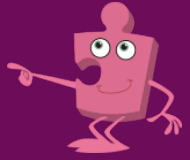




What do Primary Schools in England have to teach for statutory Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education from September 2020?



What can parents withdraw their children from?
What is Jigsaw PSHE's position?

Update for August 2025:

Our materials are currently being updated to reflect the new July 2025 RSHE guidance for England, which becomes statutory in September 2026.

Given the comprehensive nature of our review process, we'd recommend waiting until our updated materials are available (expected by end of December 2025) before undertaking any major policy reviews or curriculum mapping exercises.

It will also be important that schools read the DfE RSHE guidance for themselves and make decisions for their own schools, being clear about their educational rationale.

There have not been significant changes to the approach to sex education in primary schools, so some of this content may still be useful in this interim period.

This summary from Jigsaw is our interpretation of the 2019 DfE guidance to help schools understand the implications and decisions they need to make regarding curriculum content and parental withdrawal.

What is statutory?

A. Relationships Education is statutory.

This consists of x32 outcomes (DFE guidance pages 20-21) that pupils should know 'by the end of primary school'. The outcomes are not broken down into what should be taught when, so schools need to decide how to build these into a spiral, age-appropriate scheme of work.

Relationships Education can include LGBT relationships, but schools need to consider 4 important aspects of the guidance (page 15):

1. "Schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect.
2. Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010...under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics'
3. We expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum
4. At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area...rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson"

This means primary schools need to consider their approach to LGBT relationships and be clear about their approach and the educational rationale for this, what they teach when etc.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from Relationships Education. Jigsaw stands firmly by its philosophy that ALL children should be valued and included and hence includes images of many different family compositions in lessons on family relationships. See our article: Jigsaw's approach to LGBT Relationships.

B. Health Education is statutory.

This consists of x35 outcomes (DfE guidance pages 32-35) that pupils should know 'by the end of primary school'.

Again, schools will need to decide how to build these into a spiral, age-appropriate scheme of work.

NB The 'Changing adolescent body' section (page 35) has 2 outcomes relating to understanding puberty. PUBERTY WORK IS STATUTORY.

What is NOT statutory?

C. Sex Education is NOT statutory.

Sex Education at Primary is NOT statutory. "Sex Education is not compulsory in primary schools" although, "the Department continues to recommend...that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils" (page 23)

This means schools need to:

- 1) Decide what is meant by Sex Education
- 2) If they are going to deliver it at all, and if so, what should be included and under which curriculum banner?

After scrutinising the guidance, Jigsaw concludes that Sex Education in primary schools consists of 'human reproduction', as puberty work is now included in statutory 'Health Education'.

So, if schools decide that Sex Education means 'Human Reproduction' and that they will teach this, further decisions need to be made:

- a) What shall we teach when? (Jigsaw does this in Years 4, 5 and 6)
How shall we do it?
What resources shall we use?
- b) Shall we teach this within RSHE/PSHE or within NC Science?
What are the implications either way?
 - If we teach this within RSHE/PSHE, parents will have the right to withdraw their children from these lessons. (DfE guidance page 17 Para. 41)
Schools will need to inform parents of this right, consult with them, as well as explain what they intend to teach. Some children may not therefore receive this teaching before they go to secondary school. Schools will need to decide how they teach this and could use the Jigsaw Changing Me lessons which would make it easy to identify which lessons the parental right to withdraw applies to

(see grids below). Schools will need to be clear on the rationale behind their decisions.

- Year 5 NC Science offers the opportunity to teach reproduction in a mammal.
Parents do NOT have the right to withdraw from NC Science.
Schools can decide how they will teach this.
They could use Jigsaw 'Changing Me' lessons to do so.

The DfE guidance also includes requirements for assessment, SEND provision, religion and belief, engaging parents, governor responsibilities etc.

How Jigsaw can help

This summary is intended to help schools understand the RSHE statutory curriculum content and some of the decisions they will need to make well ahead of September 2020.

Jigsaw, the mindful approach to PSHE, when taught well, covers all the statutory requirements within a whole-school PSHE Programme, spiralling the learning in an age-appropriate way and adopting a whole-school approach for ages 3-16.

Jigsaw also offers support through:

- Mapping document showing just where each statutory outcome is covered
- Explanatory leaflets for parents
- Training PowerPoints for staff
- Training opportunities
- Mentoring
- Community Area with ongoing free support

So, where exactly does Jigsaw teach Puberty and Human reproduction in 3-11?

The 'Changing Me' Puzzle contains the 'explicit' work on these aspects. However, Jigsaw is a holistic programme that supports children's personal development, sense of identity and self-respect throughout, with the Relationships Puzzle offering more specific aspects of statutory Relationships Education.

The whole Jigsaw Programme more than fulfils all the statutory RSHE requirements.

Schools do need to own this and use their discretion as to the decisions necessary regarding Sex Education as outlined above.

Puberty and Human Reproduction in Jigsaw 3-11

FS	Growing Up	How we have changed since we were babies
Y1	My changing body	Understanding that growing and changing is natural and happens to everybody at different rates
	Boys' and girls' bodies	Appreciating the parts of the body that make us different and using the correct names for them
Y2	The changing me	Where am I on the journey from young to old, and what changes can I be proud of?
	Boys and girls	Differences between boys and girls – how do we feel about them? Which parts of me are private?
Y3	Outside body changes	How our bodies need to change so they can make babies when we grow up – outside changes and how we feel about them
	Inside body changes	How our bodies need to change so they can make babies when we grow up – inside changes and how we feel about them (animations used – shorter version Female and Male Reproductive Systems)

Puberty and Human Reproduction in Jigsaw 3-11

Y4	Having a baby	The choice to have a baby, the parts of men and women that make babies and – in simple terms – how this happens (animations used – the Female Reproductive System)
	Girls and puberty	How a girl's body changes so that she can have a baby when she's an adult – including menstruation (animations used – the Female Reproductive System)
Y5	Puberty for girls	Physical changes and feelings about them – importance of looking after yourself (animations used – the Female Reproductive System)
	Puberty for boys	Developing understanding of changes for both sexes – reassurance and exploring feelings (animations used – the Male Reproductive System)
	Conception	Understanding the place of sexual intercourse in a relationship and how it can lead to conception and the wonder of a new life (animations used – the Female and Male Reproductive Systems)
Y6	Puberty	Consolidating understanding of physical and emotional changes and how they affect us (animations used – the Female and Male Reproductive Systems)
	Girl talk / boy talk	A chance to ask questions and reflect (single sex) (animations used – the Female and Male Reproductive Systems)
	Conception to birth	The story of pregnancy and birth (animations used – the Female and Male Reproductive Systems)

The grids above show a brief summary of the “Changing Me” Puzzle (unit) in Jigsaw with respect to what is taught – when, relating to Puberty and Human Reproduction. As stated before, the puberty work in Jigsaw fulfils the requirements that sit under the ‘Changing Adolescent Body’ strand of statutory Health Education, and parents cannot withdraw their children from this.

As the paper outlines, schools need to use their own discretion as to whether or not they teach Sex Education, how they define this and which curriculum area hosts this i.e. do we consider Sex Education to mean Human Reproduction, and if so shall we teach this at all, in Science or in PSHE?

Jigsaw's position has been stated in this paper. The content in red on the grid above could be deemed as 'Human Reproduction' and if this is taught in PSHE, parents could request their children are withdrawn from all or part of these lessons.

If taught in Science (perhaps using Jigsaw Changing Me lessons) parents cannot exercise their right to withdraw.

Jigsaw's rationale for what is taught when in Jigsaw

We believe that knowledge empowers and protects children as long as it is age-appropriate. At secondary school Sex Education is statutory and we believe that primary schools should prepare children with accurate knowledge about puberty and human reproduction before they transfer to secondary school.

Correct terminology for body parts is introduced early to normalise this biological vocabulary and to support safeguarding. These words are not used in isolation but always in conjunction, ensuring children know these are private parts of their bodies.

Puberty is introduced gently in Y3 because some girls may start their periods this early and it is necessary to prepare them for this, so they aren't scared or worried.

Conception is introduced age-appropriately in Y4 in the context of understanding why our bodies change during puberty.

Understanding of Human Reproduction, conception and puberty is built upon in Year 5 and then puberty, conception and childbirth is age-appropriately covered in Y6.



For support or more information about the Jigsaw Scheme of Work and other education resources please contact us:

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