarios: discuss how a pupil might respond to a first period, unexpected body changes or worries about developing earlier or later than friends.
2. Advice clinic: write supportive, factual responses to anonymous questions about puberty.
3. Getting ready for secondary school: develop a practical plan for personal care, managing periods, emotional wellbeing and finding help.

Progression at a glance

Area	Year 5	Year 6
Physical changes	Identify and explain changes	Consolidate and apply knowledge
Biological changes	Learn about reproductive development, periods, erections and wet dreams	Revisit changes and address misconceptions
Menstruation	Understand periods, products and hygiene	Explain the menstrual cycle and plan for menstrual wellbeing
Emotional wellbeing	Recognise that feelings may change	Apply coping strategies and seek support
Individual differences	Understand variation in timing and development	Challenge stereotypes, teasing and comparison
Practical preparation	Identify hygiene needs and reliable help	Develop independence and prepare for secondary school

Year 5 — Foundations for understanding reproduction

Focus: human reproduction, life cycles and preparing pupils for further learning.

Learning intentions

Pupils will be able to:

- Recall how the human body develops through different life stages.
- Identify the basic reproductive organs and understand their biological functions, building on puberty learning.
- Understand that reproduction is how humans produce babies.
- Recognise that pregnancy and birth are stages in the human life cycle.
- Identify trusted adults and reliable sources for questions about reproduction.

Suggested activities

1. Human life cycle: sequence stages from birth through adulthood and later life.
2. Reproduction vocabulary: match age-appropriate scientific terms to definitions.
3. Question box: gather anonymous questions and address misconceptions using factual, inclusive language.

Year 6 — Understanding conception, pregnancy and birth

Focus: how a baby is conceived, develops and is born.

Pupils will be able to:

- Explain, at an age-appropriate biological level, that a sperm and an egg can join in fertilisation.
- Understand that fertilisation can lead to pregnancy and that the embryo develops in the uterus.
- Describe the basic stages of pregnancy and birth.
- Recognise that babies need care and that becoming a parent involves responsibility.
- Distinguish scientific facts from myths and identify reliable sources of information.
- Know who to approach if they have questions or concerns.

Suggested activities

1. How a baby develops: sequence fertilisation, early development, pregnancy and birth using a teacher-led diagram.
2. Fact or misconception: discuss common misunderstandings about conception and pregnancy.
3. Ask an expert: answer anonymous questions using approved teaching resources and scientific vocabulary.

RMS School-designed vocabulary progression map: Relationships, Sex Education and Body Development

Nursery to Year 6 | Primary school | England | Curriculum planning document

This progression is designed for our school, with Year 5 dedicated to puberty and Year 6 dedicated to sex education and human reproduction. It builds from naming body parts and learning about personal safety in the Early Years to accurate anatomical language, puberty, reproduction, consent and healthy relationships in Key Stage 2.

The map distinguishes the vocabulary our school intends to teach from the statutory requirements that apply across the curriculum. It is a school-designed progression, not a claim that every word must be taught in the specified year.

1. Vocabulary progression map

Year group	Core vocabulary to teach	Expected learning
Nursery	Head, face, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, neck, shoulders, arms, elbows, hands, fingers, chest, tummy, back, legs, knees, feet, toes, bottom, body, baby, grow, change, feelings, safe, stop, help	Name familiar body parts, notice growth and change, identify feelings and ask a trusted adult for help.
Reception	Revisit earlier words; penis, vulva, breasts, nipples, private, privacy, personal space, trusted adult	Use correct names for external body parts; understand privacy, personal space and the right to ask for help.
Year 1	Revisit earlier words; testicles, scrotum, vagina, consent, permission, boundaries, respect	Identify and name body parts accurately; understand that the vulva is

		external and the vagina is an internal passage; practise respecting boundaries.
Year 2	Revisit penis, testicles, scrotum, vulva, vagina, breasts, nipples; add anus, personal boundaries, appropriate touch, inappropriate touch, secrets, surprises	Consolidate anatomical language, understand privacy and distinguish safe situations from situations that require help.
Year 3	Revisit all previous anatomical terms; womb (uterus), ovaries, fallopian tubes, egg cell, sperm cell, life cycle, development	Introduce reproductive anatomy and develop an understanding of growth, development and human life cycles.
Year 4	Revisit reproductive anatomy; puberty, hormones, adolescence, pubic hair, underarm hair, menstruation, period, hygiene, body image	Prepare pupils for puberty by introducing changes that may occur and reinforcing respect for different bodies and rates of development.
Year 5 — Puberty	Puberty, adolescence, hormones, penis, testicles, scrotum, erection, ejaculation, wet dream, vulva, vagina, breasts, nipples, pubic hair, underarm hair, menstruation, menstrual cycle, period, womb, ovaries, hygiene, emotional changes	Explain physical and emotional changes during puberty, including menstruation, erections, wet dreams, hygiene and individual variation.

Year 6 — Sex education	Revisit relevant anatomy; reproductive system, sperm cell, egg cell, fertilisation, conception, sexual intercourse, pregnancy, womb, placenta, umbilical cord, foetus, birth	Explain human reproduction, how pregnancy can begin, fertilisation, pregnancy and birth, and how consent, respect and personal safety relate to relationships.
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The year-by-year allocation is a proposed school sequence. The statutory science curriculum specifies learning outcomes by the end of a key stage and includes puberty in Year 5 science, as well as human reproduction in the secondary science curriculum.

2. Teacher guidance: approved terminology

We use these definitions consistently across classes.

Term	Staff explanation
Penis	An external genital organ. It is used to pass urine; it can also release semen.
Testicles (testes)	Organs that produce sperm after puberty and make hormones, including testosterone.
Scrotum	The skin sac that holds the testicles.
Vulva	The external parts of the female genital area.
Vagina	The internal muscular passage leading from the vaginal opening to the cervix.
Breasts and nipples	Body parts found on people of different sexes; breasts may develop during puberty.

Anus	The opening through which faeces leave the body.
Womb (uterus)	An organ in which a pregnancy can develop.
Ovaries	Organs that contain egg cells and produce hormones.
Fallopian tubes	Tubes through which an egg travels from an ovary towards the womb.
Sperm cell and egg cell	Reproductive cells involved in human reproduction.
Erection	When the penis becomes firmer, usually because more blood flows into it.
Ejaculation	The release of semen from the penis.
Menstruation (a period)	The shedding of the womb lining, with blood leaving the body through the vagina.
Fertilisation	When a sperm cell joins with an egg cell.
Foetus	The developing human inside the uterus during pregnancy, after the embryonic stage.

Staff expectation: use correct anatomical terminology in lessons and in response to pupils' questions. Family euphemisms may be acknowledged, but should not replace accurate vocabulary. No anatomical word is inherently rude or shameful.

3. Statutory and school-selected content

Statutory curriculum requirements

Relationships Education, relevant Health Education and National Curriculum Science must be covered as applicable. The science curriculum includes human development and puberty at primary level.

School-selected vocabulary

The precise year in which our school introduces each word, the teaching resources used, and the additional detail included in Year 6 are curriculum decisions. We sequence them according to pupils' development and our school's published RSHE policy.

Safeguarding across all year groups

We teach personal boundaries, seeking help and identifying trusted adults throughout the school. Staff must respond to disclosures in line with the school's safeguarding policy.

4. Official reference documents

- [DfE RSHE statutory guidance — effective from September 2026](#)
- [National Curriculum in England: Science programmes of study](#)
- [Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)

5.SEND adaptations to the vocabulary progression

Area of need	How teachers can adapt teaching	Example
Speech, language and communication needs	Use short sentences, concrete explanations, symbols, pictures and repeated modelling. Check understanding rather than relying on pupils repeating a word.	Match a picture of a penis to the word penis, then practise recognising it when it is named.
Autism	Use explicit, literal language, predictable lesson structures and	Teach the difference between a private

	advance notice of changes. Avoid relying on implied meanings or social rules pupils are expected to infer.	body part, a private place and a private activity.
Moderate or severe learning difficulties	Break concepts into small steps; use objects, visual sequences, repetition and supported choices.	Teach "stop", "no", "move away" and "tell a trusted adult" through repeated scenarios.
Visual impairment	Provide accessible diagrams, tactile resources where appropriate, verbal descriptions and accessible digital materials.	Use a tactile or verbally described body diagram to teach anatomical vocabulary.
Hearing impairment	Pre-teach vocabulary, provide written instructions and use the pupil's established communication system, including sign language where appropriate.	Pair the written word vulva with an agreed sign or visual representation.
Sensory needs	Explain bodily changes in advance and offer predictable, non-threatening ways to explore the information. Do not require pupils to touch body models or participate in uncomfortable activities.	Use a visual sequence to explain changes in body hair, sweating and personal hygiene.
Physical disabilities or medical needs	Adapt materials and examples to reflect the pupil's own experience without making assumptions about their body or future development.	Use accessible diagrams and discuss personal care respectfully, where relevant.

Social, emotional and mental health needs	Provide clear routines, emotionally safe discussion structures and alternatives to sharing personal experiences in front of peers.	Allow pupils to submit questions anonymously or discuss a fictional scenario rather than their own relationships.
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These are examples, not fixed adaptations for every pupil with a particular diagnosis. Teachers should use the pupil's individual communication, learning and access needs to decide what is appropriate.

2. How the progression should work for SEND pupils

Nursery to Year 2: body knowledge and safety

- Use photographs, illustrations, symbols or accessible body diagrams.
- Teach the correct anatomical words alongside any communication aids the pupil uses.
- Practise identifying trusted adults and communicating “stop”, “no”, “help” and “I don't like that”.
- Teach privacy and appropriate boundaries explicitly.

Years 3–4: understanding growth and change

- Revisit body-part vocabulary regularly.
- Use simple diagrams and step-by-step explanations of reproductive anatomy.
- Introduce puberty vocabulary before Year 5, with additional repetition where needed.
- Prepare pupils for changes they may experience, including personal care needs.

Year 5: puberty

- Explain periods, erections, wet dreams, body hair, sweating and emotional changes in direct, accessible language.
- Use visual timelines, social stories or individual preparation where useful.
- Explain what changes may happen, what products or support are available, and whom pupils can ask for help.
- Do not assume a pupil cannot understand a concept because they have a learning disability.

Year 6: sex education

- Break reproduction into manageable steps using clear diagrams and carefully sequenced explanations.
- Teach the meaning of sperm, egg cell, fertilisation, sexual intercourse, pregnancy and birth.
- Revisit consent, bodily autonomy, relationships, online safety and help-seeking.
- Check understanding individually where needed, rather than relying only on whole-class discussion or written work.

3. SEND and safeguarding: an essential part of the map

Some children with SEND may face additional barriers to recognising abuse, communicating concerns or understanding boundaries. Current safeguarding guidance highlights the importance of appropriate communication support, individual consideration and close liaison between the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and SENCO where concerns arise.

Our RMS Expectations:

- Never assume that a pupil understands consent, privacy or safe and unsafe touch simply because they can repeat the words.
- Give pupils accessible ways to communicate discomfort, refuse unwanted touch and report concerns.
- Teach that an adult helping with personal care does not mean that all touching is acceptable; explain the purpose of care, appropriate boundaries and how to raise concerns.
- Do not promise secrecy when a pupil discloses something concerning.

- Record and report safeguarding concerns in line with the school's policy, making sure communication needs do not prevent the pupil's voice from being heard.

4. Statement

SEND inclusion and accessibility

This vocabulary progression applies to all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Teaching must be adapted to meet individual needs and remove barriers to learning, communication and participation.

Adaptations may include simplified language, visual supports, symbols, signing, accessible diagrams, repetition, pre-teaching, social stories, individual preparation and additional opportunities to practise and demonstrate understanding.

Staff must teach accurate anatomical vocabulary and provide age- and developmentally appropriate education about relationships, personal boundaries, consent, puberty, body safety and reproduction. Pupils should not be excluded from essential learning solely because of a diagnosis, communication difficulty or learning disability.

Teachers should assess understanding in ways appropriate to each pupil, working with the SENCO, families and relevant specialists where helpful. Where a pupil has an EHCP or individual support plan, teaching should take account of the pupil's identified needs and agreed provision.

Safeguarding education must be accessible to pupils who communicate non-verbally or require additional support. Staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedures and ensure that pupils have an effective means of expressing concerns and seeking help.