

RSHE Guidance 2025 What you need to know.

(Taken from the PSHE Association website 22/07/25)

This replaces the current, 2019 guidance, though schools will have until September 2026 to adapt their curriculum to reflect these updated requirements. You can, however, start following the new guidance sooner if you wish to and are properly prepared. And we'll have all the training, guidance and resources you need to get it right, including dedicated CPD this Autumn.

It's early days, and we're digesting all the implications for this guidance, but on balance it seems there are some really welcome changes — here are just a few that you might want to be aware of.

Summary of new teaching content

RSHE is about children's real lives and to keep up with new and emerging issues young people are exposed to, there is new content to teach, though this links closely with content you are already covering. This includes several references to 'AI literacy' and 'deepfake images' specifically at secondary. There's also a much greater focus on tackling misogyny, incel culture and their influence on attitudes towards women and girls and how they negatively affect boys and young men, as well as the harmful nature of pornography.

For both primary and secondary, we see the inclusion of personal safety, which now includes fire safety and travel safety — for example around water, roads and railways. At secondary, young people will also have the opportunity to learn about knife crime and conflict resolution.

There is also further emphasis on helping pupils understand their bodies and changes they might experience. For example, in primary education we now have inclusion of correct terminology for body parts, including genitalia. This reflects established best practice when it comes to giving children the knowledge they need to stay safe, including the ability to identify and report signs of abuse, while reducing stigma. Many schools have been teaching this effectively for years, as part of their approach to safeguarding, but this addition to the statutory guidance brings welcome clarification and reassurance.

At secondary level, pupils will learn more about menstrual and gynaecological health, including endometriosis and menopause. And there is greater emphasis on building skills to access healthcare services and professionals.

We are happy to see a more considered language around mental health, and the inclusion of grief, loss and bereavement at primary. And there's also a recognition of financial exploitation and its impact on safeguarding — including a requirement to cover scams, fraud, extortion and 'sextortion'.

A focus on safe, positive practice

On balance, the tone of the guidance feels safe and positive. It opens with a set of guiding principles which include the importance of engagement with pupils, positivity, careful sequencing and skilled delivery of participative education. And throughout, there are frequent references to safe and effective practice — from establishing a safe learning environment to answering tricky questions; and from avoiding fear-based approaches to recognising PSHE's vital role in safeguarding young people. This sets a really strong foundation for teachers to build their confidence in how to deliver this education well.

One of the guiding principles outlined at the start of the document is that this learning should take a positive approach, stating that schools should “focus on building positive attitudes and skills, promoting healthy norms about relationships... and avoid language which might normalise harmful behaviour among young people.” This is really refreshing to see outlined in guidance for the first time.

From an inclusivity perspective, the guidance reminds schools to work with their pupils and be aware of their needs, including references to teaching about different types of families and making adjustments for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

References to pupils with SEND are now woven through various sections of the guidance, though it is a shame that the specific section on pupils with SEND is less detailed than in the 2019 guidance. We'll be keeping an eye on what implications that may have as schools start to implement the new requirements, and are continuing to build upon our support for [teaching pupils with SEND](#).

Finally, we're really pleased to see that throughout the guidance there is an emphasis on teacher agency and the importance of teachers being equipped to make decisions about the curriculum. Trusting professionals to choose when and how they teach some content — including how to sequence the curriculum and

ensure 'participative and interactive' lessons based on the needs of their school community — is really important for ensuring that PSHE education meets the needs of all pupils across the country.