

# RSE expectations: secondary

Here's what pupils should cover during secondary school, as well as continuing to develop knowledge on the topics they're expected to study at primary school. These are the expectations set by the Department for Education.

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## Families

- › That there are different types of committed, stable relationships
- › How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children
- › What marriage is, including its legal status (e.g., that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony)
- › Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into
- › The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships
- › The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting
- › How to:
  - Determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy
  - Judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships)
  - Seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others if needed

## Respectful relationships, including friendships

- › The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online), including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent, the management of conflict and reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
- › Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- › How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g., how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- › That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others and that, in turn, they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs
- › About different types of bullying (including cyber-bullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and where to get help
- › That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- › What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable

- › The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

## Online and media

- › Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- › About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- › Not to provide material to others that they wouldn't want shared further, and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- › What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- › The impact of viewing harmful content
- › That specifically sexually explicit material (e.g. pornography) presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- › That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- › How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

## Being safe

- › The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- › How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)

## Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

- › How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
- › That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively (e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing)
- › The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women, and menopause
- › That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- › That they have a choice to delay sex or enjoy intimacy without sex
- › The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- › The facts around pregnancy, including miscarriage
- › That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)
- › How the different sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDs are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- › About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment

- How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health and advice and treatment

**Source:**

These expectations are set out in the Department for Education's [guidance for schools on relationships education, RSE and health education](#).