

# Parents' Concerns

I am embarrassed and not sure how to talk to my child about these issues

I want them to learn from me and have my morals – it is my job

My child is very young for their age, they are not ready for this, and I think it takes away their innocence

I am worried about the Internet and exposure to pornography



## Home-school partnership

As a parent you are the main educator for your child, they want to talk to you, and the school wants to work in partnership with you. Your child may ask questions as a result of lessons; they may bring resources and leaflets home to discuss. They may want to talk about things that are said in the playground and things that their friends are saying.

As a parent look at the syllabus and school policy (available on the school website) and take the opportunity to look at the resources, talk to teachers or the head about any concerns or specific issues for your child.

You can withdraw your child from the non-statutory part of RSE lessons. Talk to the head about this, they will help you consider the implications for your child and can make suggestions for resources to use at home.

### Did you know?

- The NSPCC runs the 'Underwear campaign' to help parents to talk to their children about keeping safe, [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- Sex crimes against under-11s have increased by 20% since 2011
- Pornography websites were accessed by at least 44,000 primary school children in Britain in December 2013. The Authority for Television on Demand (Atvod) tracked the actions of children. 1 in 35 of 6 to 11 year olds online clicked onto an adult website
- Education does not sexualise children, it is part of the solution. See the evidence via [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk) (National Children's Bureau)
- A 2013 NAHT (National Association of Head Teachers) survey found 88% of parents want pupils to be taught RSE in all schools
- Teenage pregnancy rates in England and Wales are the lowest they have been in forty years. In Shropshire the under-16 rate has decreased since the Shropshire Respect Yourself RSE programme started in 2010.

Ask your school about 'Understanding your child' and the 'Trust me' sessions, which may be available and recommended books and resources to use with your child.

This leaflet is part of the Shropshire Council *Respect Yourself: Eat Better, Move More, Relationship and Sex Education* resource for teachers.

© Shropshire Council 2015 All rights reserved.



# Relationship and Sex Education

## A Guide for Parents



Relationship and Sex Education is taught in primary and secondary schools. It is part of personal, social and health education (PSHE). All schools must have a sex education policy. This should fit with the school's ethos, be consistent with related policies and procedures such as bullying and child protection and comply with legislation such as the Equalities Act. The programme should be appropriate for the age and maturity level of pupils. Although not a statutory part of the curriculum, PSHE is inspected by Ofsted. All children receive the statutory science curriculum.



**There are clear guidelines and recommendations about what is good practice. In Shropshire we provide schools with an award-winning programme, coordinated lessons and resources for all key stages.**

**A good RSE programme will offer your child the opportunity to:**

- learn about relationships and feelings, not just biology and reproduction, facts not fiction
- build self-esteem and confidence
- consider behaviour and feelings, morals and values and develop skills and strategies
- express themselves, their thoughts, doubts and anxieties
- learn about where to go for further help, support and advice.



Teachers deliver the Shropshire programme; they know your child and their pupils. They know about delivering lessons in a flexible, age-appropriate way to suit differing levels of maturity, understanding and ability.

The aim is to keep children safe. Knowledge informs and educates, ignorance can harm and makes children vulnerable. Good quality RSE protects, prevents and prepares children.

Children learn from every, and any source – so it is important that they get information from reliable sources. Let them know they can talk to you, not just the one-off 'Talk', but answering questions when and as they arise. Use and comment on the news, stories in the soaps, films, leave books, leaflets, hygiene products around. Use everyday family situations: new baby, adoption, same sex couple, and marriage etc. to start conversations.

If you are too embarrassed or anxious, help your child to identify someone else, family member or someone at school. Let them know it is OK and natural to have questions. These are common concerns, you are not alone. You might like to meet other parents and discuss some of these issues. Ask your school for details of the "Understanding your Child" course.

*Children are curious about their's and other people's bodies, pregnancy and childbirth. They need to know about puberty and changes before it happens, the proper names for genitals and how a baby is made. (From the FPA, 2011)*



**Children are naturally curious:**

**AGE 3-4**

They want to know about their body, differences between the sexes and babies. They need short, simple, truthful answers.

**AGE 5-8**

They want to know how things work, their own and others' bodies, pregnancy and childbirth. They need to know about puberty and body changes before it starts.

**AGE 8-12**

They begin to show signs of puberty, some girls start their periods as young as 8. They are often anxious and need reassurance. They will have questions. They will have picked up confusing messages and myths concerning puberty, sex, reproduction, sexuality, love and sexual attraction from the Internet, popular culture, friends and older children. They are likely to have been in situations involving peer pressure. They need to know how to keep themselves and others safe.

