

# RSE:

# Our guide for parents

# Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is written for parents and carers of children at Gipsy Hill Federation primary schools. It gives information about new regulations and guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) which comes into effect from September 2020. It gives details about our school's approach to RSE, what we plan to teach in RSE, and also informs parents of their rights.

Our school is committed to supporting pupils to grow and develop academically, socially, emotionally and morally and to do so in a happy, creative environment where differences are valued. RSE has been taught for many years at our school. Our approach is to:

- Provide pupils with the knowledge and skills to be confident, curious and creative members of their community.
- Help pupils to understand and express their feelings and know how to keep healthy and safe from harm.
- Nurture a responsible attitude to personal relationships so pupils develop sensitivity to the needs of others and can enjoy safe, happy and loving relationships.

## What do the new regulations mean for primary schools?

Current regulations and guidance from the DfE states:

- Primary schools must deliver relationships education to all pupils.
- Primary schools must prepare pupils for the physical and emotional changes that occur during adolescence under Health Education regulations.
- Primary schools are encouraged to teach a sex education curriculum, separate to national curriculum science, so pupils' understanding of growing up is not restricted to only learning biological facts, but this has not been made compulsory.
- Primary schools that decide to teach a separate sex education programme must do so in a way that is developmentally appropriate, sensitive to the needs of the pupils and in a way that has due regard to morals and the value of family life.



### Children ranked the most important topics as:

Keeping safe; decision making; reproduction and how babies are made; puberty changes/periods & wet dreams; girls-only lessons about periods.

## What do children want to learn about in RSE?

We want our RSE curriculum to be useful and relevant to the pupils we teach. Since RSE has been taught for many years at our school, our starting point was to gather feedback from Year 6 pupil focus groups to share their views on RSE. We asked their opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of the existing scheme of work they had been taught over the years as well as what they thought pupils needed to learn about in the future. The pupils' valuable feedback was a vital step in reviewing and developing RSE, enabling us to meet the diverse needs of our pupils.

## What do we intend to teach in Relationships Education?

Positive, respectful relationships we have with ourselves, our families, our friends and others are the building blocks of positive relationships. We want to help children develop feelings of self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence, sympathy, empathy, mutual respect and care as they grow up. Our RSE curriculum therefore has the core thread of respect running through all the age groups, and is further developed in the compulsory topics we have to teach of:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being Safe

## What do we intend to teach about health?

As with all RSE, the health education element is based on a spiral approach. Topics start small and age appropriate and develop as the pupils mature and develop:

Younger pupils learn about the people who care for them, the importance of valuing and respecting the capabilities and uniqueness of their bodies, the importance of hygiene, similarities and differences of male and female bodies, and the correct scientific names for body parts.

As pupils mature and progress through the year groups, learning about their body develops too. By the time pupils are in Year 4, RSE lessons give a gentle introduction into the changes that will

happen during puberty so they can be aware and prepared for the changes and to be reassured of whom to turn to for support if they need it.

Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are gradually given more and more information about the physical and emotional changes of puberty, including key facts about the menstrual cycle and menstrual products and about sperm production.

## What do we intend to teach in Sex Education?

In the science curriculum, pupils will learn about human reproductive processes, and how a baby is conceived and born. Our RSE curriculum builds on what pupils learn in science:

In **Year 5**, there is a lesson which might lead to an aspect of sex education, where there is an explanation that sexual reproduction organs start to develop in puberty to prepare the body for reproduction at a later stage and that sexual intercourse is one method of human reproduction.

**Year 6** contains the main sex education content in our RSE curriculum. In the summer term, pupils revise what they learnt in science about human reproduction processes and, through teacher-led discussions, are given the opportunity to explore the importance of love, respect, trust, care and protection in relationships they have now, and may have as they go through adolescence and beyond.

**Year 6** pupils have the opportunity to safely explore what teenage life might bring, to practice assertiveness and decision making skills and ways to assess risk, keep safe and protect themselves in the community and in relationships, including basic information about FGM and the law.

*Pupils are sign-posted to people and agencies they can turn to for help and support if needed.*



# How will parents know when lessons will be taught?

As different year groups will have their module in different terms throughout the year, we will inform parents by letter before a module starts.

Lessons will be delivered by the class teacher or collaboratively with visiting experts following school policies and guidance. Depending on the age group, lessons will vary from between thirty to sixty minutes in duration, and usually one lesson a week. This means that for most year groups a module will easily fit into a half-term.

## How do we ensure pupils feel safe in RSE?

It is very important that RSE takes place in an environment which feels safe to our pupils, where they feel respected and supported, know and respect the boundaries of the lesson, and receive learning support if needed. The teacher will develop ground rules with the class at the start of every RSE lesson based on how the children want to be treated and how they promise to support and treat others:

### Basic ground rules for RSE

- Respect each other (no laughing at someone; no put-downs)
- Be open to different ideas
- No personal questions/information
- Use scientific/respectful language
- It's OK to pass
- All questions are valid
- Not judging others
- Tips and strategies for managing any embarrassment or discomfort
- Teacher allowing a five second giggle if needed
- Identifying appropriate people to talk or ask questions after the lesson

Teachers use different strategies to suit different learning styles of pupils, including stories, videos, and distancing techniques which help pupils to discuss sensitive topics without making them personal.

## How do teachers know what is appropriate for pupils to learn about?

Our RSE curriculum is based on empirical evidence and guidance in child development and maturity. Lesson plans and resources have been selected from trusted sources and adapted to appeal to the needs of our pupils or written specifically with our pupils in mind. At the start of a module, teachers will assess what pupils already know and this will inform how they progress with delivering the scheme of work. Teachers will receive training in the delivery of the curriculum as part of their continuing professional development.

## How are pupils' questions answered?

Asking questions is an important aspect of learning and we encourage pupils to ask questions in RSE too. We want pupils to be informed so they do not need to seek answers online or in other ways that may be unsafe. Teachers will use their professional judgement in answering questions, always taking into account the age, maturity and emotional needs of pupils. This may be through class discussion, individual discussion or encouraging the child to talk with a parent. At the end of every lesson, children are always encouraged to share what they are learning in school with trusted adults at home. In most lessons, pupils will be given information about where to get help and support when needed, including the national NSPCC Childline service.

## Are pupils ever taught in single gender lessons?

Pupils are usually taught as a whole class in RSE, as we believe it is important that they learn together about the normal, natural processes of growing up. However, we recognise that there are times when single gender groupings are more appropriate. The Year 6 focus group also wanted single gender groupings kept in the curriculum and, in Year 5 and Year 6, we have built-in extra opportunities for single-gender discussions as well as whole class teaching.



# What rights do parents have?

We find that parents and pupils often view lessons about growing up in very different ways. Generally for our pupils, it is just another lesson but possibly more exciting. On the whole, we find that pupils are interested and want to learn about themselves. They often feel proud when they recognise that they are building on learning from their experiences at home and in school. They enjoy having the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered sensitively and age-appropriately.

We recognise that parents may want to know more about what will be taught in RSE. Our Relationships and Sex Education Policy, including details about Health Education covered in RSE, is available for parents to view on our school website. Parent information drop-in sessions are often arranged once or twice a year for parents to view the scheme of work, ask questions and seek advice if necessary. Alternatively, parents are invited to speak with the school office to arrange a suitable time to view the curriculum.

## Right to withdraw

Relationships education and health education are national, statutory requirements we have to teach all children and parents cannot ask for their child to be withdrawn from these lessons. Parents also do not have a right to ask for their child to be withdrawn from lessons on human development and reproduction taught in national curriculum science.

Our school has decided to continue teaching sex education outside of what is taught in the science curriculum because we believe it is important in helping to keep pupils informed and safe, especially as they transition to secondary.

We hope parents will agree with our decision. However, if a parent does not want their child to take part in some or all of the sex education provision in RSE, they have the right to request for the child to be withdrawn from the lesson. We would ask that any such request is put in writing to the headteacher. The headteacher will then discuss the nature of the request and, if appropriate, try to reassure the parent. The headteacher may point out that pupils withdrawn from RSE may receive inaccurate information from peers. However, the headteacher must grant the request and provide alternative work for pupils who are withdrawn.

## What could parents do at home?

We encourage and support the partnership between home and school, and we hope that the RSE we teach pupils in school will complement and reinforce the lessons parents teach them at home.

We recognise that parents are the main educators of their children. Talking with children about what is taught in school, sharing views and answering their questions at home, shows children that their parents are happy to talk about feelings, relationships, body safety, and sex, when the time is right.

It is then more likely that the child will develop the confidence to turn to the parent first if they have questions or concerns about growing up.

We know that some parents may feel embarrassed, or simply not know where to start such sensitive conversations with their children, especially young children or children who may not ask questions. The RSE curriculum map gives a broad overview of progression across the year groups. There is more specific information in the chart about what will be taught in your child's year group.

If you have any questions or concerns about what is taught in school, or you would like support in talking with your child about any aspect of growing up, please speak with your child's class teacher or a member of the senior leadership team.

# TOPICS

Key Stage One		Key Stage Two			
Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five	Year Six
Different Friends	Similar and Different	Everybody Needs Respect	Manners and Respect	Body Image and Respect/1 Single gender groups	Puberty Recap Whole class
My Special People	We can be whatever we want to be	Body Differences	Growing and Changing	Body Image and Respect/2 Whole class	2a Puberty What girls want to know Girls-only lesson 2b Puberty What boys want to know Boys-only lesson
We are growing	Our Bodies	Personal Space and Boundaries	What is Puberty?	Puberty - Time to Change	Respecting Myself and Others
Our needs change as we grow	My body belongs to me	Respecting my body	Puberty: Emotions and Feelings	Puberty and the Reproductive System	Healthy Relationships
Everybody has a Body	PANTS Underwear Rule	Families - Help and Support	Healthy Relationships	5a Girls and Puberty (Girls-only lesson) PLUS Puberty Drop-in for Girls 5b Boys and Puberty (Boys-only lesson)	Relationships and Reproduction
Respecting My Body	Families - Love and Care	There is only one me	Self-respect and Happiness	Puberty and Hygiene  PLUS Puberty Drop-in for Boys	6a Protecting ourselves in relationships - including protecting sexual health  6a Protecting ourselves in our communities - including FGM
				Puberty - Emotions, Help and Support	Additional lesson: HIV and AIDS

## What does this mean for Year 3 learning?

### Lesson 1 Everybody needs respect

To talk about what the words *respect* and *disrespect* mean; to reflect and acknowledge how respect and disrespect could make them feel; and to decide class Ground Rules for RSE.

### Lesson 2 Body Differences

To identify that we are all unique; to understand that everyone deserves respect for their differences; and to use scientific words to name male and female body parts.

### Lesson 3 Personal Space and Boundaries

To develop their understanding of personal space and unwanted touch; to consider what appropriate and inappropriate physical contact and consent mean; to appreciate that we have a responsibility to look after our bodies and protect it from harm; and to discuss strategies for dealing with unwanted touch, and who to turn to for help.

### Lesson 4 Respecting my body

To consolidate their learning about body privacy and body safety; to reinforce who their trusted adults are that they can turn to for help or support; and to practise skills they can use to get help and support if needed.

### Lesson 5 Families – Help and Support

To develop their understanding that all families are different and have different family members; to reflect on what family means to them and why family is important in their lives; and to identify who they could turn to for help and support in their family and in their communities.

### Lesson 6 There is only one me

To consolidate learning that each of them is unique; to identify things that make them who they are, and things that make them happy.

## What does this mean for Year 4 learning?

### Lesson 1 Manners and Respect

To consider the value they place on having good manners in their family, in school and in society; that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, including those in a position of authority; and to develop a class motto which illustrates the values of good manners and showing respect they wish to demonstrate.

### Lesson 2 Growing and Changing

To identify what they already know about the human life cycle and the purpose of puberty; to understand that puberty can start from age eight for some children and that puberty changes happens gradually over several years.

### Lesson 3 What is Puberty?

An introduction to the physical and emotional changes that happen in puberty; to understand that each person may experience puberty slightly differently but puberty happens to everyone so they will be able to reproduce if they choose to when they are older.

### Lesson 4 Puberty: Emotions and Feelings

To explore how their feelings and emotions may change during puberty; to understand how relationships may change; and to explain where they can get the help and support they need when going through puberty.

### Lesson 5 Healthy Relationships

To discuss the characteristics of healthy relationships; to understand that respect is important in all relationships, including online relationships; and to explain how friendships can sometimes make people feel unhappy or uncomfortable.

### Lesson 6 Self-respect and Happiness

To consider the importance of self-respect and how this links to our happiness; and learning about showing respect in online relationships

