

RSE - The Spiral Curriculum approach

Use this guide to see what your children should be taught, and when...

Primary Education

From age three (nursery): Children should be taught the differences between boys and girls, naming body parts with the correct scientific words, what areas of the body are private, and the difference between good touches and bad touches.

Age four to six (reception – year 1): From this age children should be able to identify safe situations and those which may be risky, like other children or adults taking improper photographs of them. They should be able to identify trusted adults (both at home and school) who they can talk to if they feel worried. Within this age group they should understand about different types of families, including those with same sex parents. The emphasis being on all different types of families.

Age six to eight (year 2 – 3): Understanding the importance of boundaries within friendships and personal relationships is important, including online and through technologies such as mobile phones and games. They should know what films, programmes and online content they should and shouldn't be watching, in addition to who to tell, if someone encourages them to watch inappropriate content (this can be a grooming tactic).

Age eight to nine (year 4): By this age children need to be taught about the emotional and physical changes of growing up, coping strategies for different emotions, as well as looking after their bodies and the onset of puberty. We find that some girls may even be starting their periods in year 4, so it is critical that they have this knowledge at this age. We also recommend giving a gentle introduction to reproduction, this is the point at which we find we are able to tell children before they have received a muddled version from an older sibling or peers who may have been looking online for the definition of

“sex”. Whilst some parents and teachers may question this age, it is important to know that ‘sex’ is spoken and sung about, widely in the media including in pop music aimed at children (e.g. Little Mix). If children type this simple word into the internet to find out what it means they will be presented with graphic and often disturbing images, so it is better to educate the children in a gentle age appropriate manner, than to leave them hungry for information.

Age nine to 11 (year 5 – 6): At these ages it is important to review the previous information taught, as children tend to absorb and retain elements of the information when it is of relevance to them. So we allow children to ask more questions in these year groups, to ensure they understand what they have been taught and fill in any gaps in knowledge. They will often want more details on conception, how babies (including twins) develop and are born. Sometimes they ask how people can get germs from sex and how they can be prevented, or there may be curiosity about feelings or body image – each group is different.

Age 11 to 12 (year 7): In secondary school, the reinforcement of previous information is critical to ensure all pupils have a good foundation, as relationship and sex education provision from feeder schools may be inconsistent. In addition, further information on personal safety, potential grooming and exploitation scenarios can be delivered in a realistic but age appropriate way.

Secondary Education

Age 12 to 13 (year 8): Sex and the law should be introduced as a topic, identifying risky behaviour and consequences, including pregnancy myths, alcohol, technology, rights and responsibilities. The new Government guidance also requires we define subjects covered in the media such as FGM (female genital mutilation) Honour Based Violence and Arranged Marriage. Sexual orientation, information on growing up gay, challenging homophobia as well as concepts of gender stereotypes should be core to any programme of education. Information for boys on safe ways to access information about relationships and sex is crucial as several may have already viewed pornography at this stage. Myth busting between media and real world representations of sex and gender

stereotypes is beneficial for both boys and girls. Yet again, at this age group technology and internet safety need to be reinforced and discussed, CSE (child sexual exploitation) can be further highlighted.

Age 13 to 14 (year 9): Topics at this age group include self esteem within relationships, confidence, communication skills and consent including the effects of alcohol and behaviour in relationships. Contraception should be covered, including the modern methods and their local availability. Information on sexually transmitted infection and their effects, including long term risks, safer sex, including condom information and practical demonstrations are all recommended. Further insight into parenthood and the effects of an unplanned pregnancy on potential fathers and mothers will aid these young people.

Age 14 to 15 (year 10): Looking at boundaries at this age is useful, what's the difference between flirting and sexual harassment? Identifying abusive relationships as well as identifying the elusive "perfect partner". Further information on the realities of pregnancy and parenthood, including the physical impact of pregnancy, plus the social and economic price that young parents pay.

Age 15 to 16 (year 11): As with primary, the final year at secondary school is spent recapping on previous topics as well as allowing students to lead the discussion by asking anonymous questions or through open discussion.