



4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent,

As part of your child's educational experience at St Margarets, we aim to promote personal well-being and development through a comprehensive taught programme of Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) that gives 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.

As you may already be aware, the Department for Education has announced changes to relationships and sex education following nationwide consultation. These changes are to come into effect by the end of the Summer term 2021. All schools will be required to comply with the updated requirements. The statutory guidance can be found at:

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

The new 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, well-being, 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 well-being. Consequently, from the Summer term 2021, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) along with Health Education, will be statutory and form part of the National Curriculum.

As a result of this new guidance, we have been reviewing our PSHE/RSE curriculum and policy so we can be sure our RSE provision is appropriate for our children based on their age, physical and emotional maturity, religious and cultural backgrounds and special educational needs and disabilities.

Whilst I am sure that there will be differences of opinions about this, we hope that consulting with you will help to inform our schools' 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 PSHE/RSE policy and when and where content 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 the policy which accompanies this consultation. We are currently in unprecedented times, which makes it a little more challenging to consult with you. However, to help you to understand the curriculum requirements, we have placed information on our website which we would encourage you to read. This includes a summary of:

- what all children are expected to know by the end of primary school and when we are proposing to cover certain topics.
- FAQ sheet
- our proposed draft policy
- link to DfE guidance that outlines statutory requirements
- a PowerPoint presentation for parents, which unfortunately we cannot now share with you in person.

St Margarets will be starting their consultation process on **Monday 25th January 2021** and the consultation will close on **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021**.

**St Margaret's at Hasbury Church of England Primary School and Nursery**  
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EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY, HAPPY TO LEARN

Your views are important to us and we will respond to you on the outcome of this process later in the Spring term. Once we have considered all the feedback, the updated PSHE/RSE Policy will be uploaded to the school's website along with the new curriculum outline.

I hope you will find the information we have provided helpful. If you have any questions or if you would like to respond to the consultation process please send in your comments or queries to [info@hasbury.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:info@hasbury.dudley.sch.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Hill  
(Deputy Headteacher)



## **Relationships and Sex Education expectations**

This is an outline of what children should know by the end of primary school.

### **Families and people who care for me**

- That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability
- The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives
- That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different to their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterized by love and care
- That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up
- That marriage represents a formal and legally recognized commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong
- How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed

### **Caring friendships**

- How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends
- The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties
- That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded
- That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right
- How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to managing these situations and how to seek help or advice from others if needed

### **Respectful relationships**

- The importance of respecting others, even when they're very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs
- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships



- The conventions of courtesy and manners
- The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness
- That in school and in the wider world they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show respect to others, including those in positions of authority
- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help
- What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive
- The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults

### **Online relationships**

- That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they're not
- That the same principles apply to online relationships as face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for other online (even when we're anonymous)
- The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them
- How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they've never met
- How information and data is shared and used online

### **Being safe**

- What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)
- About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults (including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe)
- That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate/unsafe physical and other contact
- How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) who they don't know
- How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult
- How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they're heard
- How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so
- Where to get advice (e.g. family, school, other sources)

### **FAQs about Relationships and Sex Education**



The Department for Education has announced changes to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). These changes will come into effect from September 2020 with all schools having their RSE curriculum in place by the Summer term of 2020/1. All schools will be required to comply with the updated requirements, making Relationships Education compulsory for all children 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 children 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 gives 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 recognises 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.

### **So why now?**

The Equality Act came into force in 2010. The Equality Act 2010 states that it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation (Government, 2010, p1)

The public sector Equality Duty came into force on 5th April 2011 and requires that public bodies (including schools):

- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. (Government Equalities Office 2013, p1). This makes it clear that promoting some of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act while ignoring others is against UK law.



### **Teaching about equality is teaching about:**

- Difference
- Acceptance
- Tolerance
- Diversity
- How to challenge discrimination? Teaching about equality helps our children to prepare for the next stages in their lives.

We view the partnership of home and school as vital in providing the context to both complement and reinforce what children 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 is being 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 Margarets we currently teach sex education to children in Year 5 and 6 (which goes beyond the existing national curriculum for Science). 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. We give parents of children in Year 5 and 6 the opportunity to discuss this and to share materials. 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 from surveys of children, that if they 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, T.V) 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.

### **Does the new Relationships Education and RSE curriculum take account of my faith?**

The RSE curriculum is designed to help children from all backgrounds build positive and safe relationships, and to thrive in modern Britain. Our School has a Christian religious character, and we



believe that teaching about relationships builds on our core Christian values of love and respect and is in line with the Church's teaching. The Church of England's charter for Relationship, Sex and Health Education states:

'Everyone will be treated with dignity as all people are made in the image of God and loved equally by God. All children have a right to an education which enables them to flourish and is set in a learning community where differences of lifestyle and opinion (within that which is permissible under UK law) are treated with dignity and respect'.

### **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. Children 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 children about healthy relationships. RSE should meet the needs of all children, 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. You will be informed about all learning that is taking place.

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

Some children grow up in families with gay or lesbian people. 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 are no 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 be taught within our Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum. In school we use the Jigsaw PSHE curriculum. An overview of topics covered can be found on our website.

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

Parents will be given opportunities to review the curriculum and to ask questions about how it will be taught. 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 year's curriculum. Each term parents will have access via the school website to this information and the curriculum newsletter will summarise what is being taught. If you need to discuss this further, teachers will be happy to discuss this with you or signpost other resources that can be used at home to support discussions.

**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 a 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 is okay.

### **What legal rights do parents have regarding Relationships and Sex Education and Relationships and Health Education? Do you have to teach my child about sex and education or do I have a choice?**

Relationships and Health Education is statutory which means that all schools must teach it. Sex education is not compulsory in Primary schools. At St Margarets, we made the decision that we will teach sex education both in the Science curriculum (which has been in place since 2014) and also through RSE sessions. Parents will have the right to withdraw their child from these sessions, as outlined in our policy.

### **What exactly is my child being taught in 'Relationships' Education?**

The content and context of relationships education is based around the concept of 'my family' and 'my friends'. Our curriculum teaches children about safe, positive and happy relationships with families and friends both in the real world and online. This also includes mental health and bullying

### **Can I see the content of the curriculum in terms of lesson plans and resources being used?**

An annual overview of all aspects of PSHE and RSE will be sent out to parents at the beginning of the school year. This will show the elements of the lessons being taught each term. As with the puberty lessons and resources, we can share information about other aspects of the curriculum too. This is because we actively encourage our parents to talk to the children about their learning.

### **Will I know what is my child being taught each term to enable me to support school in teaching my child?**

This overview will also be posted on our website - please see the curriculum area on the website for full details.

### **How will PSHE/RSE be balanced with faith/religious views?**

At St Margarets, we have a diverse community and actively celebrate this. To support this, every year group has a unit within the curriculum specifically dedicated to 'Celebrating Differences'. We urge parents to talk to a member of staff such as the class teacher, RE leader or the PSHE leader if they have any concerns.

### **When will my child see images of same sex relationships in RHE?**

Currently same sex relationships are not taught until the summer term of Y5. At this stage, the learning centres around different types of families. There are some picture books which we will use depicting diversity in their illustrations including people of different faiths, disabilities and same sex couples. This does not mean that same sex relationships would be taught in younger age groups. Our rationale is purely to ensure that all of our families feel included and valued. If any questions about sexuality were to be raised by children, they would be dealt with in an individual age-appropriate manner and not as part of a whole class session.

### **How will the school answer any questions raised by children regarding same sex relationships?**



If a question did arise, we would simply explain that it's just another type of family and move on with the lesson. This is because, as explained above, the concept of same sex relationships will not be covered until the Summer term of Y5. Is puberty taught to boys and girls separately? As a school, we work closely with the School Nurse service and, as many of our parents have expressed this preference, we have ensured that boys and girls are taught about puberty in separate groups. We do know that other schools do teach puberty in mixed classes, but we would consult parents to explain the rationale for this if we had plans to change the current model.

**Will parents be informed if outside agencies are delivering aspects of the RHE curriculum?**

Parents are informed when outside agencies are coming in – this takes a variety of forms (website, specific letter, newsletter and on ClassDojo). Parents will always be told when the children will be learning about puberty and will be given an opportunity to see the resources that will be used. Although parents are not able to withdraw their children from these lessons, we recognise that many parents will want to have these conversations with their child too and this is encouraged.

**Within the RSE curriculum, when is the language of 'boyfriend/girlfriend' used with the children?** Within the Jigsaw programme this lesson is taught in Year 6. This lesson is about understanding how being physically attracted to someone changes the nature of a relationship and it helps children to express how they feel about the growing independence of becoming a teenager and being confident that they can cope with this.

**What support can the school offer in terms of speak to my child about relationships and health issues?**

We are happy to support any parent with any aspect of the curriculum including relationships and health. Please talk to a member of staff who will be happy to help.