

We want you to feel confident and informed about what your child is learning in RSHE and PSHE. This guide explains what these subjects are, what your child will cover in each year group, your rights as a parent or carer, and how you can carry the conversation on at home.

What are RSHE and PSHE?

Understanding the subjects your child studies

Relationships Education

- How to build kind, respectful friendships
- What makes a healthy family and relationship
- How to stay safe, online and in person
- Recognising when something feels wrong
- How to ask a trusted adult for help
- Understanding different family structures

Statutory for all primary pupils.

Health Education

- Physical health, exercise and healthy eating
- Emotional wellbeing and managing feelings
- Growing and changing bodies, including puberty
- Safe and unsafe situations
- Basic first aid
- Online wellbeing and screen time

Statutory for all primary pupils.

RSHE, RSE, PSHE: what the letters mean

RSHE stands for Relationships, Sex and Health Education. At primary school, relationships education and health education are compulsory for every child. Sex education is not compulsory at primary, and at Birchwood it is taught in one unit in Year 6 only. PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education) is the wider subject these sit within, and also covers citizenship, economic wellbeing, careers awareness and community. It is taught across the school year as part of our curriculum.

What will my child learn, and when?

Topics are sequenced to build knowledge year by year

Year group	Key topics covered
Year 3 age 7–8	Friendships and managing disagreements · Families and what makes them special · Online safety: staying safe and knowing who to tell · Physical health, exercise and sleep · Naming and managing feelings
Year 4 age 8–9	Healthy and unhealthy relationships · Bullying: what it is and how to respond · Puberty: an introduction to what to expect, including menstruation · Healthy eating and dental health · Basic first aid
Year 5 age 9–10	Respectful relationships and consent, at an age-appropriate level · Physical and emotional changes in puberty · Personal safety: online, water, roads, railways and fire · Managing risk and peer influence · Money and economic wellbeing
Year 6 age 10–11	Positive relationships and looking after each other · Growing up: physical and emotional changes · Online risks: images, privacy and location settings · Change and loss, including bereavement · Sex education: how people become parents and carers (summer term — see 'Your rights as a parent' below)

All content is age-appropriate, carefully planned, and delivered by trained teachers in a safe, supportive classroom. We use the Kapow Primary scheme of work, which is aligned to the Department for Education's statutory guidance. Topic overviews are shared at the start of each term.

Your rights as a parent or carer

What you can ask for, and what you can withdraw from

You CAN do this

- Ask for a copy of our RSHE and PSHE policy at any time, free of charge
- See any of the curriculum materials we use in lessons
- Withdraw your child from the Year 6 sex education unit
- Talk to us about any concern or question
- Come to parent information events about the curriculum

You CANNOT withdraw from this

- Relationships education, which is statutory for all primary pupils
- Health education, including puberty and menstruation
- Anything taught in the national curriculum for science, including how humans grow and reproduce
- PSHE: citizenship, wellbeing and economic education

Withdrawing your child from sex education

Sex education is not compulsory at primary school. At Birchwood it is taught in Year 6 only, in the summer term, in a unit called 'How do people become parents and carers?'. We will write to Year 6 parents and carers before the unit begins, and you are welcome to see the materials first. If you then wish to withdraw your child, please write to the headteacher. At primary school the headteacher must grant that request, and you do not have to give a reason. Your child will be given alternative, purposeful work during those lessons. Please note that a withdrawal covers the sex education unit only. It does not cover relationships education, health education, or science.

Common questions from parents

Straight answers to what we are asked most

Q Is this age-appropriate?

Yes. All content is matched to the age and maturity of the pupils in front of us. We follow the Department for Education's statutory guidance and use a professional scheme of work written for primary-aged children. Nothing is taught before children are ready for it.

Q Will my child be asked personal questions?

No. Lessons use age-appropriate scenarios and discussion. Children are never asked to share personal or family information. Ground rules are agreed at the start of every unit to keep the classroom safe for everyone.

Q What if my child asks questions at home?

That is a good sign: it means they are thinking about what they have learned. You do not need to have all the answers. Listening and staying calm matters more than saying exactly the right thing. We can share topic summaries and conversation starters on request.

Q How is safeguarding handled in lessons?

All our staff are trained in safeguarding. If a child makes a disclosure during a lesson, our safeguarding procedures apply immediately. Children are told at the start of every session what will happen if they share a concern. They are never promised confidentiality.

Q Can I see the resources you use?

Yes. You are entitled to view all curriculum materials. Please contact the school office and we will arrange a time for you to see them.

Supporting your child at home

Simple ways to keep the conversation going

Keep it relaxed

You do not need to sit down for a formal chat. The best conversations often happen in the car, at the dinner table, or on a walk.

Follow their lead

If your child brings something up from school, take it as an opening. Ask open questions such as 'What did you think about that?' rather than 'What did you learn?'

It is fine not to know

If your child asks something you are unsure how to answer, it is fine to say 'That is a good question, let me think about it.' Coming back to it later works perfectly well.

Use real words

Using the correct names for body parts at home reinforces what we teach in school, and helps children ask for help clearly if they ever need to.

Get in touch any time

If a topic comes up that concerns you, or you would like guidance on how to approach something, please contact us rather than worrying about it alone.

Get in touch

If you have any questions about our RSHE and PSHE curriculum, would like to read the policy, or would like to see the teaching materials, please contact the school office or speak to your child's class teacher. Our subject lead for PSHE and RSHE is Mr Dominic Money. We are always happy to talk.

Based on the Department for Education statutory guidance: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, July 2025, statutory from 1 September 2026. This guide should be read alongside the Birchwood Junior School RSHE and PSHE Policy.