

## **TALKING TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX**

We all want young people to move safely from childhood, through adolescence into adulthood and to develop respect for themselves and others.

In school, we contribute to this in **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)** and our wider Aspiring Futures programme.

**RSE involves learning about ourselves - our emotions, our identity, our relationships, sexuality, sexual health and behaviours.** Learning about these aspects continues throughout our lives.

However, there are some key things which young people needs to consider as they approach adulthood. **Most of what young people learn about these topics takes place at home and in the community and we support this learning in school.**

We hope this leaflet will give you some information about what young people are learning at school and what you can do to support this.

## **WHY SHOULD PARENTS AND CARERS TALK TO THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX?**

**Research tells us that young people want their parents to be the first ones to talk to them about puberty, relationships and sex.**

If families start talking to their children about puberty, sex and relationships they are **less likely to get ideas that worry or confuse them and they learn that it is alright to talk about these things at home and to ask questions.**

**Young people learn most about values and relationships from family experiences.** Close, loving relationships are the best way of showing a young person how your family 'does things' based on your values, culture, faith and beliefs.

**If families talk about sex and relationships openly and honestly, young people are:**

- more prepared for puberty and the changes they

- experience more likely to resist pressure to have

- unwanted sex

- more likely to delay having sex for the first time

- more likely to use contraception if they do have sex

- less likely to have an unplanned pregnancy or to get a sexually transmitted infection.

## **HOW CAN I TALK TO MY CHILD ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX?**

Talk while you're doing something else –washing up, driving.

Enjoy talking. Laugh with each other, not at each other –it can reduce embarrassment and stress. Listen rather than judge. Ask them what they think.

Answer questions and don't be afraid to say you don't know.

Always respond. Give the message it's good to talk about sex and relationships.

If it feels too personal, talk about people in books, films or soaps.

## **HOW ELSE CAN I SUPPORT RSE?**

You can ask at school for more information about the RSE provided.

## **WHAT DO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THINK?**

**Young people want to talk to their parents about relationships and sex, but that can be daunting for a parent.**

One group of 10-16 year olds came up with these helpful pieces of advice for parents:

Take responsibility for talking to us. Don't just wait for us to ask.

If we ask you things, always tell the truth. Don't put it off or say 'I'll tell you when you're older.' Don't be angry and try not to be embarrassed.

Don't save it all up for a one-off 'birds and bees' lecture. We'd rather you talked naturally, little and often.

Wait until we're at home and on our own together to avoid embarrassment. Make sure we know what you're talking about and let us ask you questions.

If we ask what a word means, ask us what we think the word means first.

Don't laugh at us or spread gossip about what we have been talking about. If you don't know something, be honest and say that you don't know.

Give us books or leaflets, but talk to us too.

Don't expect school to tell us everything – we want to hear from our parents too.

**U FURTHER INFORMATIONSEFUL CONTACTS**

THINKUKNOW [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/)

RSE HUB <https://www.rsehub.org.uk/for-parentscarers/>

PARENTS GUIDE <https://www.bigtalkeducation.co.uk/parents/>