

## Supporting my primary -aged child neuro -divergent child to learn about body changes and growing up

### What is RSHE?

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is part of a subject that many primary schools call PSHE (Personal Social and Health Education). Topics such as how our bodies change and grow, puberty, keeping ourselves clean and healthy, rights over our bodies and how our relationships and responsibilities might change as we get older must all be taught to children. Most primary schools teach about these things in a topic called RSE (Relationships and Sex Education). Learning about sexual reproduction is offered in this topic.



### What do children learn in RSHE?

RSHE, is carefully planned by each school, so that children have the opportunity to revisit concepts several times, building their understanding and linking learning to new experiences as they get older. Schools must take into account children's needs and the views of parents and staff when they plan the lessons, so that learning is appropriate for the children. Teachers must teach about puberty before these changes begin, so that children are not worried and can confidently ask a trusted adult for help.

In EYFS and KS1, children will consider questions like 'What are the names of different parts of the body?' and 'How has my body changed since I was little?'.

In Year 3 and 4, children will consider questions like 'Why is it important to keep myself clean?', 'How are male and female bodies different?' and 'What are the main stages of the human lifecycle?'. Some schools may also give basic information about the changes that occur at puberty and sexual reproduction.

In Year 5 and 6, children will consider questions like, 'What happens to different bodies during puberty?', 'How can I keep my growing and changing body clean?', 'What effect might puberty have on feelings and emotions?' and 'What are the different ways babies are conceived and born?'.

### What particular differences might my child experience?

Many neurodivergent children experience sensory differences that can make changes to their bodies feel confusing or uncomfortable. New routines, such as washing more often or using different toiletries, may be difficult for them to adjust to. Some children may also find it hard to understand the idea of their body changing, or to notice physical signs of these changes.

Hormonal changes can affect emotions and behaviour. This may show as increased anxiety, or more frequent meltdowns or shutdowns.

Neurodivergent children can also find communication and social situations more challenging. They may struggle to ask questions, understand conversations about growing up, or manage friendships and relationships. Some children may take language very literally, or find it hard to understand that certain behaviours are only appropriate in particular situations. Some neurodivergent children may also feel unsure or confused about their gender identity.

### How can I support my child alongside school?

Every primary school must have a Relationships Education Policy which describes how the topic will be taught. Schools must consult with parents/carers on this policy. You can look for this policy on the school website and join the consultation process. Do ask the school office if you can't find the policy.



Schools share information about what is taught in PSHE lessons at different ages on their website and/or through letters/newsletters. They might hold drop-in sessions on RSE and they will often invite you to come in to talk to them about any further information you would like, or to share questions or concerns. It is always worth talking to schools about what they teach in RSE as it will benefit your child. You can be reassured that schools are aware of the particular needs of your child and you will have a better overview of messages that you can revisit at home.

### How can I support my child at home?

Let your child know they can talk to you about anything. Some topics might feel awkward, but being open and honest helps build trust and makes it more likely your child will come to you for support.

Start these conversations early and return to them often in small, simple ways. Talk clearly about body changes, feelings, and sensory experiences, and reassure your child that discomfort is normal and okay. Use clear, factual words and respond calmly and predictably.

Don't assume your child understands social rules—explain them clearly. Remind them that everyone's body develops at a different pace and in different ways, and that there is no "right" timeline. Visual supports can help, such as books from school or simple social stories.

Give your child different ways to talk to you. Some children find it easier to talk side-by-side, like on a walk or in the car, rather than face-to-face. Others may prefer to write their questions down and get a written reply. Keep check-ins short and regular.

Involve your child in choosing body care products and treat body care as a normal, practical part of daily life, not something to feel embarrassed about.

### Where can I get more detailed information?

To find out more about what children have to learn in RSHE see [DfE RSHE 2025](#)

NSPCC [Talk PANTS: Conversation to help keep children safe | NSPCC](#).

Pinpoint Cambridgeshire [Events - Pinpoint](#).

NSPCC [Supporting children with SEND online - Inclusive Digital Safety](#).

Fledglings [Adaptive Clothing, Sensory Aids & Disability Products SEN | Fledglings](#).

Pinpoint Cambridgeshire [ADHD-Teenagers-handout.docx](#)

[Interception-handout.docx](#)

[Puberty-handout.docx](#)

Pinpoint Cambridgeshire's free booklet [Neurodiversity - Pinpoint](#). In particular: Section 4: Day to day life; Section 7: emotional regulation; Section 8: health and wellbeing; Section 9: growing up.

Pinpoint Cambridgeshire website. In particular [friends, relationships and community](#); [mental health and wellbeing support](#); and [when it goes wrong](#).

