



**Activities for
consulting about
your school sex
and relationships
education policy**



Introduction

This activity pack has been developed to support the Sex Education Forum SRE policy guidance (2014) which can be accessed from www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources

Both primary and secondary schools are legally obliged to have an up-to date SRE policy that describes the content and organisation of SRE taught outside of National Curriculum science. This applies to all maintained schools in England. Academies and free schools are required to have regard to the government guidance on SRE (DfEE 2000*) but do not have to have a policy, although they may still choose to do so.

School governing bodies are responsible for the SRE policy and should involve parents and carers in developing and reviewing the policy.

This pack contains a set of 6 activities that can be used as stand alone consultation activities or implemented from start to finish. The activities can be used by teachers and other professionals. They will provide evidence from pupils, parents and staff about any changes needed to the SRE programme and will in turn inform the SRE policy.

- Activity 1: Getting started and audit tool
- Activity 2: Needs identification – primary ‘Draw and Write’
- Activity 3: Needs identification – primary ‘Diamonds’
- Activity 4: Needs identification – secondary ‘Diamond 9s’
- Activity 5: Parent survey
- Activity 6: Staff survey

* DfEE (2000) Sex and Relationship Education guidance, Crown copyright.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sex-and-relationship-education>

Activity 1: Getting started on updating the policy

A good SRE policy will be the outcome of a process of reviewing SRE provision in consultation and discussion with parents, pupils, staff and governors.

It can be very helpful to establish a working group to take responsibility for updating the school's SRE policy. Membership could include the PSHE education coordinator, a parent/carer, the school nurse, a governor, a member of the senior management team (SMT), a teacher, a teaching assistant and pupils. This group will draw up a timetable for the development of a policy, identifying the working party's meetings, key tasks (with deadlines), and the proposed date of formal presentation and adoption by the governing body.

The step by step process can follow this pattern:

1. Form a small working group
2. Draw up timetable for updating the policy
3. Consider relevant national and local guidance (DfE, Ofsted, Public Health)
4. Consider any changes in school population or pupil needs (pupil needs assessment)
5. Audit current provision and policy and consider the results
6. Draft changes to the policy
7. Consult on draft (for example, discussion of a draft at parents/carers, staff, governors and school council meetings)
8. Finalise the draft
9. Present to governors to ratify and set review date
10. Present to parent/carers and put on school website
11. Policy implemented
12. Monitor policy against specific success criteria
13. Review policy in two-three years

To audit the current provision and policy (step 5) the following tool can be used:

Table 1. Auditing tool for SRE/PSHE policy development and revision, adapted from [Laying the Foundations](#), Second Edition, Sex Education Forum (2013).

Aspects of school life	What happens at present?	Response	Action to be taken
Pupil consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school involve pupils to ensure that the policy and programme meet their needs? • How are pupils' needs identified? Is this done regularly? 		
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school have a PSHE and Citizenship coordinator? • Is this the person responsible for SRE? • Is there a named governor for SRE? • Is there a budget to support the development of SRE? 		
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school have an up-to-date SRE policy with the date it was agreed and a future review date printed on it? • Is it part of the PSHE policy? • Is the SRE policy linked to other relevant policies e.g. anti-bullying, child protection, safeguarding and confidentiality? • Who is responsible for its implementation and review? • Does it reflect statutory requirements and national guidance, including the government SRE guidance (2000)? • Does it refer to local and national health and wellbeing priorities for children and young people? • Is it reviewed regularly (every two to three years)? • How is the policy communicated to children and parents/carers? • Did Ofsted comment on the PSHE/SRE provision at the last inspection? 		
Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is SRE currently provided and to which year groups? • Who teaches it? Are they trained in SRE? • Is there a specialist SRE/PSHE team? • How much time is allocated to SRE in each year? • Is the programme up-to-date; does it address the issues raised in 'SRE for the 21st Century' (Supplementary Advice produced by Brook, PSHE Association and Sex Education Forum, 2014. http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/sre-advice-for-schools.aspx) • What are the main resources used, including published schemes? • Where else is SRE, in its broadest sense, covered in the curriculum? (Examples include: assembly, RE, science, literacy hour) • Is pupil learning assessed and their progress reported to parents on a regular basis? • How does SRE address the diverse needs of children in the school? • How do you know the programme meets their needs? • Is there an annual evaluation and review of the programme? 		

Aspects of school life	What happens at present?	Response	Action to be taken
Climate and confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the school ensure SRE lessons are a safe and positive place to learn? • How is pupils', families' and teachers' privacy protected? • How is unacceptable language/behaviour challenged? 		
Parents and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What mechanisms are in place for consulting with parents/carers? When are parents/carers invited in to school? • Is there support available for parents/carers, either directly or indirectly (for instance, the school nurse or leaflets) to help them talk to their children about puberty, sex and relationships? • Have any parents/carers withdrawn their children from SRE? If so why? How was this dealt with? • Is there alternative provision? 		
In-service education and training (INSET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What SRE training have staff received? • What whole-staff INSET is provided in school? • What opportunities are there for SRE teachers to meet together? • What training opportunities are there for non-teaching staff and governors? 		
Wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are outside visitors invited into school to contribute to the school SRE programme? • If yes, who are they? • Is there a protocol for the use of outside visitors? • Do pupils have access to information about external sources of information, advice and support? • Does the school nurse contribute in any way to the SRE programme? 		
Girls and menstruation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What provision is available in school for girls who are menstruating? • Are there dispensers/disposal facilities? • How are protocols regarding acquiring supplies/ accessing disposal facilities communicated to the children? 		

Activities for consulting pupils and parents

This case study shows how gathering pupil views and then sharing them with parents can provide the focus and starting point for a review of a school's SRE policy.

Case study: Consulting parents about the SRE policy

The first step in updating the SRE policy at Holy Family Primary School in Birmingham was to inform parents and invite their input. The school also wanted to get the views of children across all year groups. Parents gave permission for their children to be involved in the focus groups. Children were asked about their knowledge on topics such as growing up and where they got their information. The school then arranged a parents' discussion group and shared what the children had said and explained the legal responsibilities that schools and parents have for SRE. The views of parents and children were shared with staff and a new policy was then written with support from the Birmingham Health Education Service. This will be shared with governors for their approval.

Activity 2: Needs identification – primary 'Draw and Write'

Needs identification is a useful process to identify gaps in knowledge and help make the case for changes to SRE in the future. It is particularly useful if pupils have received little or no SRE previously.

Draw and write: 'growing up'

'Draw and write' is a well-established method used for needs identification. It is often used with primary school pupils. This 'Draw and write' activity focuses on 'growing up' but the basic principles can be adapted for other topics. This activity is suitable for all primary age-groups and can be repeated as children move through primary school. With younger children it is more feasible for a teaching assistant to carry out the exercise with a small group, rather than the teacher administer to the whole class, like a test. This can be rotated until all the children have taken part.

Materials

Plain A4 paper
Felt pens or pencils

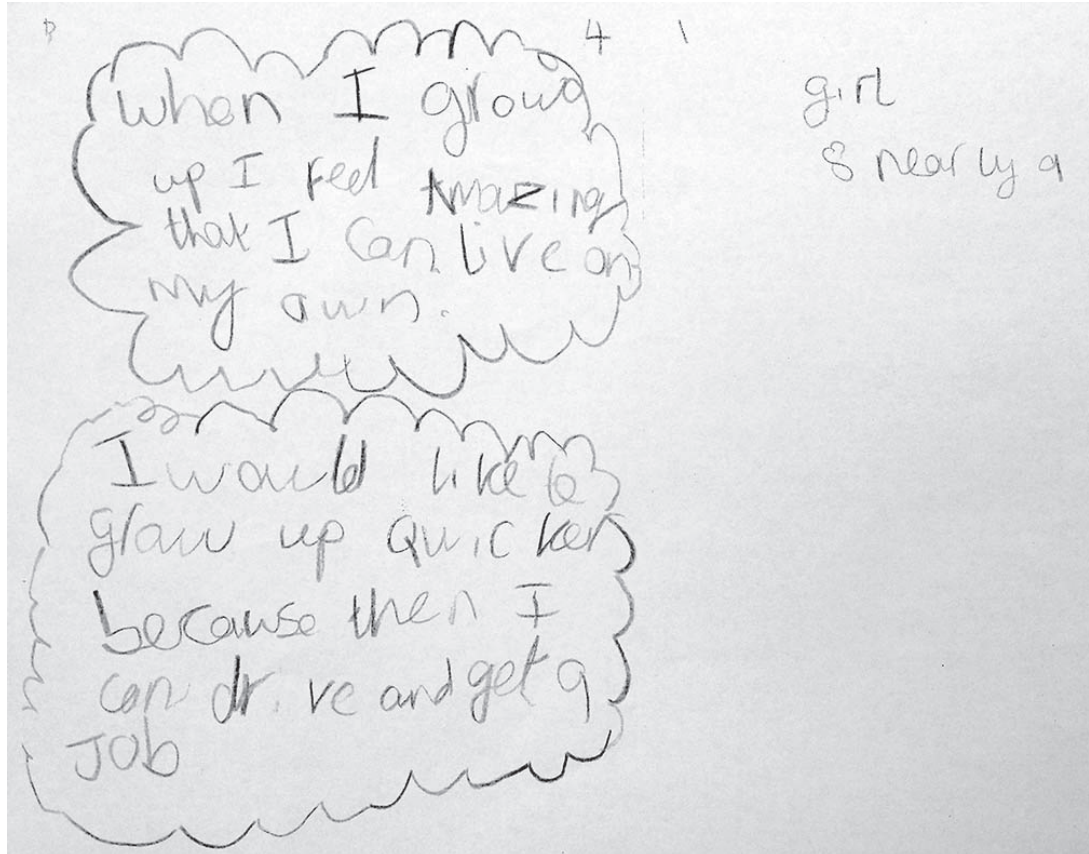
This activity is part of a collection published in '[Let's get it right; a toolkit for involving primary school children in reviewing their sex and relationships education](#)'.

Activities

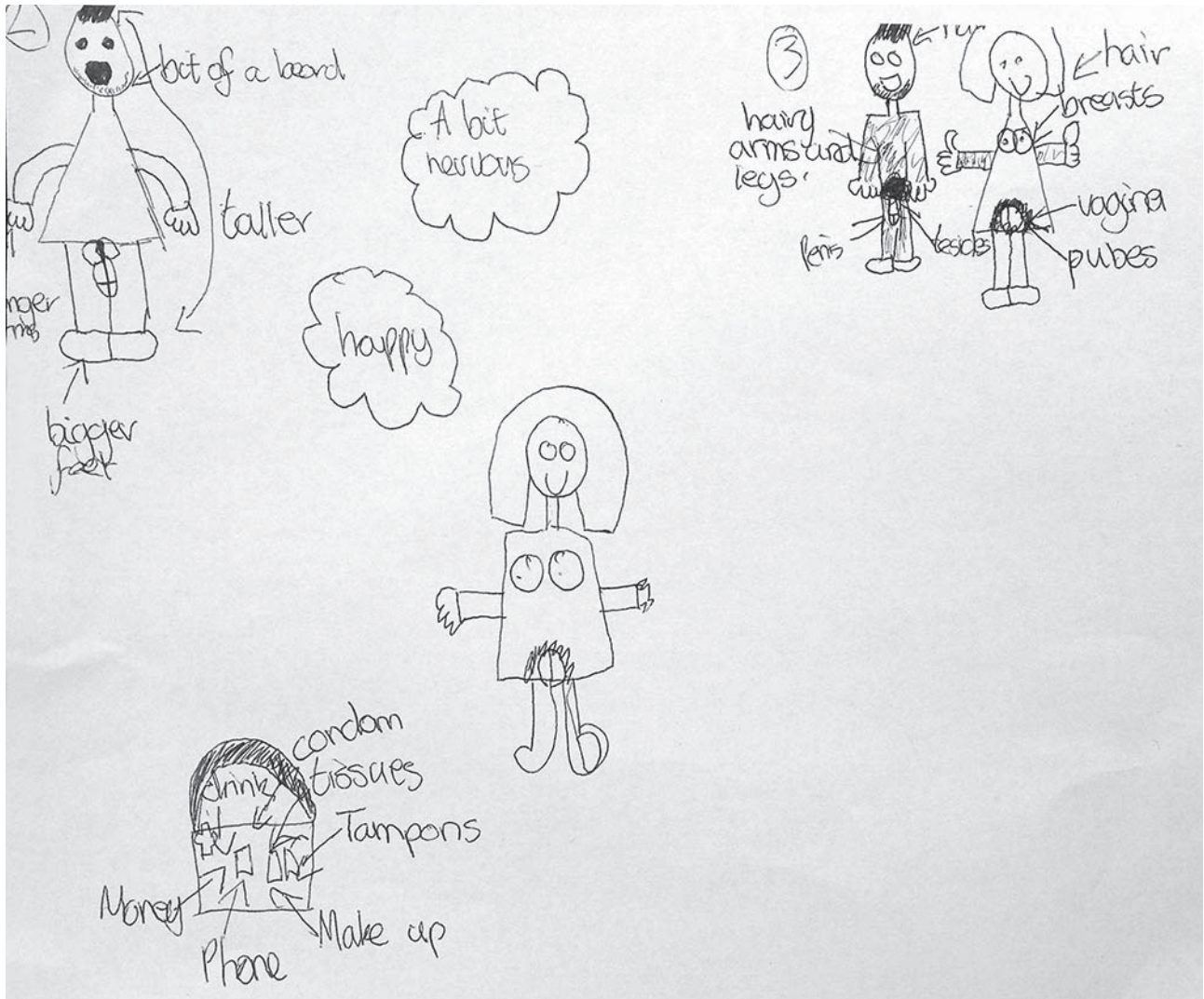
1. Do not talk about the topic before the activity.
2. Introduce the activity by inviting them to take part in some 'research' about growing up.
3. Tell them their views and opinions are very important for planning work they will be doing later.
4. Ask them to keep their ideas to themselves and explain that you will be asking them to draw and write in response to some questions.
5. Explain that they are being asked to do the activity individually because everyone will have different ideas. It is not a test. There are no right and wrong answers.
6. If they need help they should raise a hand and whisper to you if they need help for example with writing (don't worry too much about spelling!).
7. Give pupils a piece of blank A4 paper. Ask pupils to fold the paper in half and turn it so that it is like a 4 page booklet. They can number the pages so the front is page 1, inside are pages 2 and 3 and the back is page 4.
8. They don't need to put their name on the paper, but just write on the front (page 1) a G if they are a girl and a B if they are a boy and their age in years.
9. Ask pupils to imagine someone about two years older than themselves. The person can be male, let's call him Jon, or female, let's call her Kim (Other names can be used, but is important that they are not names of pupils in the class).
10. Now ask them to imagine their person (Kim or Jon) is going out, dressed up and looking grown up.
11. Ask them to draw a picture of what Kim or Jon will look like on page 2 of the booklet.
12. Remind them it is their ideas which are important and they must do it on their own.
13. Now ask them to write by the drawing how they can tell Kim or Jon (their person) is grown up (you may need to move them on with the drawing – they can come to do colouring in if there is time).
14. Draw some thought clouds from their head and write inside how Kim or Jon (their person) feels about going out looking all grown up.

15. Ask pupils to draw a bag that their imaginary person can take out with them. Ask what will be in the bag that shows they are growing up? Pupils can either draw or write the contents of the bag.
16. Now ask pupils to turn to page 3 and draw Kim or Jon (their person) getting out of the shower or bath.
17. Around the drawing write how their body is changing that shows they are growing up.
18. Instruct pupils to draw thought clouds and write inside it how Kim or Jon (their person) feels about their body changing.
19. Finally ask pupils to turn over and on the back of the booklet (page 4) ask pupils to think about themselves. Ask them to draw thought clouds and write how they feel about growing up.
20. Thank the pupils and collect in the booklets, explaining that you will use the pictures and writing to plan the work they will be doing about growing up.
21. Wherever possible check with pupils that you understand their drawing and add notes to the work to reflect additional information that pupils give you, especially if they can't write.
22. Use the pictures to plan lessons that respond to issues identified by the pupils and address any misunderstandings or gaps in knowledge and understanding.

This activity is based on a Growing Up Draw and Write activity provided by Tim Hull, CSN consultancy CIC, it was one of many created by Noreen Wetton. The general draw and write technique and other examples are provided in 'Health for Life' by Noreen Wetton and Trefor Williams (2000) *Health for Life – Ages 8–11*. Nelson Thornes, Cheltenham.



Consultation activities facilitated by Sarah le Vien at a primary school in July 2014



Drawn by an 11 year old boy.

Consultation activities facilitated by Sarah le Vien at a primary school in July 2014

Activity 3: Needs identification – ‘Diamonds’

Purpose

To provide pupils with the opportunity to prioritise what they think are important topic areas within SRE.

Outcomes

By the end of this activity pupils will have:

- identified topics that can be covered in SRE
- prioritised topics that are most important to them now
- suggested new topics that need to be included.

Materials

Board/flipchart

Set of picture/written statements per pair / small group of pupils

Blank cards to draw or write on

Notes to facilitator

This activity works well as a vehicle for small group discussion and helps develop negotiation skills. Some time may need to be spent thinking about what makes good group work before the activity begins. Also consider giving pupils the option to work in same-sex pairs/groups. This may reveal differences in priorities for girls/boys and may be a more comfortable grouping for pupils not used to talking about sex and relationships topics.

Always include blank diamonds for children to write or draw on their own topics. To extend the activity, offer pupils a full set of blank cards to devise their own set of topics.

If pupils have no experience of ranking or prioritising, give a demonstration using another topic, for example think of nine types of playground activities and then organise them in order of preference.

Activities

1. Begin the lesson with a discussion about what is meant by sex and relationships education and whether or not it is important to learn about it.
2. Younger pupils may not have been introduced to the subject as ‘sex and relationships education’. Instead you could ask pupils: ‘Do you think it is important to learn about our bodies, growing up and friendships?’
3. Older pupils will know the word ‘sex’ but may not have a clear definition. Explain that the word ‘sex’ is used to mean ‘girl or boy’ as in the question ‘What sex is the baby?’, and ‘sex’ is also used to mean the way that humans and other animals and plants reproduce. Check that pupils have a broad understanding of the term ‘relationships’. Do they think it is important to learn about relationships?
4. Once you have a shared understanding about what the subject (SRE) is, tell pupils that you want to find out what they think they should be learning about in this subject. Tell them the school will use their ideas to plan lessons in the future.
5. Write the following question up on the board or flipchart: ‘In sex and relationships education, we want to learn about ...’

6. Ask the pupils to work in pairs or groups of three or four and give each pair/group a set of the statements, including a blank card. They can then organise them in order of priority (shaped like a diamond – see below) with their number one priority at the top, two and three on the next row, below them four, five and six, and under those seven and eight, with the least important priority being number nine on its own at the bottom.
7. Older or more able pupils will be able to handle nine or more cards and can discard additional cards that don't fit in the diamond.
8. Younger or less able pupils will cope better with fewer cards so try selecting four cards for them to create a 'diamond four' or a vertical ranking line, or simply encourage them to pick one favourite card from the collection and discuss it.
9. **To extend the activity** for older/more able classes: when the pupils have finished this activity in their pairs, ask each pair to join with another pair. They should work together to agree an order of priorities.
10. Ask each pair or group of four to feed back their top three priorities. Write these on the board/ flipchart. Discuss why the group thought these were the most important priorities.
11. Ask the pupils to review the list of top three priorities on the board/ flipchart and reflect on them in relation to the SRE provided in the school.
12. **To extend the activity further** ask pupils if they wish any of these topics had been covered last year or earlier. They can go back through the diamond cards and sort topics into three piles: those that should have been taught earlier, those that should be taught now and those that should be taught when they are older.

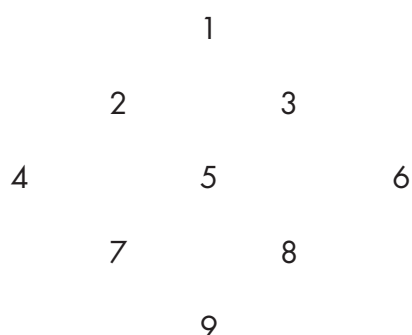


Figure 1: Diamond nine layout, with number one as the highest priority

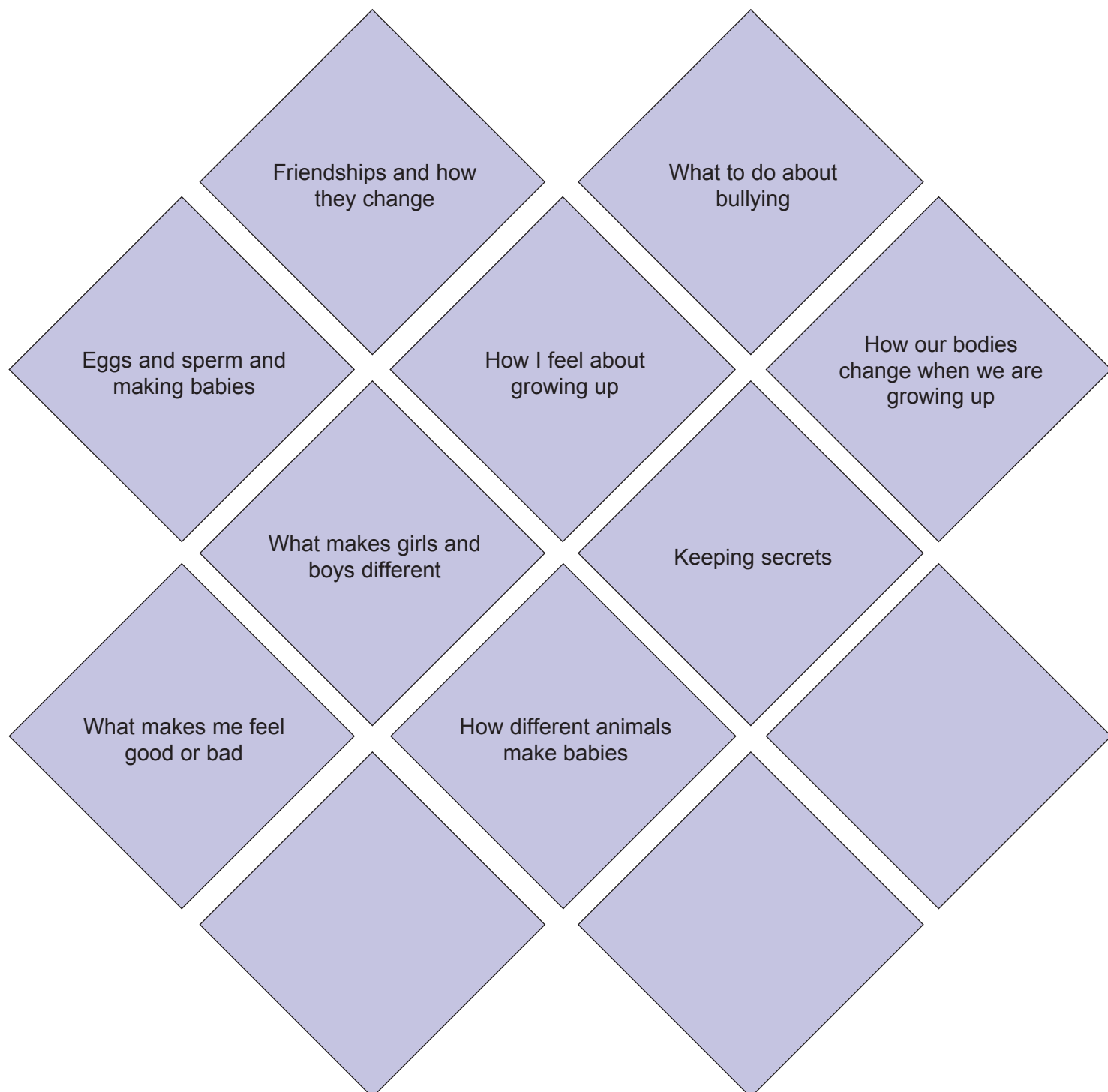
This activity is part of a collection published in [‘Let’s get it right; a toolkit for involving primary school children in reviewing their sex and relationships education’](#).

Activity 4: Needs identification – secondary ‘Diamond 9s’

Age 7–8 statements × 9

Notes to facilitator

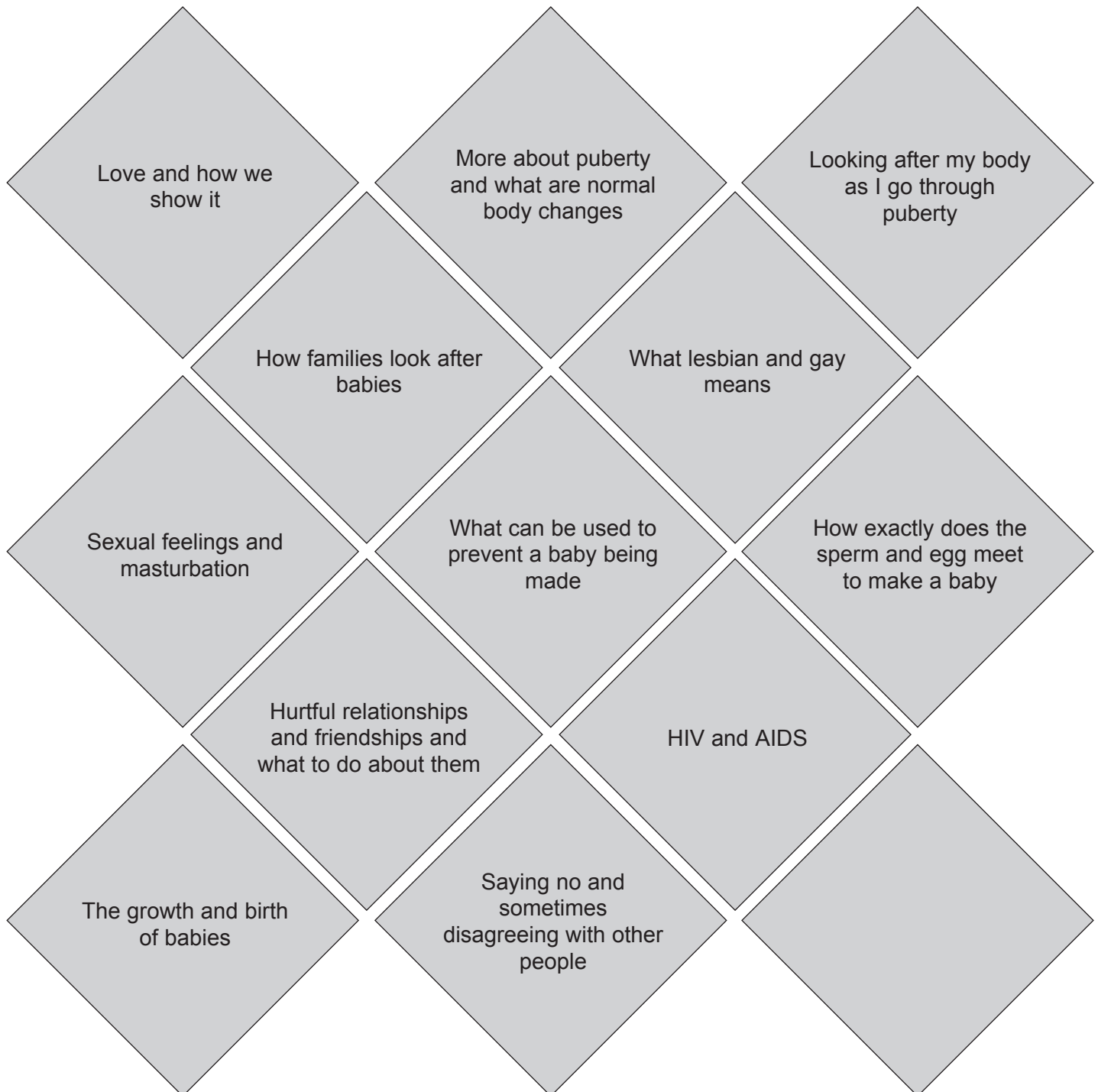
To vary the activity according to pupil ability, select four of the nine cards so that a diamond four (or ranking line) can be built instead of a diamond nine.



Key Stage 2 statements x 12 (ages 9–10)

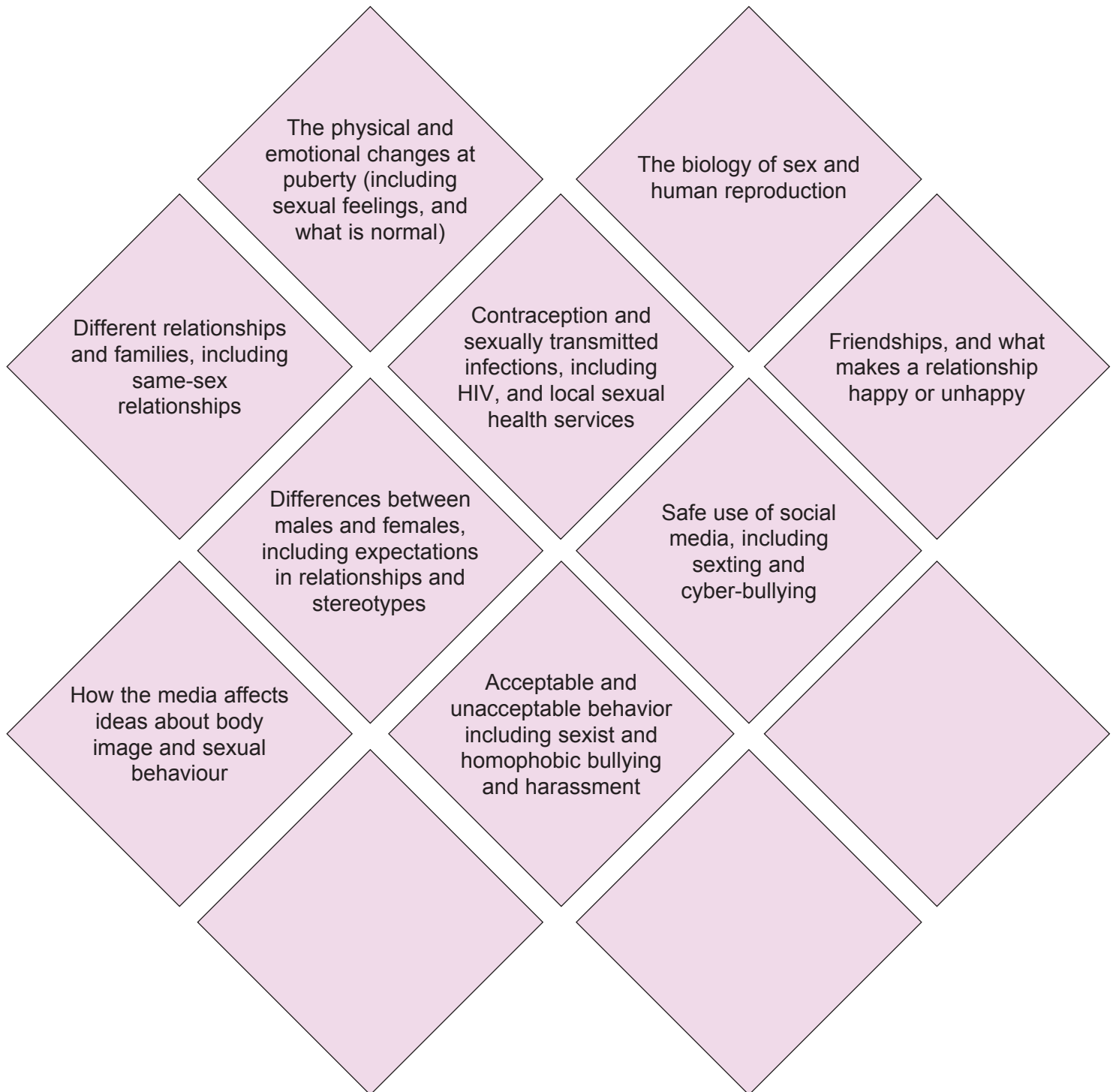
Notes to facilitator

To vary the activity to suit pupil ability, select four or nine cards from the set. More able pupils can work with the full set of cards and discard those that are a lower priority. A further variation is to ask pupils to work in single sex pairs and sort headings into topics they want to learn about in mixed sex groups or single sex groups.



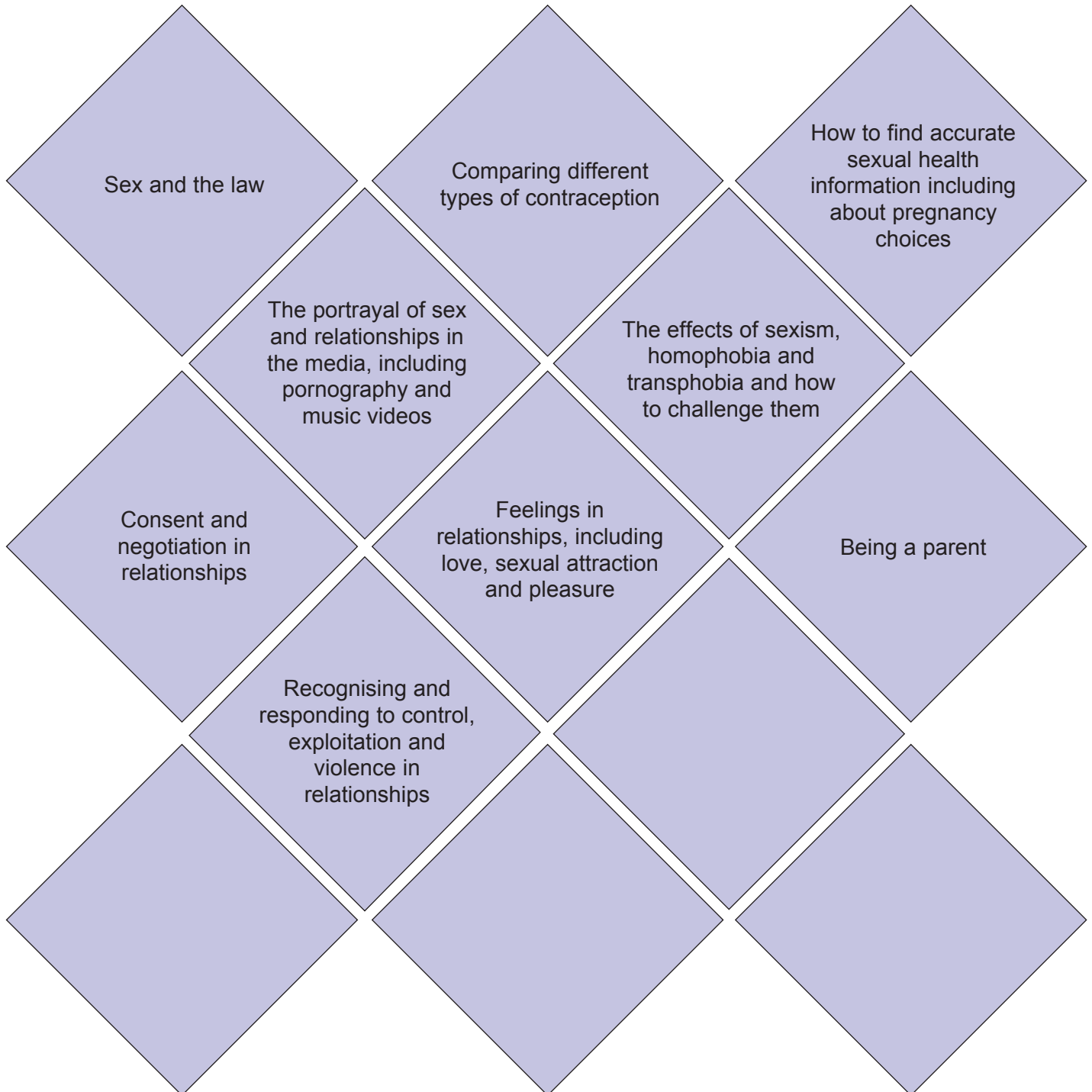
Needs identification – secondary ‘Diamond 9s’

KS3



Needs identification – secondary ‘Diamond 9s’

KS4



Activity 5: Parent survey

Getting started is often the hardest part, particularly if there has been very little dialogue between school and parents about SRE. A review of the school SRE policy provides a good opportunity to initiate contact with parents. Similarly an event such as the HPV vaccination programme or an e-safety project can be a hook. A quick survey will help gauge parents' responses and assess need. In some cases parents are the ones to set the ball rolling by requesting more information about SRE from the school.

Benchmark survey

Carrying out a quick survey with parents can help introduce further discussions about SRE provision at the school and generates useful data against which changes can be measured. Some suggested questions are below.

- Did you know there is a school policy on sex and relationships education (SRE)?
Yes / No / Not sure
- Has your child ever talked to you about something they learnt at school to do with growing up, sex and relationships?
Yes / No / Not sure
- Has your child ever asked you questions about growing up, sex and relationships?
Yes / No / Not sure
- Would you like more information about what the school teaches on sex and relationships?
Yes / No / Maybe
- Do you want more support to help you talk to your child about sex and relationships issues at home?
Yes / No / Not sure

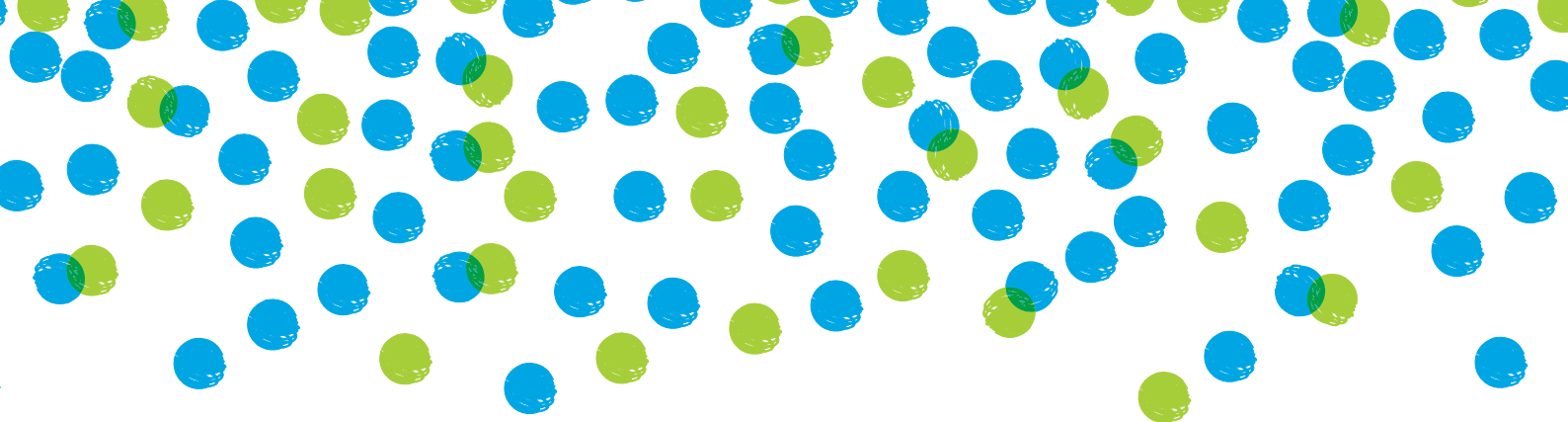
The survey could be carried out using paper-based questionnaires, online surveys or text message response. For more in-depth research with parents, consider holding focus groups.

This activity and further ideas and activities for involving parents and carers in SRE can be found in the Sex Education Forum publication '[Let's work together; a toolkit involving parents and carers in sex and relationships education](#)'.

Activity 6: Staff survey

To make it easy for a range of staff to feed into the policy review process ask the four questions below on a one-to-one basis. Try to include staff who teach / lead on PSHE, citizenship, science and religious education, and staff who have a variety of roles including SENCO, teaching assistant and year heads.

- Do you have any involvement with teaching sex and relationships education (SRE)?
- Have you ever needed to refer to the school SRE policy?
- From what you know about SRE provision at the school how would you rate it? Choose from 'very good', 'good', 'OK' or 'inadequate'?
- Are there any particular issues that you know affect our pupils and which you think could be addressed in SRE?



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Written by Lucy Emmerson and Jane Lees

Sex Education Forum
8 Wakley Street
London EC1V 7QE

Tel: 020 7843 6000

Email: sexedforum@ncb.org.uk

Website: www.sexeducationforum.org.uk



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