



18 September 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Relationships and Sex Education

As you may already be aware, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), along with Health Education, is now part of the National Curriculum. The purpose of this curriculum is to provide knowledge and understanding of safe and healthy relationships based on respect. This is to encourage the development of safe and healthy relationships throughout life.

We believe that promoting the health and well-being of our students is an important part of their overall education. We do this through our Ethics and Character Education curriculum during the first term back, where Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) plays an important part in the Year 9 scheme of work. We will be teaching lessons about RSE in the Autumn term which will include topics such as: consent, contraception, prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, gender identity, homosexuality and stereotypes. During the course, students will be able to ask questions, which will be answered factually and in an age appropriate manner. Each student's privacy will be respected and no one will be asked to reveal personal information.

Some parts of RSE are compulsory; these areas are also part of the National Curriculum for Science. If you feel you would prefer for your child not to participate in the sex education delivered as part of RSE in secondary schools, which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, will be granted up to three terms before your child turns 16, please let us know. However, we believe that the presentation of sexual images in social and other media make it important that all young people have a place to discuss pressures, check facts and dispel myths. Even if a child is withdrawn, many pupils will discuss such issues with each other outside the classroom - so, rather than hear about the content second-hand, we hope all children will have the opportunity to take part in our carefully planned lessons.

Should you have any queries, you are welcome to contact me at school to discuss the programme further.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs E Phelan
Assistant Headteacher

Relationships and Sex Education – Frequently Asked Questions

What are the aims of RSE in our school?

Depending on the age of the children and the lessons in their particular year group, we want RSE to:

- *Develop the confidence to talk, listen and think about their feelings and relationships*
- *Develop friendship/relationship skills*
- *Develop positive attitudes, values and self esteem*
- *Provide knowledge and understanding about puberty and the changes that will take place*
- *Provide knowledge and understanding about reproduction and sexuality*
- *Address concerns and correct misunderstanding that children may have gained from the media and peers*
- *Develop skills to help children protect themselves against unwanted sexual experience*
- *Know where and how to seek help*

Can you explain the school's RSE Morals and Values Framework?

RSE follows the school's agreed aims, values and moral framework which is sensitive to the needs and beliefs of pupils, parents/carers and other members of the school community. RSE will be delivered within the school's agreed equal opportunities framework.

RSE will support the importance of personal identity, equality, marriage or stable relationships, for family life and bringing up children. Care is taken to ensure there is no stigmatization of children based on their different home circumstances.

Pupils will be encouraged to understand that thinking about morals and values also includes:

- *Respect for self and others*
- *Commitment, trust and love within relationships*
- *Understanding diversity regarding religion, culture and sexual orientation*
- *Honesty with self and others*
- *Self-awareness*
- *Exploration of rights, duties and responsibilities*

Misunderstandings about RSE

There is sometimes concern that RSE in school might promote sexual activity or cause confusion about an individual's sexuality. Analysis by the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles team over several years consistently shows that men and women who said 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. Schools have an important role to play in RSE.