Frequently Asked Questions about Relationships and Sex Education.

The Department for Education has announced changes to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). These changes came into effect from September 2020 and all schools will be required to comply with the updated requirements, making Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education. It has been 20 years since the last review of these curriculum areas, and in that time the world has changed significantly. Children now face new challenges: they have to process lots of information from different sources such as TV, the internet, social media, understand how society is changing, understand risks they may face, all putting pressure on their physical and mental health.

We believe relationships and sex education is important for our pupils and our school because:

• It is giving children the knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships

• It is about giving children the opportunity to put knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts.

• It is the recognition that everyone faces difficult situations in their lives and how relationship and sex education can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.

We view the partnership of home and school as vital in providing the context to both complement and reinforce what pupils learn at home about healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online, as well as how to be healthy.

Below, we have explained some of the common questions around these subjects.

Will my child be taught sex education at Primary School? Is this too young?

Sex education at Primary school is not compulsory. However, compulsory Relationships Education was introduced in Primary schools from September 2020, to put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships of all kinds. This will start with family and friends, how to treat each other with kindness, and recognising the difference between online and offline friendships. At St Peter's Primary School we currently teach sex education to all children following the Jigsaw scheme of work. Before these lessons take place, the school gives parents the opportunity to understand what will be taught and how it will be approached, and view any materials so that you understand what we propose to teach and how. If you continue to have concerns, you have the right to withdraw from any sex education lessons that go beyond that of the science national curriculum.

We will continue to teach sex education (which focuses on puberty and reproduction). This is only part of the Science National Curriculum for Y5 and Y6. As it is part of the science national curriculum it is compulsory.You have the right to withdraw from any sex education lessons that go beyond that of the science national curriculum.

Is school the best place for discussions about Sex and Relationships?

We know that if children do not get the correct and accurate information about sex and relationships from a reliable source, they will find the information from other sources (friends, older siblings, website, tv) which may not be true or age appropriate. The information gathered during the Government consultation found that most children wanted this information and discussion to be provided in school with their teachers so that they could ask their questions in a safe space, and have them answered in an age-appropriate way.

Do I have a right to withdraw my child from Relationships and Sex Education?

In a Primary School, you have the right to withdraw from any sex education lessons that go beyond that of the science national curriculum. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at Primary or Secondary school as the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

Has the government listened to the views of my community in introducing these subjects?

The Government undertook a wide public consultation which involved discussions with over 90 organisations, as well as the public consultation on the draft regulations and guidance. This has informed the key decisions on these subjects.

Will these subjects promote LGBT relationships?

No, these subjects don't 'promote' anything, they educate. We are teaching about equality. Our school ethos says that we are respectful of everyone. We value ourselves and all others: This means that if someone is black, they are welcome in our school; if someone uses a wheelchair, they are welcome in our school; if someone is gay they are welcome in our school. Pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. These subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships. RSE should meet the needs of all pupils, whatever their developing sexuality or identity – this should include age-appropriate teaching about different types of relationships in the context of the law. In our school the teaching of LGBT will be delivered through teaching about different types of family, including those with same sex parents. All our planned learning will be taught in an age appropriate way.

Are primary children too young to be taught about gay or lesbian people?

Some children grow up in families with gay or lesbian parents. We can't say to a child who has two dads, 'You can't talk about your family!' We want all of our children to know that their family is normal and accepted in school. Our children will interact with people from different backgrounds we want them to treat all members of the community with the same respect. Just like racism, school has a duty of care to challenge any language that may cause offence to others, whether used intentionally or not. Phrases such as "that's so gay" or "that's a girls/boys toy" when used in a

negative manner may unintentionally cause offence to a child or adult. School will challenge this language if it is used by children, parents or visitors as we want everyone to feel welcome.

There might not be children who are gay or transgender here, so why does it need to be mentioned?

We want our children to grow up respectful and tolerant members of our community. As they grow up, make more friends, watch tv, go to different places they will meet people who are gay or transgender. We want them to understand that this is okay that some children when they grow up may be gay. We don't want children growing up thinking something is wrong with them or with people they recognise who are gay or transgender.

My religion says that gay is wrong, so why are you teaching about different sexuality choices?

We are teaching about equality. We understand and respect all faiths. We recognise the tension that it can present. We are teaching children not to be afraid of difference but to celebrate difference. Any discussion or resources used will be to help your child be respectful and tolerant towards others. We are preparing the children for life in Britain. Britain is diverse and they are going to meet people who are different to them as they grow up.

You are confusing my child because at home they are learning that being gay is wrong but at school you are telling them that being gay is OK.

As a parent it is your right to talk to your child about religious beliefs. In school we build our curriculum around UK law. We are teaching children that all people and relationships are equal. We are teaching children that all families are different and your child as they grow up are going to meet people who live in different families. It is important that children learn about people who are different. They need to learn to be tolerant and respectful of people with different views. When they grow up they can make up their own minds about what is right and wrong.

What are the topics covered in RSE?

In school RSE topics will taught within our Personal Social and Health Education (Character education) curriculum.

Being Me in my World

Celebrating Difference

Dreams and Goals

Healthy Me

Relationships

Changing Me

How will we know what is being taught so I can talk to my child about it at home?

Parents will normally be given opportunities to attend different meetings to understand how the curriculum is being planned to be taught, due to Covid restrictions we will be putting information on our website and inviting parents to contact teachers if they have further questions. As the curriculum planning develops parents will have the opportunity to look at materials that will be used. At the beginning of each year there will be an opportunity to discuss with the class teacher the years curriculum.

Will this work prompt my children to ask challenging questions?

Possibly, your child or children trust you and will be likely to ask you questions to test your beliefs and opinions. Please don't avoid them, talk openly about diversity and equality.

How do I explain what 'gay' means to my child?

'Gay' is when a man loves a man. 'Lesbian' is when two women love each other. 'Bi sexual' is when a person can love both men and women. 'Transgender' is when a person feels different about the body they were born into; we are all assigned a gender at birth and sometimes when we get older we may feel differently about this. Some people say there are 'boy' things or 'girl things' but we say this is not the case and boys and girls can do the same sort of things if they want.

But brothers love brothers and sisters love sisters and fathers love sons. Does that make them gay?

When two brothers or sisters love each other, it doesn't mean they are gay. This is different kind of love. We may love our mum but we don't want to marry them. Some people grow up and fall in love with a person of the same gender.

What do I say when my child comes home and asks, 'How can two men love each other?'

People are different. Some men do love other men. In the UK two men or women can get married in the same way that a man can marry a woman.

What do I say if my child comes home and asks, 'how can two men/women have a baby?'

Lots of people have children in different ways, like fostering, adoption or step families. These are all families. They look after one another and love one another so they are the same in many ways. Some families have a mum and dad. Some families have a mum and a mum. Some families have two dads. Some families have one mum or dad or one grandparent. All families are different and that it is ok.