

Parent Summary of KS1 RSHE Changes (2026)

From September 2026, primary schools in England will follow updated guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

For Key Stage 1 (Years 1–2), the changes are mainly about helping younger children feel safe, healthy and confident in everyday life.

What children will learn in KS1?

The focus is still very age-appropriate and includes:

- Friendships and kindness
- Feelings and emotions
- Family life
- Staying safe
- Healthy habits
- Online safety
- Respecting differences

There is no compulsory sex education in KS1

What's new or stronger in the updated guidance?

1. More teaching about boundaries and consent

Children will learn simple ideas such as:

- "my body belongs to me"
- respecting personal space
- asking permission before touching or hugging
- knowing they can say "no"

This is also taught through everyday situations.

2. Increased focus on online safety

- what to do if something online worries them
- not sharing personal information
- understanding that not everything online is true
- healthy screen habits

3. Greater emphasis on emotional wellbeing

- how to recognise emotions
- ways to calm themselves
- how to ask for help
- resilience and confidence

4. Stronger safeguarding messages

- who trusted adults are
- the difference between safe and unsafe situations
- how to speak up if something feels wrong
- that worries and unsafe secrets should be shared

5. Respect for different families and backgrounds
 - Children may learn that families can look different from one another, while teaching remains age-appropriate and factual.

What does this look like at KS1 level?

- lessons are **not** about sexual relationships
- The focus is relationships, safety and health
- Puberty and reproduction are generally introduced much later in KS2

What is the overall aim of the changes?

The updated guidance is designed to help children:

- Feel safe
- Build healthy friendships
- Understand emotions
- Develop respect for themselves and others
- Navigate online life more safely
- Know where to get help if needed

What areas of RSHE are compulsory?

These areas are compulsory in all state-funded primary schools:

- Relationships Education
- Health Education

Parents **cannot** withdraw children from National Curriculum science, including:

- learning about life cycles
- basic reproduction in animals/humans taught through science

For KS1 this is usually very simple and factual:

- humans grow from babies into adults
- basic life cycles of living things

Why is there a mention of sex education in KS1?

Sex education is **optional** in primary schools. The government recommends it mainly for **years 5-6**. For this reason and as an infant school, we will refer to RSHE as RHE as there will be no Sex aspect to the curriculum we teach.

In England, primary schools are strongly expected to teach children the correct scientific names for body parts, including genitals, as part of age-appropriate RHE and safeguarding education. This expectation already exists and continues under the updated 2026 guidance.

For KS1, this is usually taught very simply and factually, for example:

- penis

- testicles
- vagina
- nipples
- bottom

The purpose is mainly for safeguarding reasons and to help children communicate clearly which reduces shame or confusion about bodies. Learning does not require lengthy or explicit sex education at KS1 level. It is about correct vocabulary and body safety.

The DfE says children should learn:

- The names for body parts
- Which parts are private
- Boundaries and consent
- How to seek help if worried

Many safeguarding organisations strongly support using accurate terminology because children who can name body parts clearly may find it easier to report medical issues, discomfort, or abuse concerns appropriately (NSPCC)

This will be introduced gradually and sensitively, for example:

- Year 1: basic body parts and privacy
- Year 2: clearer scientific vocabulary and body safety language

What are my parental rights?

- ✓ You must be informed about RSHE policies
- ✓ Have access to curriculum materials
- ✓ You **can** withdraw children from non-statutory sex education (not taught in KS1)
- ✗ You **cannot** withdraw children from compulsory Science, Relationships and Health Education

If a parent/carer has any concerns about the RHE provision, we will take time to address their concerns and allay any fears they may have.