

# RSHE: Successfully implementing the 2026 statutory requirements

## Key stages 1-2

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# The PSHE Association

## High quality PSHE education provision for all pupils:

- Membership organisation and community
- Support, training and advice
- Partnerships with government, public bodies, civil society, local authorities and Multi-Academy Trusts

# Session aims:

- Explore the new statutory requirements for RSHE
- Reflect on what these mean for your school, policy and curriculum
- Build confidence in delivering new RSHE topic areas

# New content and requirements

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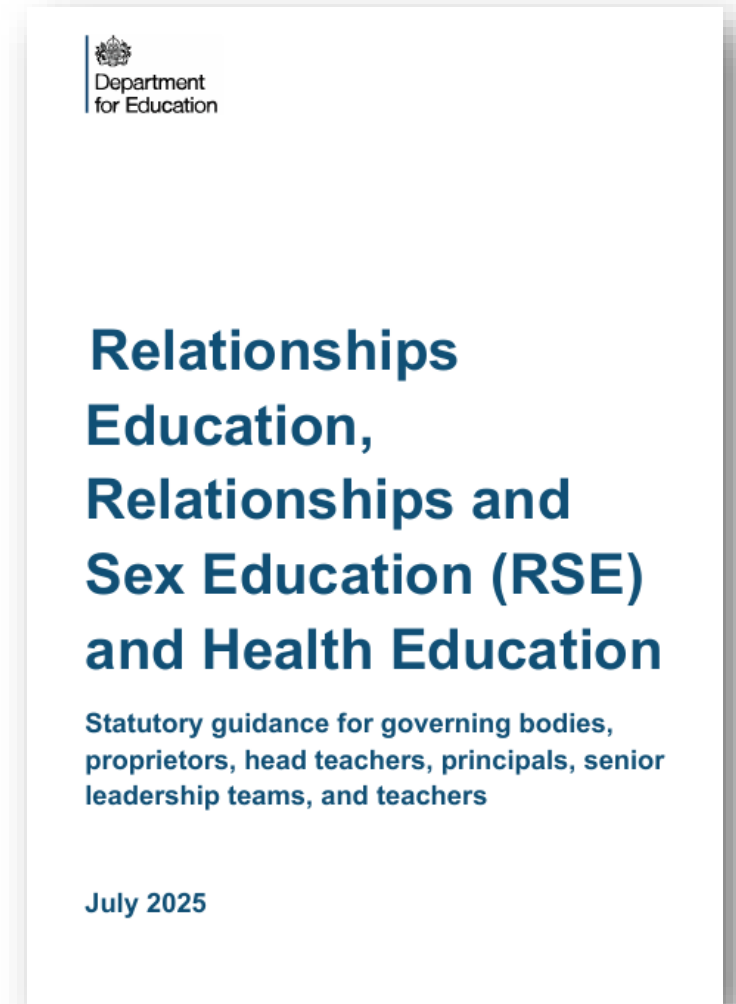


# New RSHE guidance

Replaces the existing 2019 RSHE guidance, for implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026.

A new series of 'Guiding principles for relationships, sex and health education':

- a) Engagement with pupils
- b) Engagement and transparency with parents
- c) Positivity
- d) Careful sequencing
- e) Relevant and responsive
- f) Skilled delivery of participative education
- g) Whole school approach



# KS1-2 new Relationships content

- Managing conflict in relationships, and on managing loneliness
- Greater focus on skills to manage relationships, including how to recognise who to trust and not trust
- Greater focus on online risks and inappropriate content
- Protections on social media, including age requirements and location settings
- **Optional:** to teach about the pressure to share nude images or online sexual content

“The focus for primary relationships education should be on teaching the skills and knowledge that form the building blocks of all positive relationships, supporting children from the start of their education to grow into kind, caring adults who have respect for others and know how to keep themselves and others safe.”

# KS1-2 new Health content

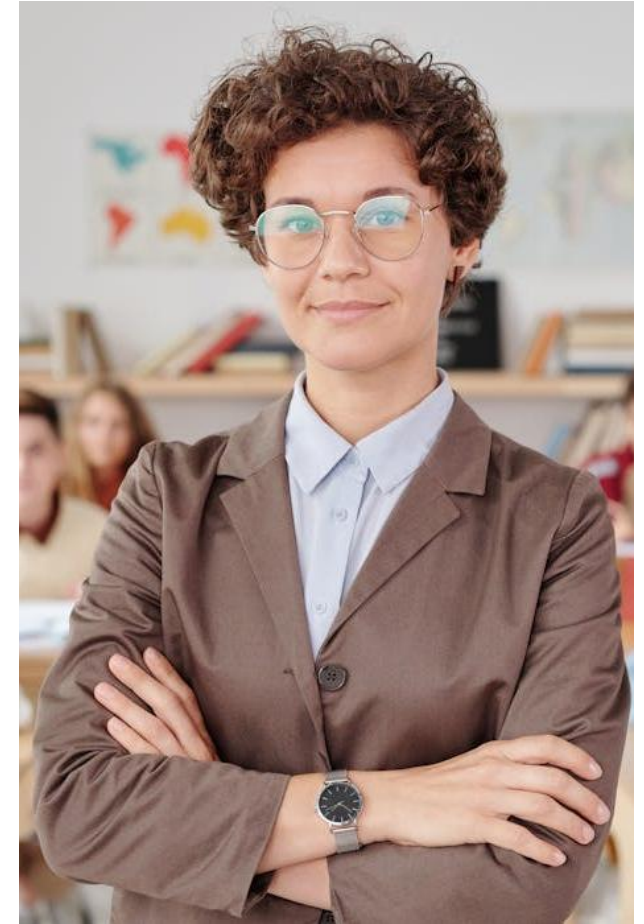
- Managing change and loss, including bereavement
- Scams, fraud and video game monetisation
- Medial literacy e.g. taking a critical approach to online content
- Personal safety including recognising hazards, fire safety and travel safety e.g. water, road, rail
- Facts and risks associated with vaping
- Correct names for body parts including penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples.

“Schools should support pupils to develop strategies for self-regulation, perseverance and determination, even in the face of setbacks... Effective teaching should aim to reduce stigma attached to health issues, in particular relating to mental health, and discourage the pejorative use of language related to ill health.”

# What about sex education?

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, but **we recommend that primaries teach sex education in years 5 and/or 6**, in line with content about conception and birth, which forms part of the national curriculum for science.

Primary schools should consult parents about the content of anything that will be taught within sex education. This process should include **offering parents support in talking to their children about sex education** and how to link this with what is being taught in school as well as advice about parents' right to request withdrawal from sex education.



# What remains the same?



## **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education**

Statutory guidance for governing bodies,  
proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior  
leadership teams, and teachers

July 2025

- Much of the content around families, caring friendships and being safe remains similar, with some minor changes to wording and approaches in other areas
- Many aspects of health education also remain, including first aid, healthy eating and physical health and fitness
- The right to withdraw remains consistent
- Continues to recommend expectations about assessment, subject leadership and cross curricular opportunities

# Supporting SEND pupils

Teaching should be developed to ensure these subjects are **accessible for pupils with SEND and prepare pupils for adulthood...** This applies to both mainstream and special schools.

Schools should be aware that **pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable** than their peers to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual abuse, exploitation and violence, bullying and other issues. **RSHE can be particularly important for these pupils**, particularly those with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities.



# KS1-2 Teaching about LGBT

Pupils should understand the importance of equality and respect throughout their education.

**We strongly encourage primary schools to teach about healthy loving relationships, and to include same-sex parents** along with other family arrangements when discussing families.

Schools should encourage young people to consider how to express their views while remaining respectful of the opinions of others. **Schools should be clear that bullying or disrespectful language or behaviour is never appropriate.**



# Developing an RSE policy

## Previously (2019 guidance):

- Definition of Relationships and Sex Education
- The subject content, how it's taught and who is responsible for teaching it
- How it's monitored and evaluated
- Information about the right to withdrawal
- The policy review date

## New 2026 guidance:

- The subject content, how and when it will be taught
- Who is responsible for teaching, inc. any external providers
- Differentiate between relationships and sex education
- Information about the right to withdrawal and how parents can view curriculum materials
- Explain how teachers will answer questions about topics in sex education from which the child has been withdrawn
- How content will be made accessible to pupils with SEND
- Describe how the subject is monitored and evaluated
- Explain how the policy has been produced, who approves the policy, how and when it will be reviewed

# Working with parents: Right to withdraw

- Where primary schools provide sex education, head teachers must automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from it, other than content that is taught as part of the science curriculum.
- It is good practice for the headteacher to discuss the request with parents.
- There is no right of withdrawal from other aspects of PSHE, such as health education.

“Everyone has relationships with others, and most pupils will develop sexual relationships at some point in their lives... Relationships education may therefore include topics related to preventing sexual abuse, for example, or avoiding sharing inappropriate material online. This can be done without describing the detail of any sexual activity involved.”

# Openness with parents

- Expectation that schools will proactively engage parents
- Schools should share a representative sample of RSE lessons with parents, and all materials on request
- Materials can be shared in face-to-face meetings or workshops, via a parent portal, or where these are not possible, sent home
- Schools should not agree to contracts with external providers which prevent them sharing materials with parents
- Parents do not have a veto on curriculum content, but they should be aware



# A focus on safe practice

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# A safe environment



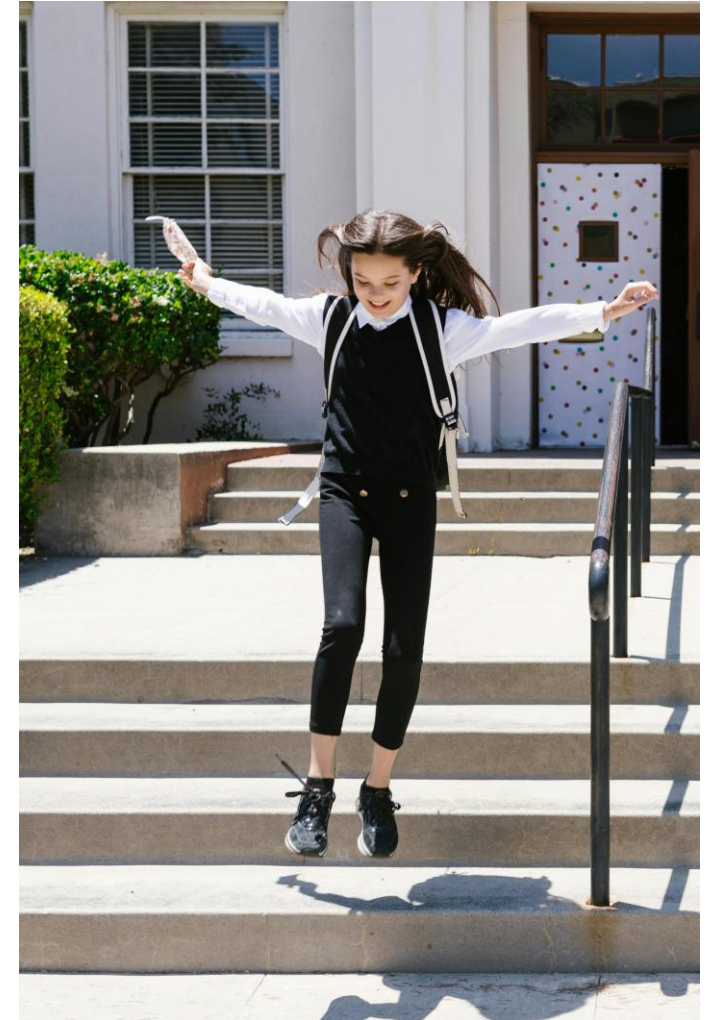
When teaching sensitive topics, teachers can use approaches such as **distancing techniques**, setting **ground rules** with the class to help manage sensitive discussion, and using **question boxes** to allow pupils to raise issues anonymously.

Effective, high-quality teaching will break down core knowledge and skills into manageable and **well-sequenced units**, including opportunities for pupils to **practise skills** so that they will be confident to use them in real-life situations.

# A safe environment

The curriculum should be delivered by school staff... who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to **create a safe and supportive environment** and to facilitate **participative and interactive** education which aims **to support and not to alarm** pupils.

It is equally important that children understand how confidentiality will be handled in a lesson and what might happen if they choose to make a report, about themselves or a peer. Pupils should also understand **where they can report any concerns and seek help**, including to external services if they do not feel comfortable talking to school staff.



# A safe environment

Schools should focus on building positive attitudes and skills, promoting healthy norms about relationships.

Schools should avoid language which might normalise harmful behaviour among young people.

RSE lessons should ensure that both boys and girls have opportunities to practise respectful communication and understand experiences which are different from their own.



# Working with visitors

“Schools should check that external resources are accurate, age and stage appropriate and unbiased... Schools are responsible for checking the credentials of any visitor or visiting organisation.”

“Schools should ask to see materials and a lesson plan in advance, and should seek the views of parents, making sure that all materials can be viewed by parents.”

“Where lessons are delivered by external agencies, schools must agree in advance of the session how a safeguarding concern would be dealt with by the external visitor.”



# Safe practice at all times

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## A safe classroom

Establishing a safe teaching and learning environment for PSHE education lessons

- Agree ground rules
- Handle questions safely
- Consider vulnerabilities
- Ensure inclusivity
- Use distancing strategies
- Signpost support
- Know your policies

For more information, see our guidance on [Handling complex issues safely in the PSHE classroom](#).

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## Effective teaching

Best practice principles for teaching PSHE education

- Give time for personal reflection
- Make learning accessible to all
- Handle myths with care
- Assess learning and progress
- Balance knowledge, skills and attributes
- Provide accurate, unbiased information
- Don't set out to shock, shame or scare
- Start from where the pupils are
- Take a positive approach
- Don't inspire, glamourise or instruct in harmful behaviours

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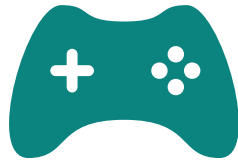
For more information, see our guidance on [Planning and choosing great PSHE lessons](#).

# Getting to grips with the new content

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# What new areas of the curriculum content might be tricky to teach?



Scams, fraud and gaming monetisation



Sharing images



Naming body parts inc. genitalia

# Spotlight on scams, fraud gaming monetisation and financial exploitation

## Online spending

Read about the children who have bought things online.

- What influenced each of them to spend money online?
- Which do you think are the top three influences on children?
- Are any of the influences on spending positive? Why do you think that?
- What were the outcomes of the children spending money?



Resource 1: Talking heads

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I went onto a clothes website once, and they got me to put in my email address to get a discount. Now I get emails all the time telling me about the newest clothes, and it makes me want to buy more. I see adverts for the same clothes shop when I'm on different websites too. Sometimes I buy the clothes and I really like them, but every now and then, when the clothes arrive, they don't really suit me.

I play games online against my friends – we're in a league. But even though the game was expensive, you have to spend more to do well. My friends were teasing me that I was always losing, and I was getting frustrated at playing the same level over and over. I spent lots of money to get the best equipment and get a pass to the next level. Now I'm winning and can show off to them because they're behind in the game.



# Spotlight on sharing images

34% of girls & 9% of boys were first asked for a nude/nearly nude aged 13 or younger. 63% of children/young people heard about AI from social media, and by ages 12-15, 53% have used it. 13% of UK teenagers have encountered nude deepfakes generated by AI. 98% of all deepfakes are sexually explicit - 99% of these target women and girls

## So how can we teach about it?

- ✓ Identify pupils' starting points to help pitch the lesson
- ✓ Take an inclusive approach – for example, avoid portraying girls as victims and boys as perpetrators
- ✓ Avoid normalising phone ownership, social media use or image sharing
- ✓ Focus on foundational skills such as making decisions about what to share and safely responding to requests or images they find troubling

“I think when you've got a phone, you've got access to it.”  
[Boy, 16]

# Spotlight on sharing images

## Learning objective

To learn about what images are appropriate to share online, and those that should not be shared.

## Learning outcomes

Pupils will be able to:

- recognise what images are appropriate to share
- respond safely to requests for images of themselves
- identify what to do if they take, share or see an image which may upset, hurt or embarrass someone
- identify, and ask for help or advice from, sources of support

## What is our starting point?

**Sami likes to share photos with their friends.**

1. What sort of photos do you think Sami might share?
2. How might they share them?
3. How might they feel about sharing and receiving photos?
4. What are the risks of sharing photos?
5. Are there any rules that the friends could have about the photos they share?



“Teaching should be age appropriate and respectful of all children, including those who may have no familiarity with the topics under discussion.”

# Spotlight on naming body parts KS1-2

NSPCC research estimates that approximately 1 in 20 children in the UK have been sexually abused, with 90% of this abuse being by someone they know.


Evidence suggests that giving pupils the language to name body parts, recognise those which are private, and how to report concerns are key protective factors to reduce potential harm.

## So how can we teach about it?

- ✓ Start early – to effectively safeguard children, they need to access this learning at a young age
- ✓ Use correct scientific terms consistently and make sure staff are confident on key terms – such as the difference between vulva and vagina
- ✓ Think about parent communications – you may choose to let them know ahead of the teaching taking place

# Spotlight on naming body parts KS1-2

1 | Resources - PANTS Power




**Talk PANTS Resources:  
PANTS Power, ages 5-7**

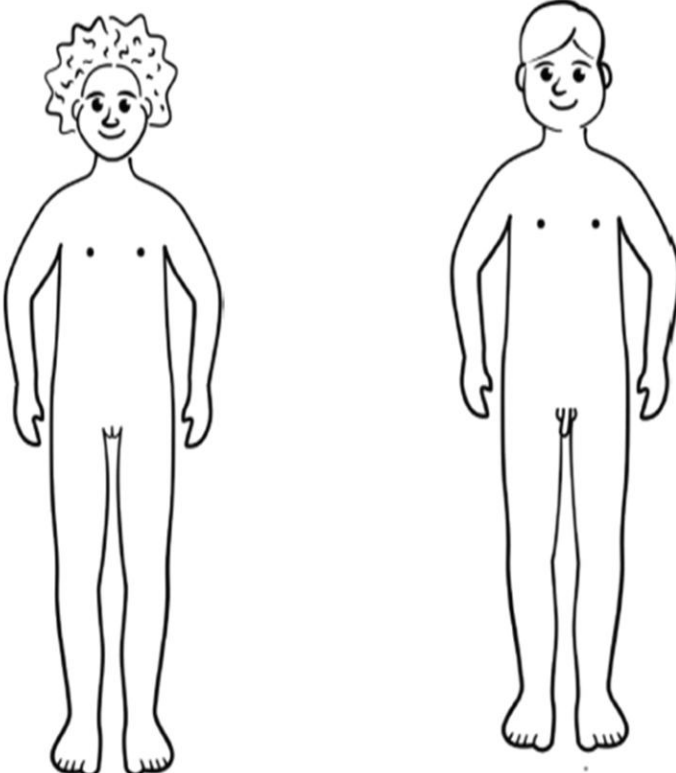
Resource 1: Body parts

Hand	Arm	Leg	Foot
Head	Chest	Bottom/ Buttocks	Vulva
Penis	Hair	Knee	Neck
Nipple	Foot	Testicle	Vagina

2 | Resources - PANTS Power



Resource 2: Body outline



# Final thoughts and next steps

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# Resources to support you

**MEDWAY PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTORATE**

## Changing and growing up

Teacher guidance for key stage 1-2



Foreword..... 2

Introduction..... 3

Statutory requirements..... 3

Supporting parents and carers..... 3

Key steps to safe, effective learning..... 3

Creating a safe learning environment..... 3

Ground rules..... 4

Anonymous question box..... 4

Inclusion..... 5

Children and young people with limited access to period products..... 5

Safeguarding and the limits of confidentiality..... 5

Female genital mutilation (FGM)..... 6

Forced marriage..... 6

Signposting support..... 6

Subject knowledge..... 6

Adaptive teaching..... 7


Effective assessment..... 7

Differentiating and adapting the learning..... 7

Appendix: curriculum links..... 7

**A BETTER MEDWAY**  
Easier ways to be healthy

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**KS2**

## Families

### Lesson Plans & Resources

**Lesson Plans**

- Lesson 1: Family relationships..... Page 2
- Lesson 2: Diverse families..... Page 7
- Lesson 3: Family changes..... Page 12

**Resources**

- Lesson 1 resources..... Page 18
- Lesson 2 resources..... Page 20
- Lesson 3 resources..... Page 30

TEACHING ABOUT CONSENT | KS1

## LESSON 1: ASKING FOR PERMISSION

This is the first in a series of lessons for primary aged children about the topic of consent. In key stage 1, this single lesson provides the first opportunity to discuss asking for permission, and when this is needed in relationships with classmates and other peers.

Neither this, nor any other lesson, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme. It is helpful for this lesson to be taught within the context of wider learning about friendships and respectful relationships.

**Learning Objectives**

To learn what it means to ask for permission

**Resources Required**

- Box or envelope for anonymous questions
- Flipchart paper and pens
- Resource 1: Permission scenarios 1 per pair
- Resource 2: What next? 1 per pupil
- Resource 3: Learning summary 1 per pupil

**Learning Outcomes**

Pupils will be able to:

- say why they should ask other people for permission in different situations, including when touching someone else
- use simple phrases to ask for, give or not give permission

**Lesson Summary**



Activity	Description	Timing
1. Baseline assessment	To assess initial understanding, introduce pupils to a scenario and encourage them to suggest how the character might ask for permission.	10 mins
2. Introduction	Introduce learning objectives, outcomes, and class ground rules. Pupils list when they need to ask for permission in their daily lives.	10 mins
3. How do we ask?	In pairs, pupils rehearse different ways to ask for permission.	10 mins
4. Permission scenarios	Pupils explore different scenarios where children need to give or ask for permission, and discuss how to respond in each case.	15 mins
5. Endpoint assessment	Pupils complete a learning summary card to demonstrate their understanding of permission seeking.	10 mins
6. Signpost support	Remind pupils of who can help them with respectful relationships, including permission seeking and giving.	5 mins

Teacher guidance

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## KS1-4

### Teaching about friendship and bullying

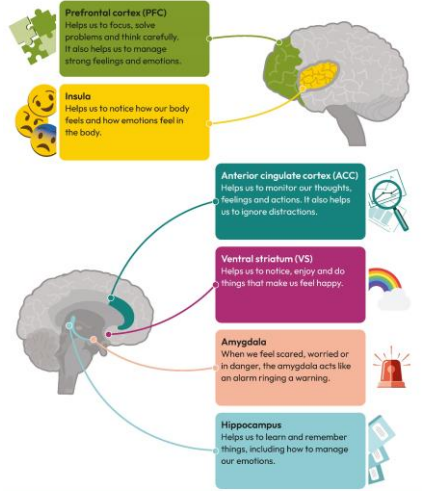
# Foundations for Wellbeing



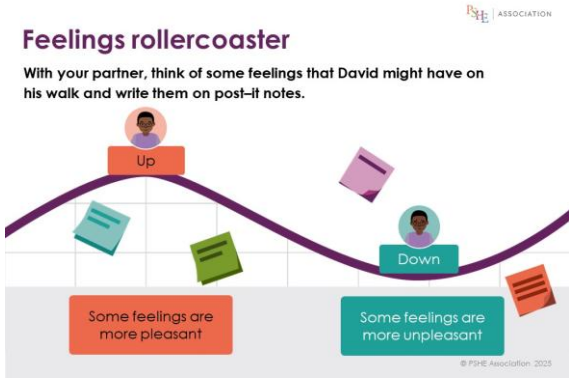
### Our strategies for managing unhelpful thoughts and worries

- Watching thoughts**  
Imagining unhelpful thoughts and worries as balloons or as leaves on a stream, letting them go and watching them float away, or imagining them as pop-up adverts that we can notice but then choose to close.
- Noticing and naming our emotions**  
Naming, describing or writing about emotions.
- Focusing on positive things**  
Thinking hard about things that we like or happy memories.
- Reappraisal**  
Thinking differently about the situation - looking at something from a different, more helpful angle.
- Sensory focus**  
Doing something that uses our senses and is enjoyable, like drawing, dancing or listening to music.

## My amazing brain!



Different parts of the brain work together, like a team!



### Changing habits

- amygdala** More active when someone has negative thoughts.
- PFC** Helps someone to redirect their attention to more positive or neutral thoughts.
- VS** Active when someone has positive thoughts, feelings or experiences.
- hippocampus** Helps someone remember the strategies.

**All this helps the brain to change - brain plasticity!**

### Noticing feelings

The brain helps us to notice how we are feeling. Feelings can be felt differently in the body for different people.



		angry	excited
		happy	relaxed
		sad	scared



# Final thoughts

- Don't rush into making changes; it's important these are embedded effectively and meaningfully
- Collaborate with colleagues and get your senior leaders on board
- Upskill your team with the knowledge and confidence they need to deliver high quality PSHE education
- Refer back to our website for support along the way
- Prioritise the changes that matter most to your students in your school



# What are your next steps?

- Think about your timeline for the coming academic year.
- What do you need to do to prepare?
- What do you want to prioritise?

Staff training

Curriculum  
audit

Pupil voice

Parent  
engagement

Update policy

Develop subject  
knowledge

Monitoring  
teaching

Medium term  
planning

Create new  
lessons





# Questions

# Thank you for being here today!



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