

# Good Practice Guide for Teaching Relationships and Sex(uality) Education (RSE)



# Acknowledgements

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*Photos from the 2019-20 programme.*

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## Introduction

This guide has been written for teachers who are new to teaching RSE, or new to teaching the compulsory RSE [guidance](#), published in 2019, which applies to both primary and secondary schools in England. It has been developed and produced as an outcome of a specialist RSE programme that was created and run at UCL Institute of Education during 2019-20 with a group of voluntary student teachers from the Social Science, Psychology and Science Secondary PGCE and their PGCE tutors. The programme ran with invaluable support and collaboration from [School of Sexuality Education](#) and the [Sex Education Forum](#), who acted as consultants and co-tutors. The programme was informed by the latest international research in RSE and the academic and intellectual expertise of Professor Jessica Ringrose (Professor of Gender and Sexuality) and Dr Sara Bragg. We would also like to thank Professor EJ Renold from Cardiff University for their teaching input and support.

We are grateful for the funding we received from the Higher Education Innovation Fund, which made this project possible. The programme was developed as part of a knowledge exchange project with our partnership schools on the Secondary PGCE programme, to try and better understand the needs of teachers and schools in London in developing good practice in RSE. This guide has been developed with collaboration from the volunteer student teachers who were on the programme, reflecting on their experience as well as a response to the identified needs of the schools and teachers that worked with us and the student teachers, albeit briefly due to the closure of schools in the spring term of 2020. The result has been a collaborative effort to develop something that serves the needs of a range of stakeholders and informed by multiple perspectives. We hope that you find this a useful and informative starting point for responding to the new guidance and that it encourages you to reflect on what makes for good practice in RSE. Whilst the guidance is focussed on secondary education, we believe that many of the principles and approaches can also be applied to primary education, although the statutory requirements around primary education are different, as stated in the guidance.

This guide aims to support teachers to:

- Understand what the new guidance means for their own teaching practice and the school as a whole;
- Consider some principles and approaches to teaching RSE, which support equality, inclusion, dignity and respect;
- Understand the role, purpose and value of RSE in the curriculum;
- Ensure that students are informed, empowered and safe as they develop and grow through secondary school and beyond;
- Develop strategies and resources for teaching the RSE specifically;
- Feel more confident in teaching RSE and responding to challenges that they might encounter in the classroom and beyond.

## Approach and Principles

This guide reflects the principles and approaches that we took in the development of the RSE programme, which was collaborative and responsive to need, building on the experiences of student teachers and of young people. We believe that these principles should be visible through pedagogical approaches, practices and classroom activities in good RSE teaching:

1. **Diversity and Equality/Equity Focused** – the diverse experiences of gender and sexuality should be approached as part of a commitment to diversity and equity - seen in the [Equality Act 2010](#). Teachers and young people can look to this UK legislation (foregrounded in government guidance) to build knowledge and understanding of diversity, equity and mutual respect for all. LGBTQIA+ rights are therefore enshrined in equality law, and this framing creates a safe and welcoming environment for all students. Consequently, it is important not to give a platform to discriminatory views under the guise of ‘debate’, which may make some students feel unsafe.
2. **Intersectional** – gender and sexual-based power inequities continue to shape societies and cultures globally, and our aim is to educate and empower young people to understand and challenge these unequal structures and power relations. Gender and sexual identities are always intersecting with age, disability, sexuality, race, class and other factors which create conditions of relative privilege and oppression for groups and individuals depending on their position or location in these intersectional power relations.
3. **Inclusive** – be actively and positively inclusive in terms of gender, sexuality, disability, race, culture, age, religion/belief or other life-experience through teaching practices, language use, selection of resources and curriculum knowledge. Part of this inclusion means avoiding making unnecessary distinctions, for example, rather than doing a lesson on ‘LGTBQ+’ families, we advise incorporating LGBTQIA+ families into a more general lesson about all kinds of families.
4. **Rights-based and empowering** – ensure that young people have access to accurate information, health services, advice and knowledge based on a rights-based frame of children’s rights (health, educational, sexual and digital rights) which will help them to make informed choices, access support and protect them physically and emotionally.
5. **Positive but critical thinking** – actively encourage positive attitudes towards sexuality and body image, bust myths, but also expose taboos and tackle feelings of shame driven by inequalities. We highlight sexuality in the title to show the need to go beyond simplistic ideas of ‘sex’ as biological sex defined by genitals and a need to shift to diversity and inclusion of multiple gendered and sexual identities and relationships.
6. **Research-driven** – be informed by and be able to critique the research and evidence base in developing practices, knowledge and understanding of what makes high quality RSE and the ability to critique mainstream media representations, which polarize debates.
7. **Contemporary, relevant and flexible** – build on the experiences of young people in today’s society, so that RSE is relevant and responsive to the needs of learners.

## The role, value and transformative potential of RSE

The role of relationships and sex education has historically been positioned in relation to public health. Effective RSE equips young people with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain their health and wellbeing. It empowers them to understand their bodies and the bodies of others while giving them the information needed to make informed choices about relationships, sex, protection and contraception; it's proven that evidence-based and comprehensive RSE has positive outcomes for young people including reduced rates of sexually transmitted infection and unplanned pregnancy amongst young people.<sup>1</sup> These factors remain prominent in discussion around the purpose of RSE and rightly so, however, it is our intention here to recognise RSE's scope beyond this area too. Perhaps more accurately, we hope to broaden what is understood to constitute 'health' and 'wellbeing' in the context of RSE.



In addition to the benefits already mentioned, RSE can make powerful contributions to young people's understanding of healthy, fulfilling relationships. It teaches them to recognise unhealthy patterns in relationships and to know what a healthy relationship involves with discussions around trust, honesty, equality, and boundaries as well as managing conflict and ending relationships in a healthy way. It tackles issues of sexual violence by allowing young people to learn about consent, coercion and gendered harms and signposts reliable sources of information and support to ensure young people can access help if they need to. Increasingly, a holistic RSE curriculum incorporates the digital aspects of all the issues mentioned too, providing young people with vital information about how to navigate life and relationships online.

Considering the broader school context, RSE can underpin a whole-school approach to wellbeing, inclusion, equity and human rights. An important frame is the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNHCR). This emphasises children's rights to access educational and health services; their right to be listened to; their right to an accessible overview of contemporary gender identities; to participate in the decisions that affect them; and to be given the knowledge, skills and understanding to make informed choices that support the development of positive life experiences for sexual well-being and respectful relationship cultures.<sup>2</sup>

Human rights and equity are enshrined in the [Equality Act 2010](#), which aims to protect characteristics (including race, religion, sexuality, age, disability and gender) and for individuals to be free from discrimination on the basis of these identities (see principle 1). We advocate that

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<sup>1</sup> Renold, E. and McGeeney, E., 2017. *The future of the sex and relationships education curriculum in Wales: Recommendations of the Sex and Relationships Education Expert Panel*. [Accessed here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Haberland N, Rogow D., 2015. Sexuality education: emerging trends in evidence and practice. [Accessed here](#).

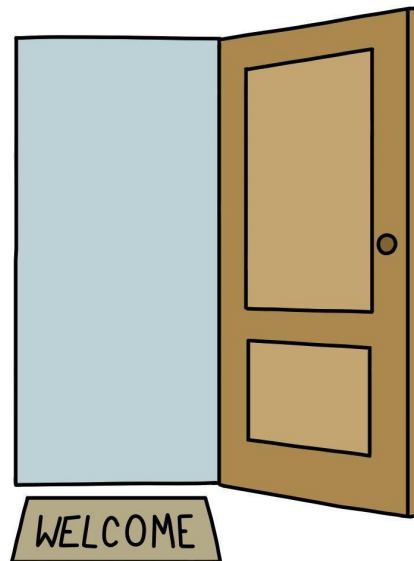


teachers begin all RSE by reviewing the Equality Act and the rights it ensures to protect diverse identities from discrimination. The equality and human rights frame is of course critical in terms of valuing gender and sexuality diverse students; and it connects these with issues of racial and religious rights and discrimination to encourage students to think in an 'intersectional' way (principle 2). This creates a starting point for educating about positive and healthy relationships based on treating others - no matter if they are different from us - with 'respect'. (Respect is the basis of much of the RSE guidance.) This approach to respect through diversity and equity sets the building blocks for reducing homophobic, transphobic and biphobic bullying, challenging gender stereotypes, but also tackling racism, faith based discrimination and more.<sup>3</sup>

## The Government RSHE Guidance: a whistle-stop tour

From September 2020 schools in England are required to follow updated [Government guidance on Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\)](#). The guidance was passed in Parliament in March 2019 with the support of 538 Members of Parliament, opening the way to an era where developmental and inclusive RSE is required in schools across the country. It also ushers in Health Education as a new mandatory subject. So what does the guidance require schools to teach, and how should schools go about updating their provision?

The first thing to appreciate is that the guidance does not provide a full programme of study for Relationships, Sex or Health Education, so there is no year by year breakdown of content. Instead there are lists of statements about what students should know 'by the end of primary' and 'by the end of secondary'. These statements cover a considerable breadth of knowledge about relationships on and offline and about sexual and reproductive health. Health Education houses content on puberty and menstrual wellbeing as well as mental and emotional health, sleep, drugs and alcohol, first aid and more. The guidance sets out a remarkably comprehensive curriculum, signalling that a planned and developmental approach is needed with learning sequenced year by year across the Key Stages. Allocating the resource and time for the school subject lead to plan the curriculum is going to be important. The guidance gives schools flexibility about how they design their curriculum, and for a teacher who has the support and has a passion for the subject, this should be an enjoyable and creative process.



It is important that secondary schools are clear about which aspects of their RSE they consider to be sex education. The guidance requires that secondary schools have a policy on RSE which defines Relationships and Sex Education and that includes information about a parent's right to

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<sup>3</sup> Bragg et al., 2018. 'More than boy, girl, male, female': exploring young people's views on gender diversity within and beyond school contexts. [Accessed here](#).

request that their child be excused from sex education within RSE only. If they have been withdrawn by their parents, children can opt back into sex education from three terms before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. Schools are required to provide for this. Don't forget that puberty is contained in Health Education, which is mandatory with no parental opt-out, and that aspects of menstruation are covered in biology.

Despite the caveats, the new guidance brings us closer to meeting children and young people's entitlement to high quality inclusive RSE, and a key lever is the [Equality Act 2010](#). The guidance establishes the tenet that LGBTQIA+ content should be integral, not a stand-alone lesson, and sets out the expectation that all students receive LGBTQIA+ content within secondary RSE. Another important feature of the Equalities legislation is that the curriculum must be accessible to students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Some schools will want to include faith perspectives as part of their RSE, alongside information about the law and medical facts. It is important that different types of information are identified as such, e.g. description of a faith position or belief, or legal or medical facts.

A school's RSE policy is a good place to explain how its RSE programme contributes to the ethos and values of the school. The importance of respectful behaviour and positive, caring relationships is integral to the ethos and values of perhaps every school in the country. Indeed, whole-school approaches to creating inclusive school environments work alongside LGBTQIA+ inclusive RSE to ensure students learn about equality and live equally in their everyday school life. Choice of teaching resources is not stipulated in the guidance, and there are lots of resources that schools can choose from to ensure their teaching about relationships is inclusive.

The guidance is a real boon for high quality RSE because of the many ways it gives the subject parity with other subjects. It specifically instructs schools to have the same high expectations of the quality of students' work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas, and to assess student progress. Assessment should be factored into curriculum planning from the outset, both to inform learning in an iterative fashion and to feed into a cycle of reporting, review and evaluation.

A feature of RSE that is quite unlike any other subject is the legal requirement to consult with parents. Sometimes this is faced with trepidation, yet asking parents what aspects of RSE they think are important can result in useful insights. For maximum impact, combine student consultation with parent consultation, sharing views from students with parents to develop a conversation focused on the realities of young people's lives and how school and home can work together to meet their young people's needs. Finally, if RSE and Health Education are to have the status they deserve then the teachers leading and delivering the subject must be properly equipped with training and ongoing professional development opportunities.



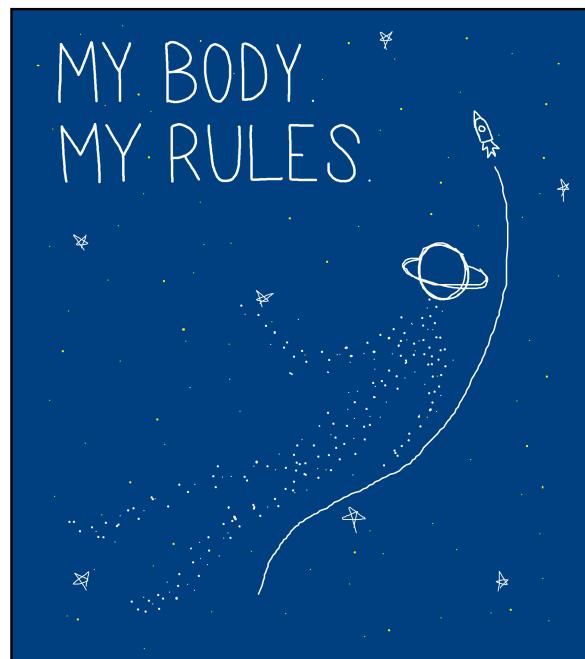
## Approaches to Teaching RSE in Schools

Our survey to partnership schools revealed that, of the 72 schools who answered the question ‘How will RSE be taught in your school from September 2020?’, only 17% were planning to teach RSE through explicitly timetabled lessons. The vast majority (47%) said that RSE would be taught through a combination of ways, including tutor time, cross-disciplinary, drop down days and explicit lessons. When asked ‘Who will be teaching RSE in your school from September 2020?’, 37% answered ‘a team of specialist teachers’ and 35% answered by ‘all/most teachers’. The open-ended responses also revealed that teaching time and staff training were the two biggest barriers to implementing RSE. These findings suggest that RSE will frequently be taught by non-specialist teachers and will not necessarily be given regular, consistent and dedicated space and time in the curriculum. Given such restraints in timetabling, it is important that schools and teachers recognise that whilst the content of RSE may be found in other curriculum subjects, such as science, sociology, psychology and computing science, the aims of the curriculum and the teaching and learning approaches are distinct and different. This means that time and space needs to be given to experienced teachers as well as those new to the profession to develop both their content and pedagogical content knowledge.

According to UNESCO (2018), the goals of comprehensive sexuality education are to equip [people] with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to:

- realise their health, well-being and dignity;
- develop respectful social and sexual relationships;
- consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others;
- understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.<sup>4</sup>

These goals are very different to the aims or goals of other curriculum subjects and these should be recognised and foregrounded when teaching RSE.



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<sup>4</sup> UNESCO, 2018. *International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach*. UNESCO Publishing. [Accessed here](#).

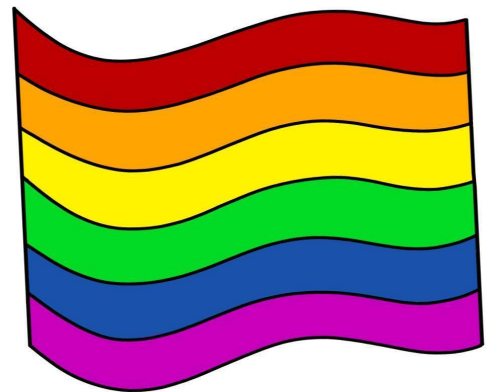
## Setting up a Safe Classroom Environment

Creating a classroom environment which encourages explorative learning, questioning and development while ensuring safety for vulnerable or marginalised students was a key concern amongst student teachers, therefore we hope the following will serve as useful guidance for *all* teachers. In any classroom, the safety of students is paramount. In the RSE classroom, consciously ensuring this safety is especially important given the often-sensitive nature of the subject matter and the goals of the curriculum. With that in mind, we've developed a few suggestions to do this while also facilitating a space in which students feel comfortable to ask questions and discuss their views and experiences candidly without harming others.

### Language

#### Do

- ❑ Sometimes learning and applying new vocabulary can be daunting. Explain that students aren't expected to get the language perfect every time – trying to learn and understand and be respectful is the most important thing.
- ❑ Acknowledge that you as the teacher might say the wrong thing sometimes as well and that's okay – we can all apologise and learn from these situations and teachers are no exception!
- ❑ Encourage students to think about pronouns and share their pronouns with the group.
- ❑ Practise and use the relevant vocabulary with colleagues so that in the classroom context you feel comfortable with it.
- ❑ Sometimes having a discussion about slang terms for body parts may be useful for clarification but afterwards always use the correct anatomical terminology when you are referring to body parts e.g. vulva, vagina, penis, scrotum etc. This is important for safeguarding as well as accurate learning – young people need to be able to describe specific parts of their body with the correct names.
- ❑ Gently challenge misconceptions and misuse of language which emerge, such as 'transgender is when a man decides to be a woman'. Tackling these types of comments can be fertile ground for learning opportunities and deepening understanding.
- ❑ Use gender neutral language when discussing bodies; refer to specific body parts.
- ❑ Acknowledge that gender and sexuality are fluid and not binary.
- ❑ Try to answer all questions that students ask and take them seriously. If they have asked them in a way that could cause harm or offence, then rephrase them but still try to answer them, as there is likely to be a genuine question in there somewhere!



## Don't

- ❑ Use language that could be cis-normative e.g. referring to people with penises as men (this would be conflating gender with anatomical sex) instead use 'people who have penises'.
- ❑ Use language that could be heteronormative e.g. assuming penis-in-vagina (PIV) sex when discussing sex in general (sex could also refer to anal, oral, non-penetrative acts, etc; acknowledge the diverse intimacies and pleasure that many people enjoy regardless of sexual orientation rather than assuming that sexual acts follow sexual orientation, e.g. that heterosexuals only have PIV sex or gay men only anal sex, etc.).
- ❑ Giggle or express embarrassment around the language used in RSE - this could take practice! Seeing the teacher talk comfortably and openly about sex and relationships is an important example of modelling for students.
- ❑ Use the concept of virginity to think about sex – it is inaccurate and can be unhelpful, heteronormative and shaming.
- ❑ Immediately reprimand a student for making a problematic remark if you think it is rooted in misunderstanding. Instead, try to have a conversation about where the comment comes from and guide them to reassess their own thinking. (Other students will often be a resource for helping you if given the opportunity.) If, however, problematic comments which are homophobic, transphobic etc. in nature persist, it is important to make clear that such comments cannot be tolerated if they are inherently disrespectful.
- ❑ Use words like 'homosexual' and 'homosexuality' because they have been used in recent years in a context which pathologises gay and lesbian sexualities. Similarly, the term 'intersex' is now preferred to 'hermaphrodite'; try to ensure you are using terms that are widely accepted by those to whom they refer.

## Ground rules and tips

- ❑ Underpin everything with respect, kindness and dignity.
- ❑ Where appropriate, provide some historical context around gender and sexuality power dynamics so that students understand, for example, why Pride events take place.
- ❑ Give the option for students to leave the room if they feel very uncomfortable.
- ❑ Explain to students that you aren't making any assumptions about their knowledge or experiences, but learning and becoming more informed about RSE is important to all.
- ❑ Explain that students can ask any questions they need to *as long as they're not personal about anyone in the room/school*.
- ❑ Give students an option to ask questions in private at break/lunch/after school or through a 'questions box' if they don't feel comfortable doing so during the lesson (explaining that conversations will remain private *unless you think there is a cause for concern over their safety, in which case it will have to be passed on to the safeguarding team*).
- ❑ Be sex positive! Model acceptance and celebration of differences in sexual orientation, sex preference and decisions (while always championing consensual relationships).



You may wish to consider setting up your classroom with some ground rules, using either a shared agreement approach or a rights and responsibilities approach:

**Example of a Shared agreement approach:**

- We join in and ask questions if we want to
- We make sure that everybody feels listened to
- We make sure everybody feels ok: we don't put people down and we're kind to each other
- We use the correct vocabulary when possible, if we are unsure we ask the teacher
- We keep the conversation in the room
- We know we can ask for further help or advice if we want to (in or outside the lesson)

**Example of a Rights and responsibilities approach:**

- Everybody has the right to feel listened to
- Everybody has the right to join in and speak if they want to
- We have the responsibility to ensure people do not feel judged or 'put down'
- We have the responsibility to use the correct vocabulary so as not to cause offence or confusion
- Everybody has the responsibility to keep confidentiality
- Everybody has the right to seek help or advice if they want to.

Setting up ground rules can also serve as an important activity before teaching, when you might actively involve students in co-creating these ground rules.

## Guidance for responding to challenges relating to faith or beliefs

- ❑ Try not to engage in an argument with a student around religious verses or teachings, instead shift the discussion towards the fair and just treatment of people and their rights.
- ❑ Understand that there are multiple interpretations of faith, i.e. not all Muslims or Christians believe or feel the same way about many different issues.
- ❑ Ensure that any bi/homophobia, bullying, offensive language is challenged in the classroom, whatever the basis of the viewpoint.
- ❑ Ensure that you set up the classroom space that uses inclusive language and create a safe space for young people to feel respected and included.
- ❑ Remember that in relation to issues like contraception or termination, the RSE classroom is not the place to debate their morality but to provide non-judgemental information about how to access services and young people's rights to do so.
- ❑ Some challenges you may experience might not be entirely religious-based but also relate to culture and it is important to be sensitive to religious or cultural identity.
- ❑ The safety of those in the class is paramount. If you believe a discussion is erring on the side of making individuals in the class feel less safe, prioritise their feeling of safety over other people in the class having their views aired. If necessary move onto a different topic and consider how you could continue the learning in a different way another time.

# Teaching RSE

## 1. Identity, gender and sexuality

### Approaches to teaching

When teaching about gender and sexuality, it can be helpful to think of the topics as part of a broader picture of identity. Eliciting ideas from students about all of the traits which make up their identities (e.g. hobbies, family background, where they're from, race, faith, school, etc.) can help them to recognise the many intersections which make up a person's experiences. While it's important to teach about LGBTQIA+ identities, it is vital that this does not feel tokenistic or singled out. As such, LGBTQIA+ identities and issues should form one part of a broader identity lesson and should be an aspect of teaching across *all* RSE topics in order to be truly inclusive.



Delivering a foundational lesson around gender, sexuality and **power dynamics** can help young people to understand how sexism and LGBTQIA+ discrimination is still at work in society. Using recent news stories or statistics can support this, e.g. statistics such as those listed in [Stonewall's School Report](#) and Plan UK's [The State of Girls' Rights in UK 2019-20](#).

Sometimes, when preparing to teach RSE, educators might feel overwhelmed by unfamiliar vocabulary if they have not come across different terms to sexualities and gender identities before. In this guide, we provide definitions for terms which might be important to know and use in RSE and in school more broadly, however, if there are certain terms which come up that you forget the meaning of or have not heard, don't panic! Once you have prepared as much as you can, the primary aim is to be inclusive and to remain open-minded. As long as you are focusing on these principles, it's fine to not get things right all of the time. As with all subjects, continuous learning is key for both students and staff.

### Key content

- Outline the meaning of 'identity', 'gender' and 'sexuality'.
- Provide an overt explanation around the distinctions between gender and sexuality.
- Power dynamics, inequalities and privilege are all relevant in the context of identity, gender and sexuality.
- The term 'queer' has historically been used as a homophobic/transphobic slur and as such must be used with caution by anyone outside of the queer community – it has now been reclaimed.
- Gender stereotypes exist for men and women which make false assumptions about individuals and exacerbate our understanding of the 'gender binary'.
- Discuss the LGBTQIA+ acronym and definitions and the reason why the community doesn't include heterosexual gender conforming people (e.g. LGBTQIA+ have historically been excluded from mainstream spaces so have forged their own community).

- LGBTQIA+ Pride events were borne out of protest against discrimination and mistreatment of people within that community. They continue to be sites of protest as well as celebrations of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- It is vital to support friends/peers who might face prejudice because of their gender/sexuality/identity by being a supporting ally and bystander.
- There are local and national support services available for young people struggling with aspects of their identity.

## 2. Consent and healthy relationships

### Approaches to teaching

In the past, we've seen consent taught with a dichotomous 'yes means yes' and 'no means no' model. The reality of intimacy, relationships and communication is far more nuanced than that; it's important for our educational approaches to reflect that complexity. The starting point for this is to teach that consent is underpinned by communication – by asking what feels good, checking in with a partner, looking out for cues that might indicate how they're feeling and so on.



To do this, we recommend teaching young people about 'verbal' and 'non-verbal' modes of communication. For example, if we notice someone's body stiffen or they avoid eye contact, this might suggest that they're uncomfortable. If our partner is laughing and being physically affectionate, it might suggest the opposite. These are all cues to recognise but the operative word here is 'might' – body language is subjective and we can't *really* know how someone's feeling unless we ask them. As such, verbal communication is an essential part of consensual sex. Sexual pleasure is important to this too. Ultimately, sex is supposed to be enjoyable for those involved. Communicating about what does and doesn't feel good and asking a partner about this contributes to sex being consensual *and* enjoyable.

When teaching about healthy relationships more broadly, it's helpful to discuss all kinds of relationships – from romantic to platonic to familial – because key attributes like fairness, equality, trust and honesty should underpin them all.

### Key content

- Laws around consent: the legal age of sexual consent is 16; legal age of consent for sharing sexual images is 18; consent is legally defined as a person agreeing by choice with the freedom and capacity to make that choice. (For more information, see School of Sexuality Education's Online Sexual Harassment [guidance documents](#).)
- Communication is key for consent and sexual pleasure.
- It's the individual's responsibility to ensure a sexual partner is consenting. Getting consent is prioritised over giving consent.
- Consent should always be free from any kind of coercion or pressure. If this is not the case, consent has not been 'freely' given.



- Consent is ongoing and anyone has the right to stop or change their mind if they no longer feel comfortable. This also applies long term; if someone consents to sex one day it doesn't by default mean they will want to do the same thing on a different day.
- Consent has to be specific (e.g. 'sex' is a broad term so it's important to discuss types of sex, what each person feels comfortable with, what each person wants and so on).
- Sometimes people will say 'no' without using the word e.g. body language and offering false reasons why they can't do something.
- 'Healthy relationships' encompasses all kinds of relationships.

### 3. Anatomy, sexual health and fertility

#### Approaches to teaching

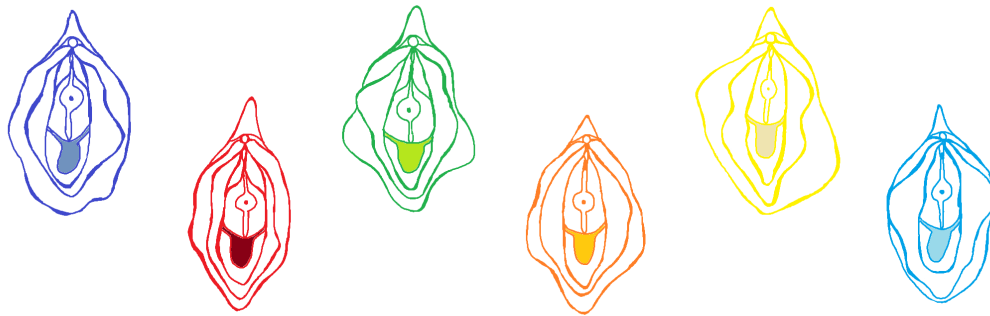
Although anatomy isn't overtly mentioned as a key topic within the government guidance for RSE, it is important foundational knowledge for understanding other compulsory topics such as fertility, sexual health, FGM and menstruation (which is technically part of health education). Being able to name parts of the body is essential for all young people as a fundamental aspect of safeguarding – if they are not able to describe specific parts of the body accurately then they may not feel able to tell someone if they are experiencing abuse or if something is happening to them which makes them feel unsafe. For the same reason, it's vital for speaking to medical professionals. Not only is accurate anatomical knowledge important for ensuring the safety and health of young people, it also plays a crucial role in encouraging empowerment and removing long standing stigma and shame around the body.



When it comes to teaching about anatomy and genitals, it's important to avoid essentialising language which could conflate sex with gender. Using the specific anatomical language can help with this, for example, by referring to 'people with penises' and 'people with vaginas'. We advise teaching about genitals and body development by showing how genitals develop at the foetal stage. This allows for conversations and learning around intersex bodies as it is possible to see how different genitals develop from the same bundle of tissue just a few weeks into a foetus' development. We recommend following this with teaching about how the body develops through puberty, the process of menstruation and fertility.

Once young people have grasped the basics of anatomy and fertility, they should have the necessary information to learn more about sexual health specifically. We recommend teaching about sexual health in terms of 'types of sex which could lead to pregnancy' and 'types of sex

which could lead to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) being passed on'. This is to avoid heteronormative and presumptuous definitions of sex and to be as clear as possible on the potential outcomes of sex involving *specific body parts*. As with all RSE topics, the key points in teaching strategies are about inclusivity, accuracy and approachability.



### Key content

- Correct anatomical names for body parts e.g. vulva, vagina, clitoris, penis, scrotum.
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) and the law relating to FGM.
- Sex isn't binary – there can be variations in sex characteristics (intersex bodies).
- Key facts about the menstrual cycle and how this links to fertility.
- Information about the wide range of period products available and how they work.
- That all bodies are different (this could link to a wider conversation about body image and media representation).
- The types of sex that could result in pregnancy and/or STIs being passed on (e.g. penis-in-vagina sex would be a pregnancy risk and an STI risk).
- Definitions of and differences between contraception and protection and how they work.
- Facts around pregnancy and miscarriage.
- Facts about options related to pregnancy such as abortion.
- Facts about how STIs are transmitted and how transmission risks can be reduced (with protection such as condoms) as well as facts about how to get tested and treatment.
- How to access safe, accurate and free information about sexual health.
- How to practise sex in ways that students feel comfortable and safe with their choices.

**Note:** Certain activities used to teach about STIs can be misleading and contribute to shame and stigma. For example, photos of infected genitals can provide a misleading impression that all STIs have visible symptoms - in fact they can be (and often are) asymptomatic. This is very important to know. Similarly, using props like tape or cups of 'infection' to create a visual representation of infections being transmitted can be misleading in terms of how STIs are spread. These examples can encourage reactions of disgust and stigma which can make students feel scared and ashamed.

## 4. RSE in a digital context

### Approaches to teaching

For many young people, the online world may feel inseparable from the tangible. As educators, we must maintain an awareness of this when speaking to students. Relationships begin, develop and end online for many young people and, as such, the digital context has to be a recognised and significant aspect of RSE. As with all other topics within sex education, we advise against an abstinence-oriented approach; this has been proven to be ineffective. Telling young people not to do something has not historically stopped them from doing it. Instead, we suggest empowering young people with the tools to make informed choices. For RSE in a digital context, this involves ensuring all students are taught digital literacy and digital defence.



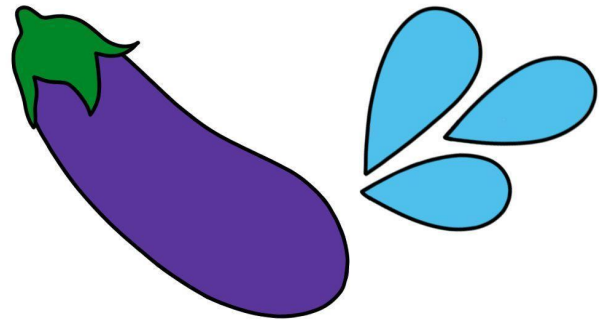
Understanding RSE in a digital context is particularly important when thinking about consent. The principles of consent and healthy relationships (as outlined above) can be applied to interactions online and to understandings of online sexual harassment. This is particularly relevant when it comes to sexual image sharing. We suggest teaching about this within a framework of consent, ultimately applying the principle that images should only be sent or received if both parties consent and they should never be shared with others if the person in the photo wants them to remain private.

Another key topic when considering RSE in a digital context is pornography and sexual content online. We encourage educators to avoid making any assumptions about whether young people have encountered porn and, as always, avoiding any language that could appear judgemental. It is also important to note that you do not have to have watched porn to teach about it and you should not discuss your own use or non-use of porn with students.

We recommend that teachers should be measured, rather than value-laden, when addressing pornography; there are many different forms of porn and it's not helpful to treat it as one single 'thing' or as inherently bad or good. Discussing pornography in terms of exposure and effects, or as a health issue, doesn't help with understanding its significance and meaning in young people's lives.

## Key content

- Digital literacy and digital defence (teaching young people how to use and manage social media, adapt privacy settings, report and block unwanted or inappropriate content/users)
- Consent in a digital context.
- Unwanted sexual content (any sexual content which is received or shared online without the consent of the recipient). This could include content seen on apps, messaging services and websites which has not been sought out by the user).
- Image-based sexual abuse (the non-consensual creation and/or distribution of sexual images).
- Sexual coercion, threats and intimidation online (a person receiving threats of a sexual nature or being coerced to engage in sexual behaviours on or offline via digital technologies).
- Being a supportive bystander online (witnessing another young person experiencing online sexual harassment and challenging the perpetrator/s if it is safe to do so).
- Some pornography promotes gender and sexual violence; teachers should promote critical analysis of how societal injustices manifest in mainstream porn but are not the product of porn itself e.g. sexism, racist stereotypes, etc.; and promote a discussion of consent.



# Some Practical Hints and Tips to Lesson Planning

## Things to consider

Every school will have a different approach to planning RSE lessons which are in line with the schools ethos, expectations and context. The [new guidance states that](#) 'all schools must have in place a written policy for Relationships Education and RSE... Schools are free to determine how to deliver the content set out in this guidance, in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum'.

Most schools will also have a member of staff or team who are responsible for the implementation of the policy and planning of the RSE/PSHE curriculum. Schools either have a medium term plan which outlines the content and learning objectives of each topic and teachers then plan lessons for their classes independently based on this plan. Or schools may plan lessons centrally for each topic and allow teachers to modify these 'core lessons' to meet the needs of their particular class/students. Or they may use a combination of these approaches. It is important to remember that there is no 'right' or 'one' way to plan these lessons and that they should be planned primarily, to meet the needs of students in their particular context. The guidance below draws together evidence from a number of sources to help teachers think about approaches to planning a lesson.

The PSHE Association has developed [Ten Principles of Effective PSHE Education](#), which provide a good foundation for lesson planning, many of which are summarised below:

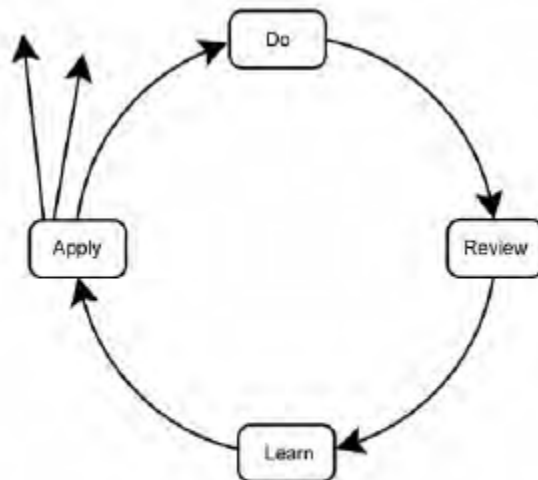
## Dos

- Start where students are: find out what they already know, understand, are able to do and are able to say.
- Take a positive approach which does not attempt to induce shock or guilt but focuses on what students can do to keep themselves and others healthy and safe and to have positive, healthy relationships.
- Apply a wide variety of approaches to teaching and learning, with an emphasis on interactive learning and the teacher as facilitator.
- Provide information which is realistic and relevant and which reinforces positive social norms.
- Encourage students to reflect on their learning and the progress they have made.
- Link the lessons to other whole school approaches, to pastoral support and provide a setting where being the responsible student becomes the easy choice.
- Provide opportunities for students to make real decisions about their lives, to take part in activities which simulate adult choices and where they can demonstrate their ability to take responsibility for their decisions.
- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment where students can develop the confidence to ask questions, challenge the information they are offered, draw on their own experience, express their views and opinions and put what they have learned into practice in their own lives.

In addition, you should also:

- Use resources which challenge, rather than reinforce, gender stereotypes and inequalities and are culturally sensitive and represent the diversity of the school/community/context/world. <sup>5</sup>
- Plan to teach explicit life skills (e.g., planning, decision-making skills), specific skills (e.g., communication, sexual negotiation skills) and promote resilience. <sup>6</sup>
- Include reading something, looking at something, doing a collaborative exercise, taking part in a simulation or an activity outside the classroom in the 'do' phase of the cycle.
- Incorporate independent, pair and group work at different stages of the cycle.
- Consider using 'active learning methods' warm up activities, open questions, role play, structured discussions, scenarios and case studies, and media analysis.
- Use distancing techniques which will enable learners to depersonalise the topic being considered (see ground rules).

The Active Learning Model can also be used as a helpful heuristic when thinking through the cycle of a lesson or sequence of lessons. <sup>7</sup>



The Active Learning model, taken from  
*Personal and Social Development for All*, McLaughlin and Byers, 2001

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<sup>5</sup> Pound, P, Denford S, Shucksmith, J, et al. *What is best practice in sex and relationship education? A synthesis of evidence, including stakeholders' views.* [Accessed here](#)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> DfE (2004). *PSHE in Practice: Resource Pack for Teachers in Secondary Schools.* [Accessed here.](#)



## Student Teacher Testimonials

At the end of the programme, participants answered a series of survey questions about their experience. They expressed gratitude for being involved in the course with comments such as:

“This was a fantastic programme that I felt privileged to be a part of. I want to say a massive thank you to our tutors and School of Sexuality Education.”

“Thank you very much, this was an amazing course and I appreciate the time and effort spent on it. I am proud to have been a part of the RSE Programme.”

We are equally grateful to the trainee teachers who were involved and who brought insightful questions and perspectives to the programme. More of their responses are shared below.

### **Key messages about teaching and learning in RSE that participants have taken away from the programme:**

“[I have learnt] to approach RSE with an open mind and to create a safe learning environment.”

“Environment should be a safe, open space where students feel comfortable to discuss the RSE topics. Ground rules should be established. Important to be aware of any safeguarding issues that may arise during discussion or during lessons on different topics.”

“The importance of RSE in the curriculum and creating a safe space for students in the classroom. It is important to set ground rules at the start of the lesson and signpost students to alternative sources of information.”

“How important using scientific terminology when discussing the body.”

“To challenge my own lens which I see the world through. Broadening my mind on what is 'normal' and how to label things. RSE is a subject that can have an impact on a student's overall wellbeing in life. We want to change the experience around RSE that a lot of people have had, which is uncomfortable, piecemeal and at best forgettable.”

“Young people should be provided with inclusive and intersectional RSE as part of their education. This can in part be achieved by setting a learning environment based on mutual respect and openness, so students have the space to explore the topics they are learning, ask questions and feel safe. This feels like the foundation to successful RSE in the classroom.”

### **One thing participants will do differently as a teacher, as a result of this programme:**

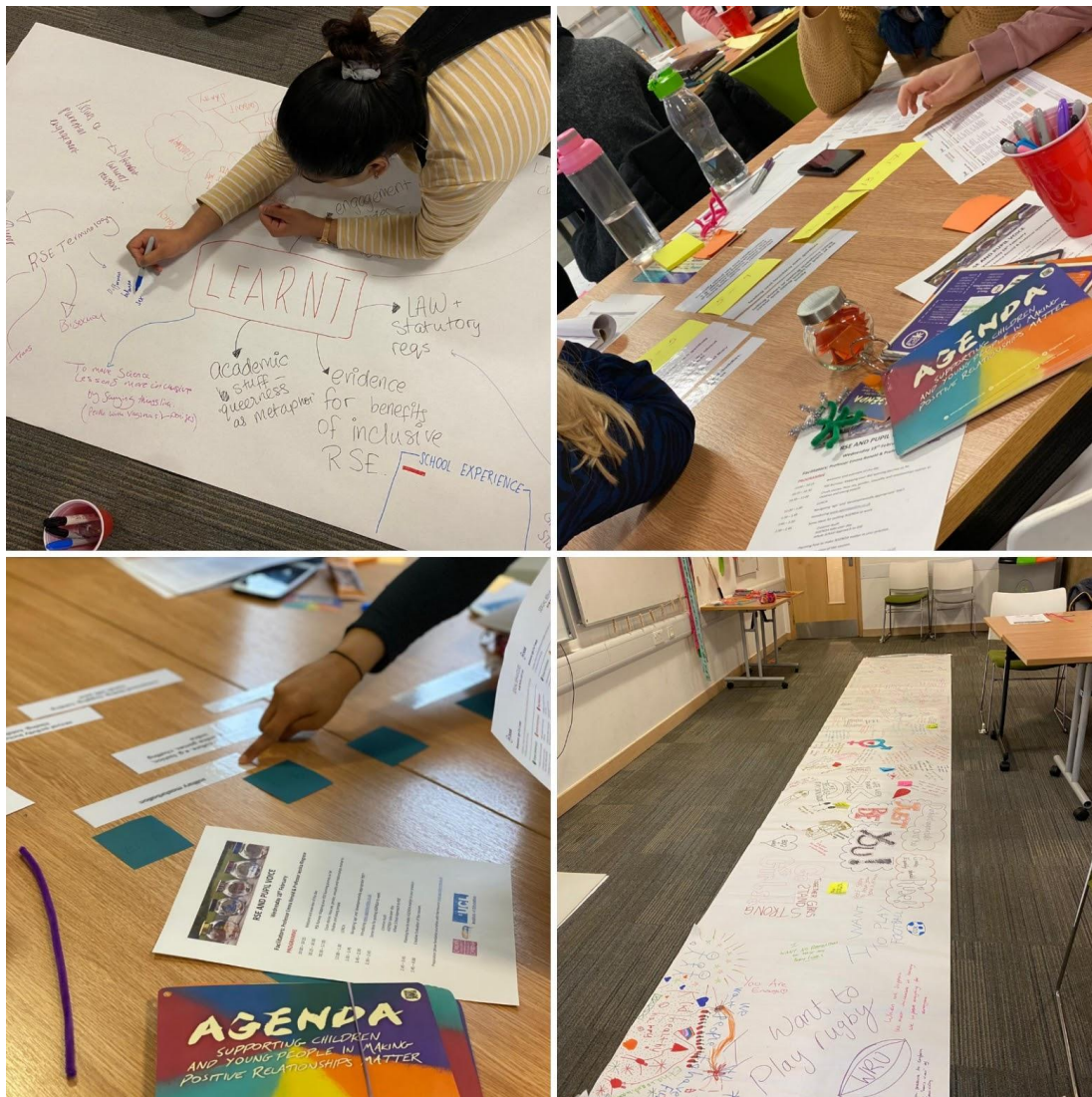
“Plan accordingly and prepare for surprise questions.”

“Be more aware of the appropriate language to use, not just in RSE but always.”

“In both RSE and Science teaching I will allow students to offer their ideas without giving away the answers e.g. guess the statistic. This is a good way to assess for misconceptions.”

“Reassuring students that “normal” is just a social construct in terms of sexual preference. RSE training has supported me in how to create the environment I want to provide and the level of confidence I would need to enable me to teach to a standard, and within the ethos I have around the subject. I also feel ready to be at the table when my school is deciding on how they want to roll out RSE.”

“I will be much more confident in teaching this subject and be more aware of terminology and language I use when speaking throughout my teaching practice.”



## Teaching Ideas, Activities and Resources

Before teaching any lessons in RSE it is really important that teachers review resources and activities carefully, so that they can plan their lesson appropriately, be responsive to the needs and age of the students they are teaching, anticipate student responses and how to manage these in the classroom. The resources below should act as some helpful starting points to think about how to structure lessons and activities that could be used.

### Identity, Gender and Sexuality

- The [Gender Unicorn](#) explains the meanings of each of terms and uses visual symbols to represent them and their fluidity.
- A similar resource is [The Genderbread person](#)
- MTV Decoded videos, e.g. [4 Reasons School Dress Codes are Sexist](#)
- BBC 3 Things Not To Say videos, e.g. [Things not to say to a non-binary person](#)

### Consent and Healthy Relationships

- [Agenda](#)
- Amaze [videos](#) on consent and healthy relationships
- Healthy relationships and boundaries activities (see Page 23)
- Consent activities (see Page 26)

### Anatomy, Fertility and Sexual Health

- Sexual and Reproductive Health quiz (see Page 28)
- Introduction to anatomy worksheet (see Page 29)

### RSE in a Digital Context

- 'Digital Defence' activities (see Page 25)
- School of Sexuality Education's [Online Sexual Harassment Guidance for Schools](#)
- [Bish](#)'s resources on pornography (14+)

### Other useful resources:

- School of Sexuality Education's [teachable moments worksheets](#) (designed for students to complete independently, though adaptable for classroom use)
- [Sex and History Project](#)
- Agenda [CRUSH](#) Resource
- [DO RSE lesson guidance](#)
- *Great Relationships and Sex Education: 200+ Activities for Educators Working with Young People*, Alice Hoyle and Esther McGeeny, [available to purchase here](#).
- Poster activity for setting up ground rules (see Page 33).

# Teaching about relationships and boundaries in RSE

**Resource 1 (teacher-facing):** [Exploring Boundaries](#)

## Key questions/points to consider:

- Who do we have relationships with?
- How would a healthy relationship feel?
- How might an unhealthy relationship make us feel?
- What language do we have to assert our boundaries?
- You are the only person who can set boundaries for yourself.
- You always have the right to say “no”. Your boundaries may change over time and with different people. You choose what you are and are not comfortable with.

## Example activity:

In pairs, students make small to large requests of each other, so they can work out language they feel comfortable using to say ‘no.’ Remind students of your ground rules to ensure that they follow this activity in a productive way.

## Example questions:

Can I have a crisp?

Can I have your seat?

Do you want to go to the cinema?

## Example answers:

I’m not comfortable with this

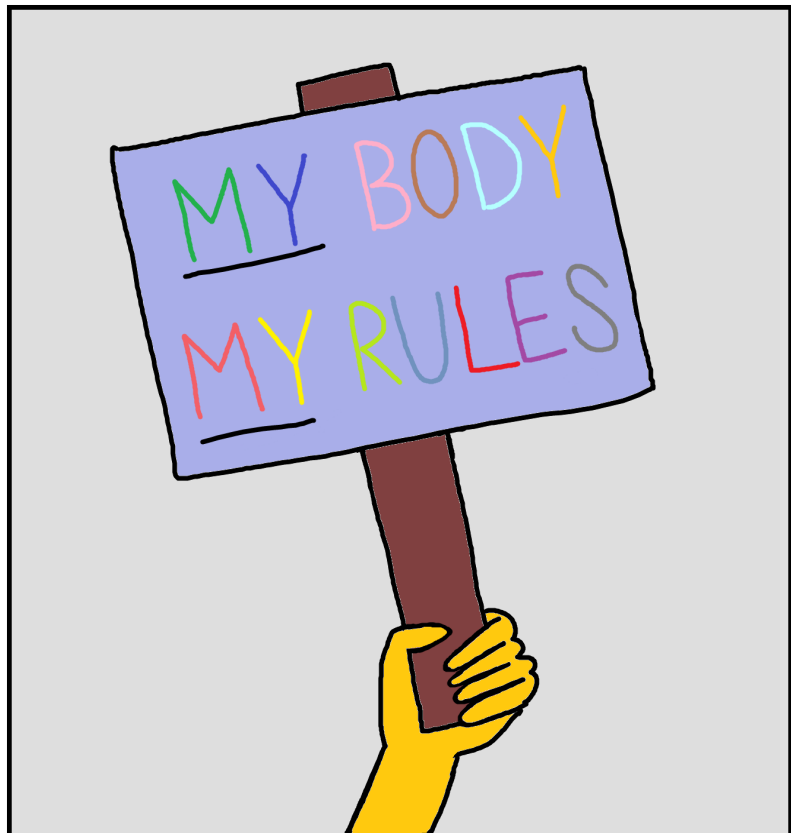
Please don’t do that

Not at this time

I can’t do that for you

I’m drawing the line at...

I don’t see you that way.



## Resource 2: [How to be a good listener](#)

### Key questions to consider:

- What makes a relationship healthy?
- What are the signs of an unhealthy relationship or abuse?
- How can we better support our friends during times of stress?
- How do we ensure our own good mental health?
- What is self-care?

### Example activity:

Before watching this video ([How to be a good listener](#)), ask students to jot down their top 3 tips on how to be a good listener.

Ask students to act as evaluators for this video.

- What was good about it?
- What new ideas did they learn that they didn't already have?
- How could the video be more inclusive in its language?

Extra resources: [Empathetic listening](#) video

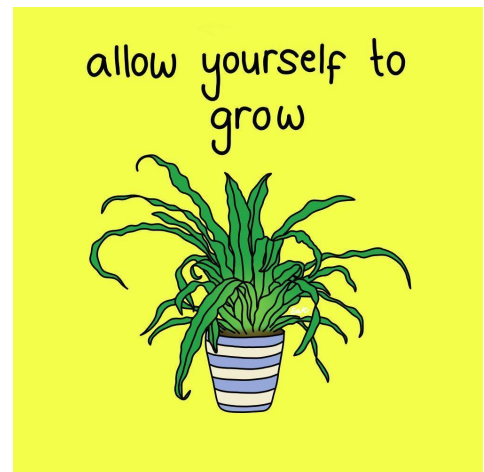
## Resource 3: [Anger Iceberg worksheet](#)

### Key questions to consider:

- Do we allow space for our anger?
- Do we often suppress anger and categorise it as a 'negative' emotion?
- How can we feel comfortable discussing our anger with the person we are angry with?

**Example activity:** discussion on anger and its validity.

- Would it feel better to have more words to accurately express our feelings?
- What other words can students think of?
- Explain that anger is a valid and healthy emotion. Learning how to express and manage it might make us feel more confident and happy.
- Students could mindmap '5 tips to manage anger and conflict'. [This resource](#) can get you started.





# Tackling Online Sexual Harassment in RSE: 'Digital Defence'

## Background information:

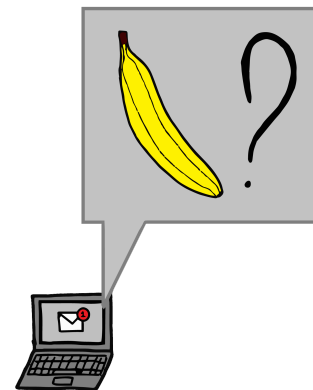
- To understand about sexual harassment in digital spaces, visit School of Sexuality Education's Policy and Guidance page ([www.schoolofsexed.org/guidance-for-schools](http://www.schoolofsexed.org/guidance-for-schools)). This includes a comprehensive guidance document explaining what constitutes online sexual harassment, the relevant laws, and best-practice approaches to tackling it.
- 'Digital defence' describes methods young people can use to protect themselves online. It's a form of **digital literacy**. Digital literacy skills empower students to navigate online spaces in a way that safeguards their happiness and rights.

## Lesson resources and preparation:

1. Visit School of Sexuality Education's Policy and Guidance page ([www.schoolofsexed.org/guidance-for-schools](http://www.schoolofsexed.org/guidance-for-schools)) and open the 'Online Sexual Harassment: Guidance for Students' document. This pdf contains advice for secondary-aged students about tackling online sexual harassment.
2. Decide how you want to use the document in your lesson - e.g. hard copies / electronic.

## Activity ideas:

- Ask students to read through the information in small-groups and identify key info, e.g.:
  - *Prepare a definition of online sexual harassment*
  - *Identify 3 key tips on what to do if you experience online sexual harassment*
  - *Identify a piece of advice that they personally think is particularly useful, and they would like to highlight to other young people.*
- It's useful for students to have time to familiarise themselves with the e-safety platforms relevant to online sexual harassment. Ideas for how to facilitate this:
  - *Give students 10 minute at the end of the class to navigate through these sites on their phones or a computer; or set this as independent learning;*
  - *Split the class into groups. Ask each group to take 1 site, and then provide a quick tutorial for the rest of the class about how the site works and the situations in which it might be useful.*
  - *Ask student to plan an Instagram post which explains a) What is online sexual harassment? b) Top tips for what to do if you experience it. Remind students that they will need to synthesise the information on the handout in order for the post to be Instagram-friendly.*





# Teaching about consent in RSE

**Resource 1:** [The LGBTQIA+ Sex Talk](#) by Bloom to start the conversation.

## Key questions/points to consider:

- How do we define sex in an inclusive and non-heteronormative way?
- How do we define consent in relation to this?
- Consent in law: “A person agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.”
- If someone deliberately touched someone else in a sexual way without their consent, this would be a sexual offence, and against the law.
- What do we mean by having the ‘freedom’ to consent?
- What do we mean by having ‘capacity’ to consent?

## Example activity:

You could ask students to think about their favourite TV shows. Use the internet to research clips on YouTube.

## Key questions to consider:

- Is there a particular scene where students can recognise coercive behaviour?
- Is there a scene where someone has directly asked for consent?
- Can we see consensual communication?
- What are people doing well in the following scenarios?
- What other problematic behaviours can you identify?
- Does everyone in the situation sound like they are comfortable?
- Does everyone have the freedom and capacity to give their honest responses?
- What tone do you think is being used?
- How would you feel in this situation?

## Example activity 2:

Once they have grasped the key principles, it can be useful for students to apply their understanding of consent to some practical examples. This could be done in a number of different ways:

1. Ask students to write a number scenarios, e.g. 2 dialogues which demonstrate good consent being practised; 2 dialogues which represent problematic or unethical sexual interactions.
  - a. Extension activity 1: groups could swap scenarios and discuss the other group’s ideas, focussing on the specific positives or problematic elements of the scenarios.

- b. Extension activity 2: groups could swap scenarios and then improve the problematic elements of scenarios and share the improved situation with the rest of the group.
  2. Provide students with a number of scenarios to discuss in small groups.
    - a. Extension activity 1: order the scenarios from positive to problematic using blue tac or a string line and pegs;
    - b. Extension activity 2: ask students to improve the problematic scenarios and then share how they have improved it with the rest of the group.

Below are some example scenarios of an ethical online interaction written by PGCE RSE students during our 2019-20 short-course at UCL IOE.

Sam: hey I'm bored wanna share nudes? Alex: ok as long as you don't send them to anyone else I'm cool with that Sam: deal

"I miss you" "I miss you too. I wish I could be with you" "Would you like me to send you a picture""Yes please, only if you're comfortable"

A: Hey, I miss you. Do you want to send nudes? B: I miss you too. Nah, I'm not into that. But I am imagining kissing you! A: Mmm me too! I love imagining kissing you.

Where both parties are willing/open to receiving the photos. There needs to be a level of trust to ensure that the person receiving the photos does not share them.

#### Further resources:

- [Consent and relationships](#) video
- [Let's talk about consent](#) video
- What is [domestic abuse](#)? information sheet
- [Victim blaming explained](#) video

# Reproductive & sexual health: quiz!

Visit [sexwise.fpa.org.uk](http://sexwise.fpa.org.uk) or the **NHS website** for more information on reproductive and sexual health.



- 1** List 5 different types of contraception:  
For a bonus point: what's the difference between contraception and protection?



- 2** What products help prevent both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections?

- 3** a) What's the name of the two types of hormone in hormonal contraception?  
For a bonus point: name one type of non-hormonal contraception.



- 4** Write down four examples of a sexually transmitted infection.



- 5** a) Where can you go to access contraception, protection, STI screening, sexual health advice?  
b) How old do you have to be to get contraception, protection and STI screening?





# Understanding anatomy

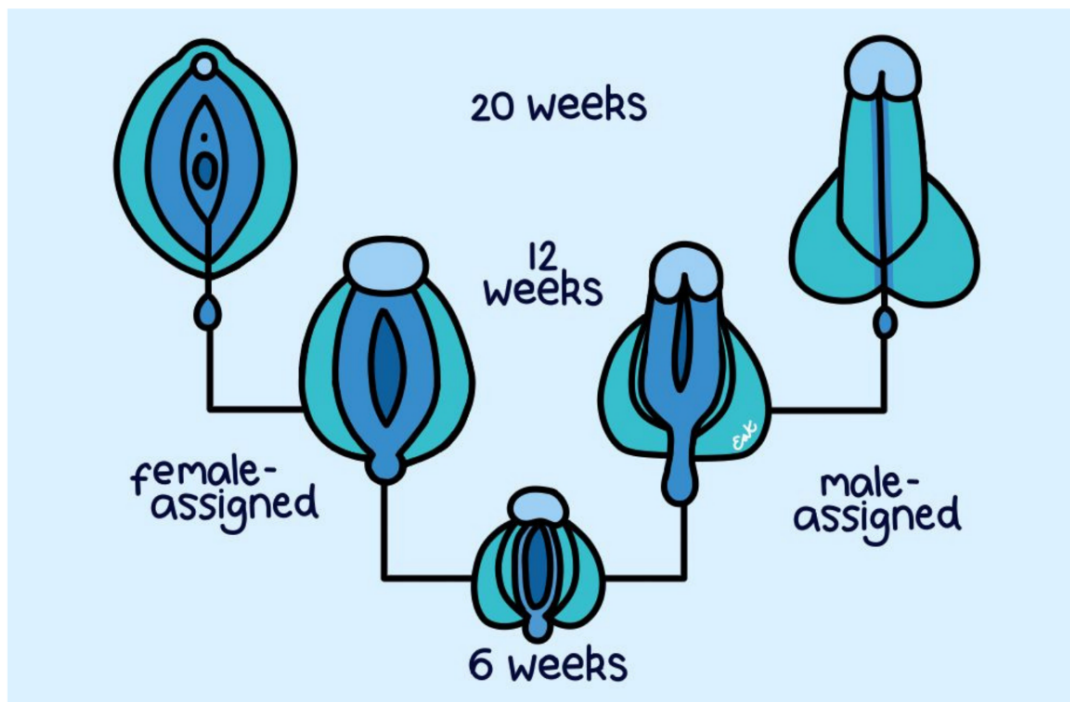


The diagram below shows the typical foetal development of the genitals.

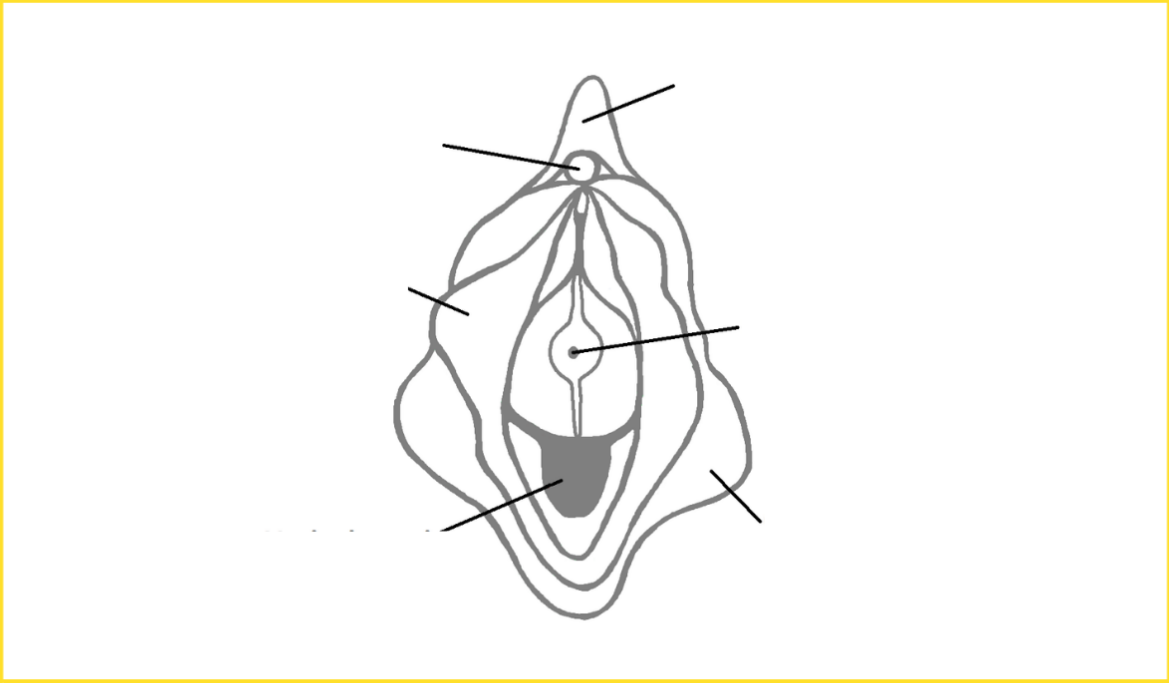
Key points:

- At 6 weeks (the diagram at the bottom), everyone's genitals are identical - it's just a bundle of tissues at this stage, and we all start out the same.
- This means that the tissues in the vulva and the penis/scrotum are similar in structure and form. These are what we call **homologous** tissues.
- The different colours on the diagram represent the homologous tissues, for example:
  - The head (or 'glans') of the penis, and the head ('glans') of the clitoris;
  - The scrotum (containing the testes) and the outer labia (labia majora).

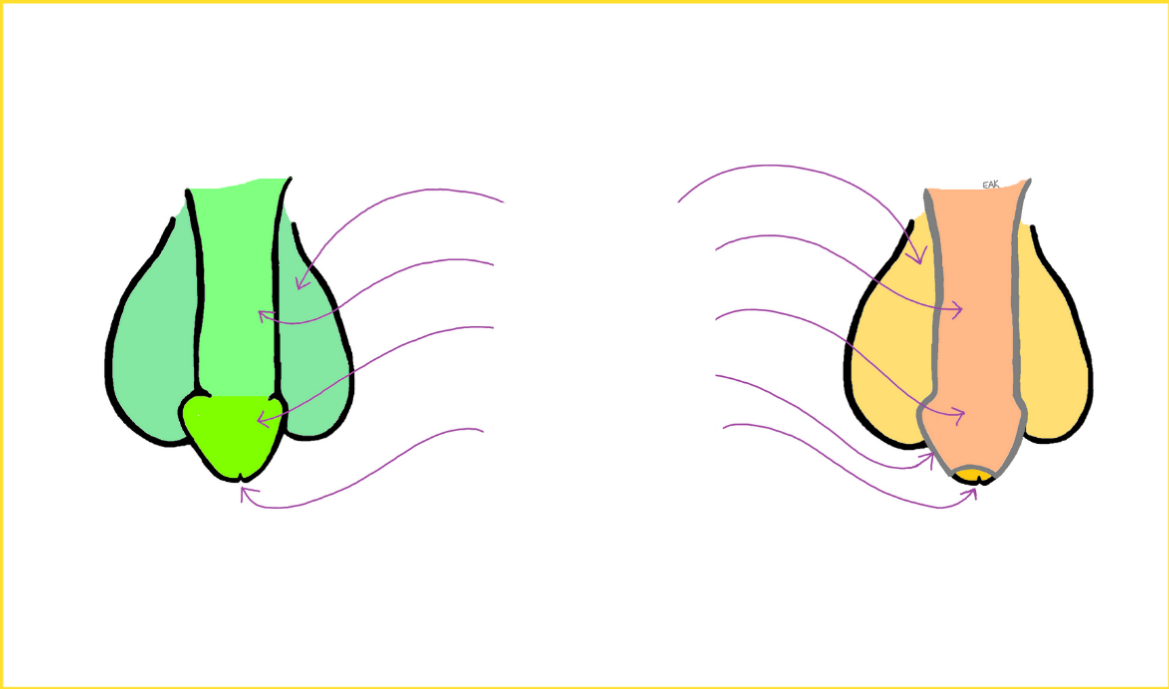
So - although these body parts can seem quite different, they actually have a lot of similarities!



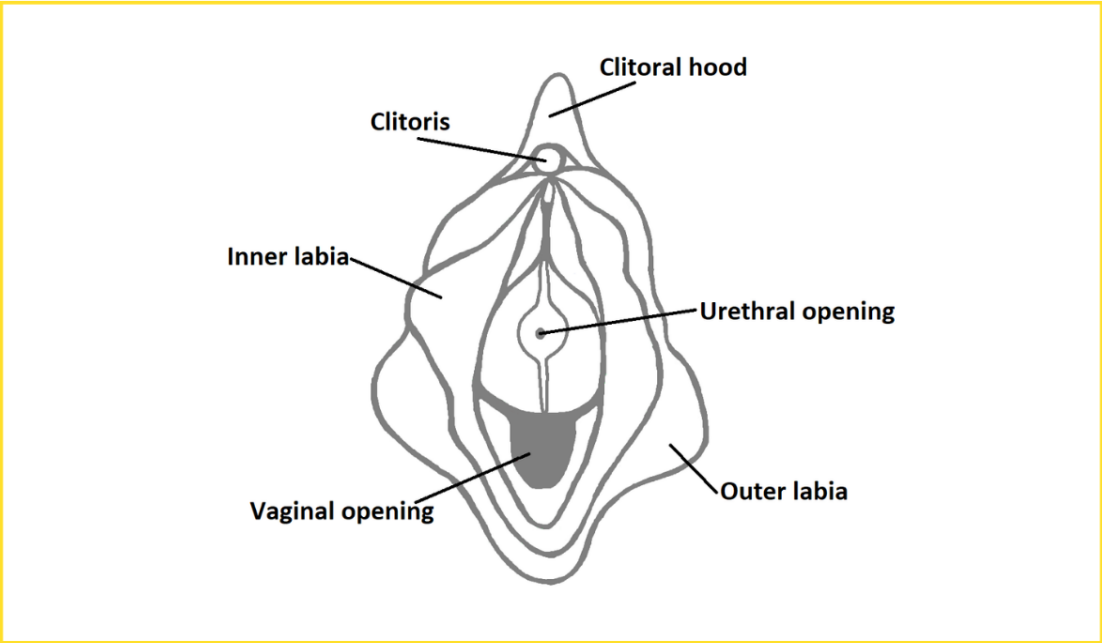
Can you label the parts of the **vulva**?



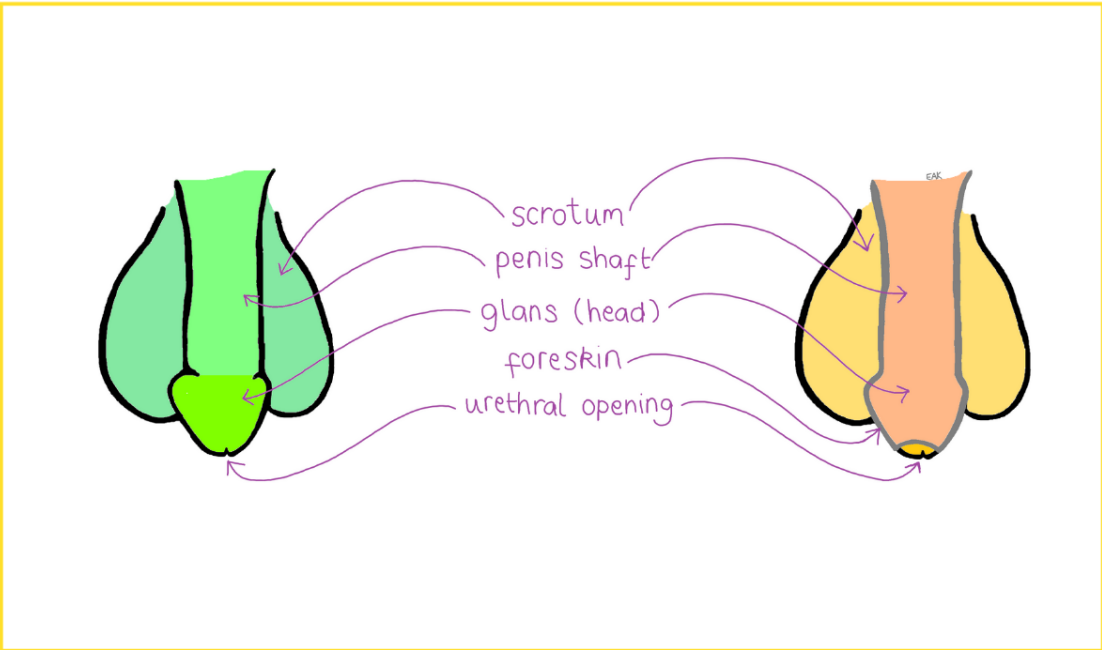
Can you label the parts of the **penis**?



Here's a diagram of the **vulva** with correct labels:



Here's a diagram of the **penis and scrotum** with correct labels:





# Understanding anatomy

## Intersex

Although we often think of human biology in **binary/opposite** terms (m/f), people exist out of this binary. As humans, our bodies are naturally varied.

Whilst the diagrams above show two typical presentations of the genitalia, it's important to know that not everyone's genitalia look like one or the other. Some people have 'intersex' genitals, which means they may have features of both of the presentations above. (This can include the internal sex organs, external, or a mixture.)

Importantly, being intersex does not just refer to the genitalia. It's an **umbrella term** which encompasses all variations in sex characteristics, including in hormones and chromosomes as well.

### Video resource:

Teen Vogue interview nine young people on how they found out they were intersex. There's also a short video accompanying the article: [www.teenvogue.com/gallery/young-people-on-how-they-found-out-they-are-intersex](http://www.teenvogue.com/gallery/young-people-on-how-they-found-out-they-are-intersex)

### Discussion ideas:

- What impact did the idea that there are only two 'correct' ways for bodies to look have on the people interviewed here?
- What is it about the medical interventions that some of the interviewees had to undergo as children that's so problematic?
- One of the interviewees says that their condition was sometimes described as a 'disorder of sex development' (DSD). Why do you think people might see this phrase as problematic?
- Why, if you were intersex, do you think it might be hard to meet other intersex people?

### Key date:

The 26th October is Intersex Awareness Day.

**Activity idea:** design posters to raise awareness of what it means to be intersex, and/or celebrate the fact that we are all different.




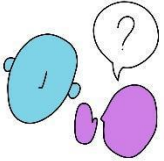
## Setting Ground Rules


<p><b><i>Sharing opinions, the right to ‘pass’ and asking questions</i></b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> Commitment to exploring topics honestly and respecting people’s opinions and ideas even if you don’t agree with them. Allowing participation in line with the needs of everyone and allowing students to pass if they want to. Agree to a way that questions can be asked at answered (e.g. at the start of the lesson or end or anonymously in a question jar/box).</p> <p><b>Example rules:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We join in and ask questions if we want to</li> <li>• Everybody has the right to join in and speak if they want to</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Listening to others</i></b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> What good or active listening looks like and why it is important for RSE and life, discuss how best to agree with or challenge someone’s else viewpoint (i.e. listening in full before making assumptions or formulating a response, not interrupting)</p> <p><b>Example rules:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We make sure that everybody feels listened to, as long as they are speaking and listening respectfully and inclusively</li> <li>• Everybody has the right to feel listened to, as long as they are also speaking respectfully and inclusively</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Non-judgemental and no assumptions</i></b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> Acknowledge that there may not necessarily be a neat and ‘right’ answer. Everyone should feel free to express an opinion or ask a question without feeling ridiculed, embarrassed or judged. Consider how it feels when people make incorrect assumptions about us and use this to develop empathy. When disagreeing focus on challenging the opinion and not the person or the groups they belong to.</p> <p><b>Example rules:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We make sure everybody feels ok – we don’t put people down</li> <li>• We have the responsibility to ensure people do not feel judged</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Use of language</i></b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> Understanding why using vocabulary everybody understands (e.g. correct anatomical terms) is vital to learning. Inclusive language ensures everyone feels seen and included in conversations. How some incorrect vocabulary is offensive and upsetting to others.</p> <p><b>Example rules:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the correct vocabulary when possible, if we are unsure we ask the teacher</li> <li>• We have responsibility to use the correct vocabulary so as not to cause offence</li> </ul>

<p><b>Confidentiality*</b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> Lesson time is not the appropriate setting to directly discuss your own personal experience or the personal experiences and private lives of others. Sharing stories or experiences can be useful but this must be done without naming others (using distancing techniques) for example, by saying: ‘Someone I know...’ or ‘A situation I heard about...’. Lesson content should not be shared outside of the classroom.</p> <p>*Remember that teachers cannot completely guarantee confidentiality, if they become concerned that a child is at risk (being hurt or harmed), they will need to follow the school’s safeguarding policy and report it.</p> <p><b>Examples rules:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We keep the conversation in the room</li> <li>• Everybody has the responsibility to keep confidentiality and understand it’s important.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Seeking help and advice</b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> Teachers will plan lessons to ensure that sources of further help, information and support are included in each lesson. These may include someone in the school, reliable websites and material from specialist organisations (local and national).</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We know we can ask for further help, information or advice if we want to</li> <li>• Everybody has the right to seek help, information or advice if they want to</li> </ul>
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## Setting Ground Rules

**Activity idea** – The cards below can be used with students to think about agreeing rules collectively and then could be edited to create a poster to use as a reference point during the lesson.

<p><b>Sharing opinions, the right to ‘pass’ and asking questions</b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> Commitment to exploring topics honestly and respecting people’s opinions and ideas even if you don’t agree with them. Allowing participation in line with the needs of everyone and allowing students to pass if they want to. Agree to a way that questions can be asked at answered (e.g. at the start of the lesson or end or anonymously in a question jar/box).</p> <p><b>Agreed rule:</b></p> 	<p><b>Listening to others</b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> What good or active listening looks like and why it is important for RSE and life, discuss how best to agree with or challenge someone’s else viewpoint (i.e. listening in full before making assumptions or formulating a response, not interrupting).</p> <p><b>Agreed rule:</b></p> 
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<p><b>Non-judgemental and no assumptions</b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> Acknowledge that there may not necessarily be a neat and 'right' answer. Everyone should feel free to express an opinion or ask a question without feeling ridiculed, embarrassed or judged. Consider how it feels when people make incorrect assumptions about us and use this to develop empathy. When disagreeing focus on challenging the opinion and not the person or the groups they belong to.</p> <p><b>Agreed rule:</b></p> 	<p><b>Use of language</b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> Understanding why using vocabulary everybody understands (e.g. correct anatomical terms) is vital to learning. Inclusive language ensures everyone feels seen and included in conversations. How some incorrect vocabulary is offensive and upsetting to others.</p> <p><b>Agreed rule:</b></p> 
<p><b>Confidentiality*</b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> Lesson time is not the appropriate setting to directly discuss your own personal experience or the personal experiences and private lives of others. Sharing stories or experiences can be useful but this must be done without naming others, by saying: 'Someone I know...' or 'A situation I heard about...'. Lesson content should not be shared outside of the classroom.</p> <p>*Remember that teachers cannot completely guarantee confidentiality, if they become concerned that a child is at risk (being hurt or harmed), they will need to follow the school's safeguarding policy and report it.</p> <p><b>Agreed rule:</b></p> 	<p><b>Seeking help and advice</b></p> <p><b>Think about:</b> Teachers will plan lessons to ensure that sources of further help, information and support are included in each lesson. These may include someone in the school, reliable websites and material from specialist organisations (local and national).</p> <p><b>Agreed rule:</b></p> 

## Signposting resources and reading materials

- Stonewall, [glossary of terms](#) relating to gender and sexuality
- [Mermaids](#), (supports trans and gender diverse children and their families)
- School of Sexuality Education, [Response to statutory RSE guidance](#) and [What is sex positivity?](#)
- School of Sexuality Education, UCL and University of Kent, [Research on young people's sexual image sharing practices](#)
- School of Sexuality Education, [Online Sexual Harassment Guidance Documents for Schools](#)
- Agenda, [Positive Relationships Resource](#)
- Smith, Attwood and Scott, [Young People and Digital Intimacies. Policy Brief](#)
- NHS, [Guide to Sexual Health services](#)
- Sexwise [Sexual and Reproductive Health](#) information
- FSRH [Abortion Care factsheet to support RSE lessons](#)
- Sex Education Forum, [12 principles for RSE](#)
- Sex Education Forum, [Curriculum design tool for RSE](#)
- Sex Education Forum, [RSE Definitions Guide](#)
- Sex Education Forum, [Parental Engagement Questions](#)
- Sex Education Forum, [Newsletter Sign-up](#)
- The British Museum, [School RSE workshops](#)
- The [Vagina Museum](#)
- [DO RSE for Schools](#), guidance for teachers and leaders on RSE teaching and learning
- [The PSHE Association](#)
- [Dilemmas of school-based relationships and sexuality education for and about consent.](#) Bragg et al., 2020. Sex Education: 1-15.
- [Sexual harassment at school: What can young people's gender-based activism tell us?](#) Ringrose and Retallack, 2018. LSE Parenting for a Digital Future blog.