

Permission to Discuss

**Talking to children and young
people about healthy
relationships and sex**



A Guide for Parents and Carers

The role of parents in the development of their children’s understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.”

*RHSE Statutory Guidance, Department for Education,
(updated July 2020)*

This leaflet should be read alongside the fuller guide for parents, [Permission to Discuss](#).

This is a Diocese of Guildford Education Department document to support parents of children in primary schools.

Top Ten Tips for Parents:

1. From the very beginning always refer to parts of their bodies by the correct terms.
2. Ensure they are aware of the 4 parts of their body no one should touch unless they need help and allow them to: the genital area (penis, vagina), bottom, chest, and mouth.
3. Reassure them they can come to you if ANYONE touches them or asks them to keep a secret. Secrets are not OK.
4. Never expect or force them to kiss people goodbye etc. Blowing kisses, shaking hands or a “high five” can be a good alternative.
5. Don’t encourage or tease about “boyfriends” or “girlfriends”. All children will have friends who are boys and girls. Let them be children and enjoy their friendships.
6. Talk to your children about how your family values and the school’s ethos affect relationships and the way we respect and behave with others.

7. Help children to understand and respect the values and make up of other families, different to your own.
8. Remember, not all children will identify with typical gender stereotypes, and that in later in life, not all young people will identify as being heterosexual.
9. Tell them they can always speak to you as a parent / carer, or to a trusted adult within school, to ask about things that they have seen/heard and don't understand.
10. As a parent or carer, keep the channels of communication going, be interested. Who are their friends at school? Who are their friends on-line? Make time to talk.

Answering children's questions



When your child asks a question about something relating to relationships and sex, it is helpful to dig a bit deeper before you answer to make sure that you are answering what is *really* on their mind. Sometimes they just want to know about one thing. You don't need to tell them everything at once.



When is a good time to talk?

Talk whenever your child is asking curious questions.

When you're running your child's bath or helping them with things like getting dressed or applying sun cream.

When you are walking together.

Car journeys are also a great time to talk.

When your child is wearing their swimwear is a great time to talk about the idea that what's covered by your pants and your swimwear is private.

If their favourite programme is handling a sensitive storyline encourage them to talk about anything that upsets them.

Playing a computer game, or on an app, there may be opportunities to talk about how characters relate to each other.

