

Delivery of Youth social action - Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

The Department for Education (DfE) has introduced compulsory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) to ensure that all children get a good quality education about mental health and a range of other factors that may affect their well-being. All state schools will have had the opportunity to train a senior mental health lead by 2025 in how to lead a 'whole school approach to promoting positive mental health and well-being"

The aim of teaching young people about physical health, mental health and well being is to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and well-being. It should enable them to recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others and, when issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

Physical health and Mental Well-Being are interlinked, and it is important that pupils understand that good physical health contributes to good mental well-being and vice versa.

It is important that the starting point for health and well-being education should be a focus on enabling young people to make well-informed, positive choices for themselves. In secondary school, teaching should build on primary content and should introduce new content to older young people at appropriate points. This should enable young people to understand; how their bodies are changing, how they are feeling and why to further develop the language they use to talk about their bodies, health and emotions and to understand why terms are associated with mental and physical health.

Young people should know the following:

- How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively using appropriate vocabulary
- That happiness is linked to being connected to others
- How to recognise the early signs of mental health and well-being concerns
- Common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression)
- How to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health and well-being
- The benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental well-being and happiness

Relationship Education at Key Stages 3 and 4

- Know that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.
- Know how to recognise and talk about emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings.

- Know simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests.
- Know that isolation and loneliness can affect children and that children need to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support.
- Know that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental well-being.
- Know where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support).
- Know whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental well-being or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online).
- Know it is common for people to experience mental health and ill-being. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough.

Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional well-being is also a requirement as part of Statutory Health Education

PSHE education helps children and young people to understand their own and others' emotions, develop healthy coping strategies and seek appropriate support. Talking openly about mental health issues is an effective means of breaking down any associated stigma.

PSHE education equips young people to adopt healthy behaviours and strategies from an early age and seek dedicated support when they or their friends need it. Protective learning – including good communication, problem-solving, healthy coping skills, resilience and recognising emotions – can reduce the risk of young people turning to unhealthy coping mechanisms. These factors lay the foundations for more specific learning about mental health, later on focusing on issues such as depression, anxiety and eating disorders.

PSHE effectively supports mental health and emotional well-being as it directly focuses on related issues and develops the underlying skills, attributes, and knowledge across the whole subject. PSHE can also help address contributory factors that can affect mental health, such as unhealthy relationships, pressures exacerbated by social media, peer pressure, bullying (online and offline), body image and substance misuse.

<https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/mental-health-wellbeing-and-pshe/>

- Promote young people's well-being through an understanding of their own and others' emotions
- Help young people develop healthy coping strategies.
- Enhance safeguarding by providing young people with the knowledge, understanding and strategies to keep themselves (and others) healthy and safe
- Help to avoid stigma around mental health issues⁴⁹