

12th March 2021

Dear Families,

As a part of your child's educational experience at Holy Trinity C of E Primary School, we aim to promote personal wellbeing and development through a comprehensive programme of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. This curriculum aims to give children and young people the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live healthy, safe, productive and fulfilled lives, both now and in the future.

The Department for Education has made changes to Relationships and Sex Education following nationwide consultation, which came into effect from September 2020 and all schools are required to comply with the updated requirements. The statutory guidance can be found at:

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

Consequently, from September 2020, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), along with Health Education, has been statutory, and forms part of the National Curriculum. Parts of sex education remains non-statutory, but the DfE recommends that schools have a sex education programme tailored to the age, and physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. All maintained schools should continue teaching reproduction as part of the Science National Curriculum.

As a result of the pandemic schools have been given additional time to prepare the RSE policy documents and to implement the curriculum at the beginning of the Summer Term 2021.

What is Relationships Education?

Most schools are already delivering very effective Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and the new guidance is simply about ensuring that **all** children get the information they need and want. The lessons will help children to learn about their bodies including the changes that take place at puberty, and will help keep them safe, so they can form healthy relationships (friendships) with others, now and in the future.

Relationships Education teaches the fundamental building blocks of positive relationships, focusing on friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other peers and adults. The DfE guidance focuses on healthy relationships and keeping children safe in the modern world. It also covers a wide range of topics relating to physical and mental health, wellbeing, safeguarding and healthy relationships. Learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up will give children and young people the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships and help them take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

We have reviewed our RSE curriculum and policy so we can be sure our RSE provision is appropriate for our pupils and reflects:

- our pupils' age
- their physical and emotional maturity
- their religious and cultural backgrounds
- all special educational needs and disabilities
- the values of our school community
- what pupils need to know to be healthy and safe in school, in their personal relationships and in the wider world.

At our school we are using the leading children's health and wellbeing charity, Coram Life Education (CLE) to support us in meeting these legal requirements. More information about Coram Life Education and SCARF can be found on their website:

www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk

Research shows that not delivering this vital education puts our children at greater risk of poor mental health. We know this because every year, around 25% of girls start their periods before learning about them at school. This can result in them agonising over why they are bleeding and how serious the cause might be. Similarly, 38% of boys experience wet dreams before having learnt about them, leaving them open to shame and stigma over a natural bodily function; this can lead to problems later in life. Current government Sex and Relationships Education guidance states that children should learn about puberty before they experience it, but clearly this isn't happening in some schools – one of the reasons why making this subject statutory in all schools is so important.

We also know that RSE has a protective factor when it comes to safeguarding children. 1 in 20 children are sexually abused and 1 in 3 of these do not report this to an adult. Sexual abuse can happen to any child; the best way to safeguard children is to ensure that they receive information on naming parts of their body, knowing the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch, and having the skills and confidence to find and talk to a trusted adult to report any abuse.

Research now shows that children with better health (including mental health) and wellbeing are likely to achieve better academically. By learning about positive relationships, respect for themselves and others, and behaving appropriately and safely online, they are better able to enjoy their friendships and therefore focus more at school.

There is sometimes concern that RSE in school might promote sexual experimentation or cause confusion about an individual's sexuality. Research on quality Relationships and Sex education in the UK by the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles team consistently shows that men and women who reported that *lessons at school were their main source of information about sex* were more likely to have started having sex at a **later age** than those for whom parents or other sources were their main source.

We recognise that parents play a vital part in their child's RSE, and we encourage you to discuss these themes with your child at home as well. If further advice or support is required, or if you have any questions about the programme or would like to view the resources, please don't hesitate to ask us.

Parental Consultation

Whilst we are aware there may be differences of opinion about this, we hope that consulting with you will help to inform our school's decisions on when and how certain content is covered and enable us to reach a general consensus. Consequently, as part of our curriculum review, we would welcome your views on:

- Our draft policy for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
- When and how certain content within this subject is covered.

What is taught, and how, is ultimately a decision for the school and consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content as schools are legally required to teach the National Curriculum. The right to withdraw children from **some** lessons is explained in our policy.

In our current situation, it makes it a little more challenging to consult with you. However to help you understand the curriculum requirements, information can be found on our website which we encourage you to read. This includes:

- A summary of what all pupils are expected to know by the end of primary school
- FAQ sheet

- Our proposed draft policy
- DfE guidance that outlines statutory requirements – or use link above
- Defining Sex Education
- Yearly PSHE overviews (which include RSE) for Years 1 to 6
- SCARF information which includes how you as a parent can support your child in this area

All the documents listed can be found at: <https://holy-trinity-cofe-primary-school-surrey.secure-primariesite.net/rse/>

If you would like to read more about this area of education, there is a useful guide https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/812593/RSE_primary_schools_guide_for_parents.pdf

If after reading all the above information you would like to contribute towards this consultation with any comments or concerns, then please email the school at school@htp.tamat.org.uk Please do this by Friday 19th March and mark for the attention of Mrs Ambrose. Any views will be taken into consideration, the policy and curriculum overviews will then be reviewed and if necessary, updated, they will then be approved by the Holy Trinity governors and uploaded to our website for the start of the summer term.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Liz Ambrose
Head of School