

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 5 learning?

Lessons 1 Body Image and Respect

Single gender groups to explore how stereotypes and expectations may influence how others treat them and how this, in turn, may affect how they feel about themselves, whatever gender they are.

Lesson 2 Body Image and Respect

Whole class discussion for pupils to share feedback from the previous lesson and discuss next steps in how they intend to treat others and give support in their class, their families and their communities.

Lesson 3 Puberty – Time to Change

To learn more about the physical changes that happen to bodies during puberty, that puberty begins and ends at different times for different people starting from around age eight; and to use scientific vocabulary for external male and female genitalia.

Lesson 4 Puberty and the Reproductive System

To learn how puberty affects the reproductive system; explain and ask questions about menstruation and sperm production, and use scientific vocabulary for external and internal male and female body parts. To understand that the sexual organs and sexual feelings start to develop during puberty in preparation for reproduction at a later stage in life. To understand that they may start to experience romantic 'love' crushes.

Lesson 5 Girls and puberty/Boys and puberty

Single gender lessons learning more about how puberty affects the reproductive systems and why this happen. For girls: to explain and ask questions about menstruation and why this happens; to ask questions about menstrual products and experiment with how they work. For boys: to explain and ask questions about sperm production and wet dreams (nocturnal emissions); to explain why this happens. Girls and boys: to identify sources of help and support if needed.

Lesson 6 Puberty and Hygiene

To understand biological facts about why humans perspire; to explain how and why it is important to keep body parts clean and fresh, especially from puberty onwards; to discuss hygiene products that help clean the skin and those that help control body odour and learn how to use the products safely and appropriately.

Lesson 7 Puberty and Emotions, Help and Support

To consider how and why emotions may change during puberty and how they can get appropriate help, advice and support about puberty if needed.

What does this mean for Year 6 learning?

Lesson 1 Puberty Recap

To identify myths and facts about the physical and emotional changes during puberty; to demonstrate how to begin conversations or ask questions about puberty with people that can help them at home or in school.

Lesson 2a Puberty – What girls want to know?

Lesson 2b Puberty – What boys want to know?

To learn more about the changes that happen to girls and boys during puberty; to provide mutual support and answer questions about puberty using scientific facts and vocabulary in a relaxed single-gender atmosphere.

Lesson 3 Respecting myself and others

To understand the importance of respecting themselves and others, even when others are very different to them; to understand that they can take positive steps to support and maintain equality in relationships.

Lesson 4 Healthy Relationships

To discuss key components of a healthy relationship; discuss how healthy relationships in adolescence are formed and maintained; and to develop their understanding of permission seeking and permission giving in relationships.

Lesson 5 Relationships and Reproduction

A sex education lesson, identifying links between love, committed relationships/marriage and conception; explaining what sexual intercourse is, laws about sexual intercourse and consent, and that sex may be one part of an intimate relationship between consenting adults; and explaining pregnancy and birth.

Lesson 6a Protecting ourselves in relationships

Sex education elements: that we all have the right to be safe in relationships; basic information about contraception; protecting sexual health in the future; and to practise assertiveness skills they can use now and develop through adolescence and adulthood.

Lesson 6b Protecting ourselves in our communities

Safety and safeguarding: to discuss and demonstrate how to assess community risks and develop personal strategies; to learn basic facts about FGM (female genital mutilation), the law, and how to seek help and support to protect themselves from harm if needed.

Additional lesson at teacher's discretion - HIV and AIDS

Sex Education element. To learn basic facts about HIV and how it can progress to AIDS; to dispel myths about HIV transmission; and to give basic information about protection from HIV, e.g. basic information about how condoms protect.

