



# Northern House Academy

## Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Date ratified:	March 2026
Date for review:	March 2027*
Chair of Trustees	Chris Scrivener
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<sup>1</sup>LGBT+ refers to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, and to people with gender expressions outside traditional norms, including nonbinary, intersex, and other queer people (and those questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation).

<sup>2</sup>SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability.

\* An early review will be held if new statutory guidance comes into force before this date

## Introduction

This policy covers Northern House Academy's whole school approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) as part of the schools Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) curriculum. We use the Coram Scarf Life Education curriculum complemented by additional resources and learning relevant to the school community.

RSE is vital for the personal, social and emotional development of our pupils. It equips children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, respectful and enjoyable relationships and empowers them to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

All children and young people have a right to holistic, inclusive and needs-led RSE. Through providing high quality RSE, we are upholding the ethos and values of our school and its commitment to equality and celebration of difference. At Northern House Academy we are committed to guiding and encouraging our pupils so they reach their full potential. We believe that each and every one of our unique learners has their own contribution to make to the life of the academy, their family and their community.

This policy was produced in consultation with our staff, board of governors, pupils and parents/ carers. We have listened and responded to all views to help strengthen the policy, ensuring that it meets the needs of all of our pupils. We will ensure the policy is effectively communicated to staff and parents/ carers, including through publishing the policy on our school website.

The information below complies with our statutory obligations to deliver Relationships Education and Health Education Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It also has due regard for the DfE's (Department for Education) statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance and other relevant guidance.

We will review the policy on a regular basis to ensure that it is in line with current Government guidance and legislation and to ensure that our RSE programme continues to meet the needs of our pupils.

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2SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school and Gallery Trust policies:

**Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Teaching and Learning Policy, Science Curriculum Policy, E-Safety Policy, SEND Policy, The Gallery Trust Peer on Peer – Child on Child Abuse Policy, The Gallery Trust Equality Duty Policy.**

### **Equality, inclusion and social justice**

*‘Schools should consider what they can do to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls; and provide an environment which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic, including through these subjects and as part of a whole school approach.’*

- [Department for Education](#) (2019, p.14)

RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. Our RSE is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes, sexism and sexual harassment in school. We take these issues seriously and ensure that we embed content on gender equality throughout the curriculum.

We are also committed to RSE that makes every pupil feel valued and included and is relevant to them. This means we are committed to LGBT+<sup>1</sup> inclusion and SEND<sup>2</sup> inclusion and are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice 2014 when planning for this subject.

We will also ensure that we consider the religious and cultural background of all pupils when teaching RSE. Relationship and Health Education will only use teaching and materials which are appropriate to the age and the religious background of the pupils receiving it.

Inclusive RSE at Northern House Academy will seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

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<sup>2</sup>SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability.

## **Definition of relationships and sex education**

*'The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.'*

(DfE Guidance, p25)

At Northern House Academy, we use a gender equity and human rights framework for RSE. We take a positive, inclusive and affirmative approach that accepts children's and young people's experiences and enables them to be explored sensitively.

To meet the aims outlined in the DfE Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education Guidance, we will equip our pupils to build positive relationships online and offline. We seek to ensure our curriculum gives pupils the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help them to:

- value their health, wellbeing and dignity
- build self-esteem and self-worth
- accept and value their personal and identity and the personal identities of others
- understand and make sense of the real-life issues they are experiencing in the world around them
- manage and explore difficult feelings and emotions
- consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others
- develop as informed and responsible citizens
- understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives

## **What Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education including Relationships Education, is:**

Our PSHE education, including statutory Relationships and Sex education, and non-statutory sex education, as recommended by the DfE, provides a framework through which key skills, attributes and knowledge can be developed and applied. This promotes positive behaviour, good mental health and wellbeing, resilience and achievement, helping children to stay safe online, develop healthy and safe relationships, making sense of media messages, challenging extreme views and having the skills and attributes to negotiate and assert themselves now and in the future.

The school's PSHE provision supports the school's aims of developing confident citizens and successful learners who are creative, resourceful and able to identify and solve problems. The social and emotional development of

pupils is embedded throughout the entire school’s curriculum and culture. The school has a powerful combination of a planned thematic PSHE program, built around a spiral curriculum of recurring themes, designed to:

1. Give pupils the knowledge and develop the self-esteem, confidence and self-awareness to make informed choices and decisions.
2. Encourage and support the development of social skills and social awareness.
3. Enable pupils to make sense of their own personal and social experiences.
4. Promote responsible attitudes towards the maintenance of good physical and mental health, supported by a safe and healthy lifestyle.
5. Enable effective interpersonal relationships and develop a caring attitude towards others.
6. Encourage a caring attitude towards and responsibility for the environment.
7. Help our pupils understand and manage their feelings, build resilience and be independent, curious problem solvers.
8. Understand how society works and the laws, rights and responsibilities involved.

We know there is a proven link between pupils' health and wellbeing, and their academic progress. Crucial skills and positive attitudes developed through comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic education are critical to ensuring children are effective learners.

By the end of primary school pupils should know:

Relationships education	Physical health and mental wellbeing
Families and people who care for me Caring friendships Respectful relationships Online relationships Being Safe	Mental wellbeing Internet safety and harms Physical health and fitness Healthy Eating Drugs, alcohol and tobacco Health and prevention Basic first aid Changing adolescent bodies

At Northern House Academy we will deliver the statutory Relationships and Sex Education as part of our PSHE curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum during Year 6. There is a statutory duty upon schools to teach these aspects. The national curriculum for science includes content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals.

We will ensure that our Year 6 pupils are prepared for their transition to secondary school, whilst continuing to support their ongoing emotional and physical development. Pupils will understand the changes they face as they approach adolescence, and understand healthy relationships.

**How PSHE education, including Relationships Education, is provided and who is responsible for this:**

Our curriculum programme is developed by Robyn Kingston (PSHE Lead) and Abigail Allum (Deputy Head Teacher) in conjunction with the views of teachers, pupils and parents.

At Northern House Academy, we teach to the learning objectives and content outlined in the DfE Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education Guidance. All content will be accessible and delivered in a timely way and will be age and developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of our pupils. At Northern House Academy we deliver high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised for all pupils, and take into consideration the additional vulnerabilities of our pupils due to the nature of their SEND.

At Northern House Academy we use SCARF, a comprehensive scheme of work for PSHE and Wellbeing education. We focus on a whole school theme per term, which is differentiated and personalised for each Gallery. An overview of SCARF can be found in our appendices. We follow the six suggested half-termly units and adapt the scheme of work where necessary to meet the needs of our pupils, for example, we may use our local environment as the starting point for aspects of our work. The school council are also consulted as part of our planning, to ensure pupil voice is considered and fed into the planned programme.

Rationale for selecting SCARF as our PSHE resource:

- Lessons build upon children's prior learning
- The content is relevant and sensitive to the needs of our pupils.
- There is planned progression across the SCARF scheme of work, so that children are increasingly and appropriately challenged as they move up through the school.

**What is being taught:**

The SCARF programme divides the year into 6 themed units:

1. Me and My Relationships: includes content on feelings, emotions, conflict resolution and friendships;
2. Valuing Difference: a focus on respectful relationships and British values;
3. Keeping Myself Safe: looking at keeping ourselves healthy and safe

4. Rights and Responsibilities: learning about money, living the wider world and the environment;
5. Being My Best: developing skills in keeping healthy, developing a growth mindset (resilience), goal-setting and achievement;
6. Growing and Changing: finding out about the human body, the changes that take place from birth to old age and being safe.

Children are encouraged to engage in activities that promote an understanding of themselves as growing and changing individuals, and as members of a wider community, based on their own first-hand experiences. These activities also encourage pupils to understand how their choices and behaviours can affect others. They are encouraged to play and learn alongside – then collaboratively with – their peers. They may use their personal and social skills to develop or extend these activities. Children are also given the opportunity to make choices about their health and environment and are encouraged to develop a caring attitude towards others.

**Appendix 1** provides additional information regarding the themes that will be taught to pupils before the end of primary. Given the age of primary pupils, the focus of the curriculum is around relationships of pupils, with their family members, friends and online relationships.

By the end of their primary education the school expects pupils to know the information set out in the **Appendix 1**.

### **Subject delivery**

*‘Effective teaching in these subjects will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to pupils, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme or lessons.’*

- [Department for Education](#) (2019, p.8)

RSE will be delivered at Northern House Academy as part of our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all key stages, using a spiral curriculum approach (a course of study in which pupils will see the same topics throughout their school career, with each encounter increasing in complexity and reinforcing previous learning).

SLT will work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas (e.g. Science, Computing and PE) to ensure a holistic and joined up approach is delivered to students with regard to RSE content. We also supplement learning using a whole school approach and utilising time outside of the classroom. For example, through school assemblies, curriculum themed links, school celebrations and events.

RSE will address aspects of relationships in an integrated way within a single topic. We will not artificially separate learning about real life and online relationships when it is appropriate to integrate this teaching and explore a topic in both contexts. Where an issue is experienced exclusively or disproportionately in an online context, this will be drawn out.

We also use external agencies, where appropriate, to deliver aspects of Relationships and Sex Education (see 'Working with visitors and external agencies' section below).

The programme will be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way, using the correct medical terms where appropriate (e.g. for external body parts). School staff will not express or be expected to express their personal views or beliefs when delivering the programme.

All staff who have responsibility for delivering RSE will undergo training on a regular basis to ensure they are up-to-date with the RSE policy and curriculum requirements regarding RSE.

In addition to ongoing training, CPD will also be scheduled in response to updates to our RSE scheme of work and any new development in terms of course content.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

*'Schools should have the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas.'*

- [Department for Education](#) (2019, p.43)

We regularly monitor and evaluate our RSE scheme of work to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, that the curriculum is meeting the up-to-date national requirements under the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance, and that learning outcomes are reflective of pupil need.

This policy will be reviewed by the school's leadership team in conjunction with Trustees and Governors on a regular basis. If changes are needed, members of staff, parents/carers and pupils will be consulted, and any amendments clearly communicated.

The School's Leadership Team monitors and evaluates the implementation of the programme and pupil's knowledge and understanding through:

- The Pupil Voice will include pupil interviews, questionnaires and using pupil question boxes
- Evidence from lesson observations

- Teacher evaluation of lessons and the overall RSE programme
- Looking at samples of pupils' work, pupils' pre and post unit self-evaluation
- Analysis of behaviour incident records (e.g. prejudicial bullying)
- Analysing pupil engagement in lessons

## **Pupil voice**

*'Listening and responding to the views of young people will strengthen the policy, ensuring that it meets the needs of all pupils'*

- [Department for Education](#) (2019, p.12)

Pupil voice is central to the culture and ethos of our school. We use pupil voice to evaluate how relevant and engaging RSE is to children's lives.

Throughout our RSE scheme of work we embed pupil voice practices to enable pupils to express their views on the range of topics and issues that RSE covers and to ensure that they listen to differing opinions and evidence, reflect on their own perspectives and take a broader view.

We want to ensure that all pupil voices are heard whilst ensuring that any views which are hurtful, offensive or exclusionary do not dominate and are addressed appropriately and without delay. We want to ensure a culture where human rights, social justice, inclusion and diversity are promoted.

## **Answering pupil questions**

*'The school's policy should cover how the school handles [difficult] questions. Given ease of access to the internet, children whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information.'*

- [Department for Education](#) (2019, p.23)

RSE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from pupils. We view questions as a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others.

To ensure pupils have every opportunity to ask any question they might have and to avoid loss of dignity for all, school staff may offer pupils the chance to contribute questions anonymously in advance of specific lessons (e.g. on puberty). This will enable staff to research questions and respond with factually accurate information. As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group. There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class. If school staff do not feel in

position to immediately address questions, they may defer a question and seek more information before responding to pupils.

Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way. If school staff have concerns about pupil contributions or questions, they will inform parents/carers as appropriate.

School staff will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their pupils that could make either party vulnerable.

An open approach to answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and older pupils. We believe exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSE. Importantly, we believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they can discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

## Working with parents/carers

*'All schools should work closely with parents when planning and delivering these subjects. Schools should ensure that parents know what will be taught and when.'*

- [Department for Education](#) (2019, p.17)

*'All schools must have in place a written policy for [...] RSE. Schools must consult parents in developing and reviewing their policy.'*

- [Department for Education](#) (2019, p.11)

Successful teaching of RSE involves parents/carers and schools working together. We also believe that parents/carers can play an important role in the RSE of their children through exploring discussions at home that have taken place in school.

Our RSE policy has been developed through consulting parents and carers.

See below for how we work with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of what we teach and when.

At Northern House Academy we invite parents/ carers to:

- Parents' evenings
- Inductions to the school
- Welcome packs
- Sharing copies of the policy in face-to-face meetings and/ or through emails
- Letters to parents/carers giving information about when RSE will be delivered and when certain classes will take place.

If parents/carers have any concerns or special circumstances that the school should be aware of, or would like any further information about the curriculum, we can designate a time for them to come into school and address any issues.

We may share examples of key resources we use with parents/carers to reassure them of the content we are covering and to enable them to continue the conversations started in class at home. If parents/carers wish to view resources, this can be arranged via the school office.

## Parental right to request their child be excused from sex education<sup>3</sup>

*'All schools should work closely with parents [...] and clearly communicate the fact that parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.'*

- [Department for Education](#) (2019, p.17)

As outlined within the Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSE.

Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education.

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of Relationships Education, it is our aim to encourage parents to see the value of RSE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice.

Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the headteacher to discuss their concerns. The headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum.

If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this.

We will remind parents annually that the request to withdraw is still in place and invite them to confirm whether they still want it.

If a pupil is withdrawn from a lesson they will join another class and be given appropriate alternative work to complete.

### **Working with visitors and external agencies**

*'Working with external organisations can enhance delivery of these subjects, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with young people [...] It is important to agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with school policy.'*

- [Department for Education](#) (2019, p.18)

From time-to-time Northern House Academy may invite external experts and visitors to deliver parts of our RSE scheme of work.

External visitors will be selected in order to enrich and supplement our RSE by bringing particular skills, methods and expertise to the classroom and the whole school. External visitors may include for example, the School Health Nurse, Community Police Officers.

A teacher will always be present throughout these lessons to build on the pupil's learning after the session/s as well as answer any questions the pupils may subsequently have.

Any external visitor will be expected to comply with this policy and other related policies, including the school's confidentiality and child protection policy.

We will also ensure that:

- There is appropriate planning, preparatory and follow up work for the session
- The visitor understands the cohort of children involved, including the different ability levels and diversities in identities across protected characteristics. They will also be made aware of any specific issues relating to child protection.

### **Safeguarding and child protection**

*'At the heart of these subjects there is a focus on keeping children safe, and schools can play an important role in preventative education [...] Good practice allows children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports.'*

- [Department for Education](#) (2019, p.42)

Northern House Academy acknowledges that RSE is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the school and for meeting our statutory obligations as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September, 2022).

RSE helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing abuse or have experienced abuse.

We recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSE covers, some pupils could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory training around child protection and will follow the schools safeguarding policy and procedures.

At Northern House Academy teachers will involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy Safeguarding Lead) when planning new subject content that is safeguarding-related in the context of these subjects. This will allow staff to be signposted to trusted, high quality resources in how they approach this content and how they consider their planning.

We also recognise that some children may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or

changes to their personal life. For those children, additional support will be given to prevent them being affected by the scenarios or topics in their planned lessons.

While Northern House Academy wants to create a learning space that feels safe for children and young people to disclose, we also want to protect children's privacy.

At Northern House Academy we do this by using a number of teaching techniques including the use of a working agreement, where rights respecting ground rules are created with pupils on what makes a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Once ground rules have been set, we will check they are in place throughout the scheme of work and actively referred to. Through the use of ground rules and other approaches, such as distancing techniques, we believe the school can create a supportive environment for discussions that can be sensitive or difficult.

### **References:**

Department for Education (2019)., *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education*.

Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

Department for Education (2022)., *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022*.

Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1101454/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101454/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2022.pdf)

## Appendix 1 – Relationships Education Primary stage curriculum

<b>Families and people who care for me</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• that families are important for children growing up</li><li>• because they can give love, security and stability the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care</li><li>• that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up</li><li>• that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong</li><li>• how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed</li></ul>
<b>Caring friendships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends</li><li>• the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties that healthy</li><li>• friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded that most</li><li>• friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Respectful relationships</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships the conventions of courtesy and manners</li> <li>● the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority</li> <li>●</li> <li>● about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help</li> <li>● what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive</li> <li>● the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults</li> </ul>
<p><b>Online relationships</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not</li> <li>● that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous</li> <li>● the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them</li> <li>● how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● how information and data is shared and used online</li> </ul>
<b>Being safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)</li> <li>● about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact</li> <li>● how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know</li> <li>● how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult</li> <li>● how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard</li> <li>● how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so</li> <li>● where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources</li> </ul>

### **Sex Education**

#### **The National Curriculum for Science covers:**

- naming the main external parts of the human body
- the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty)
- processes of reproduction and growth in animals and reproduction in some plants