

What do children and young people think?

Children and young people want to talk to their parents/carers about sex and relationships, but that can be daunting for a parent/carer. One group of 10-16-year-olds came up with these helpful pieces of advice for parents/carers:

- Take responsibility for talking to us. Don't just wait for us to ask.
- If we ask you things, always tell the truth. Don't put it off or say 'I'll tell you when you're older'.
- Don't be angry and try not to be embarrassed.
- Don't save it all up for a one-off 'birds and bees' lecture. We'd rather you talked naturally, little and often.
- Wait until we're at home and on our own together to avoid embarrassment.
- Make sure we know what you're talking about and let us ask you questions.
- If we ask what a word means, ask us what we think the word means first.
- Don't laugh at us or spread gossip about what we have been talking about.
- If you don't know something, be honest and say that you don't know.
- Give us books, leaflets or websites but talk to us too.
- Don't expect school to tell us everything – we want to hear from our parents/carers as well.

Useful contacts

Family Lives offers help and advice to parents and carers on any aspect of bringing up children. www.familylives.org.uk

For information and videos clips on talking about SRE to your children, try www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Talkingaboutsex/Pages/Whytalktoyourchild.aspx
www.familylives.org.uk/how-we-can-help/parentchannel-tv/

For information about your rights and RSE download the leaflet *SRE and Parents* from www.education.gov.uk

For further guidance from the **Sex Education Forum**, download 'Talk to your children about sex and relationships: support for parents' Factsheet 31 www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/media/6360/talk-to-your-children.pdf

For a short film to introduce importance of privacy and not taking or sharing sensitive images search for 'NSPCC Share Aware'.

Talking to Children about Relationships and Sex

Support and information for secondary school families

In school we aim to support young people to learn to respect themselves and others and move safely through adolescence into adulthood. As part of this work, we deliver an ongoing programme of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). This programme begins as soon as children arrive in school and continues until the end of secondary school. There is more information on our secondary school programme inside this leaflet.

We are very aware that the RSE we deliver in school is only a small part of young people's learning about their emotions, relationships, sexual behaviour, sexuality, sexual health and themselves. The majority of young people's learning in this area takes place with you at home. We hope this leaflet gives you some more information about our partnership in developing young people's knowledge, skills and attitudes relating to RSE.

Why should parents and carers talk to their children about relationships and sex?

- Young people tell us they want their parents/carers to be the first ones to talk to them about puberty, sex and relationships.
- If families start talking to their young people about puberty, sex and relationships, they are less likely to get ideas that worry or confuse them and they learn that it's alright to talk about these things at home and to ask questions.
- Young people learn most about values and relationships from family experiences. Close, loving relationships are the best way of showing a young person how your family 'does things' based on your values, culture, faith and beliefs.
- If families talk about sex and relationships openly and honestly, young people are:
 - more prepared for puberty and the changes they will experience
 - more likely to resist pressure to have unwanted sex
 - more likely to delay having sex for the first time
 - more likely to use contraception if they do have sex
 - less likely to have an unplanned pregnancy or to get a sexually transmitted infection.

What do children learn about in SRE in school? (This is currently under review and will be updated in September 2020)

	Content area
Age 11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendships- what is a healthy relationship, how to treat others with respect • Self awareness- emotional literacy- understanding our emotions • Puberty- emotional changes • LGBTQ+ same sex relationships <p>Other areas of RSE will be covered in computing (keeping safe on the internet), science (biology), Belief and Ethics (relationships)</p>
Age 12-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQ+- Transgender • Bullying and cyberbullying • Friendships/ online stress <p>Other areas of RSE will be covered in computing (keeping safe on the internet), science (biology), Belief and Ethics (relationships)</p>
Age 13-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different families- same love • Body image and the media • LGBTQ+- Gender and identity • Healthy and unhealthy relationships • Different sexualities • Consent- the law and understanding what consent is. • Sexting- the law, damaging effects of sexting • Contraception- condom demonstration • STIs- prevention • Porn and revenge porn- the law and the negative effects

Age 14-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalking and harassment <p>Other areas of RSE will be covered in computing (keeping safe on the internet), science (biology), Belief and Ethics (relationships)</p>
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How can I talk to my child about sex and relationships?

- Read a book, leaflet or watch a video with your child.
- Talk while you're doing something else like washing up or driving.
- Enjoy talking. Laugh with each other, not at each other – it can reduce embarrassment and stress.
- Listen rather than judge. Ask them what they think.
- Answer questions and don't be afraid to say you don't know.
- Have a phrase ready for awkward moments – 'That's a good question. Let's talk about it when we get home.'
- Always respond. Give the message it's good to talk about sex and relationships.
- If it feels too personal, talk about people in books, films or soaps.

Useful websites:

<https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/>- general health advice/ information

<https://www.fpa.org.uk/>- family planning association, information on contraception

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/friends-relationships-sex/sex-relationships/sexually-transmitted-infections/>- information on STIs

<https://www.icash.nhs.uk/contraception-sexual-health/c-card-scheme-> C-Card-scheme for young people aged 13-24

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/sex/healthy-relationships/>- Is my teen in a healthy relationship?