

Changes to the Personal, Social and Health Education/Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum in 2021

Parents/Carers: Frequently asked questions

1. What is changing from September 2020?

Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) is taught in almost all primary schools, however it has never been statutory. The Government has now made it statutory from September 2020. The Lockdown has interfered with this, so the Government has asked that schools aim to have statutory PSHE in place by September 2021. It doesn't change a great deal at Sundridge, as we have always taught this subject. There are also changes regarding Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). This is part of our PSHE curriculum, and teaches children about topics such as puberty and how to keep their bodies safe. It also covers relationships of all types and how to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships, including those in the online world. Many parents worry that RSE, which includes Sex Education, means we will be teaching their children all about sexual intercourse. This is not the case at Sundridge, although some primary schools do choose to do this.

2. What will be taught in each year group?

PSHE covers a huge amount of topics. These vary from year group to year group. All pupils learn about keeping safe. In KS1 they learn about water, fire and sun safety. Older pupils learn about being safe online and about the dangers of smoking, alcohol and medicines/drugs. They learn about how to be healthy, friendships, social skills and mental health. They also look at issues such as equality, racism, the environment and peer pressure. In RSE, most of the learning takes place in Years 4, 5 and 6, where they learn about puberty. However, the early foundations of RSE are developed throughout the infants where we teach children about how humans change over time, boys and girls, looking after babies, families, good and bad relationships and personal hygiene. The correct body names for genitals are introduced very carefully and gradually throughout school. Children should be able to use the scientific names for all body parts, including external and internal genitalia by the end of KS2. This gives all children a unified language for which to talk about health and keeping safe. There is an overview of these lessons on the school website.

3. Can I withdraw my child from these lessons?

In the past you could opt out of puberty lessons. This content is now statutory, which means that children cannot be withdrawn. It is recommended that if you have any concerns about the content of puberty lessons, you should speak to the class teacher, Mrs Barron (PSHE/RSE Lead) or Mrs Brudenell. They can discuss concerns or queries with you and show you the lesson.

4. Can I see the lessons in advance?

Yes! The 'Growing and Changing' unit is always taught in the summer term and teachers will inform you in advance. There will be overviews of these lessons on our website.

5. Why are you teaching children the correct names for body parts?

Sadly, some children experience sexual abuse. Knowing the correct body parts gives pupils a language to talk to adults about without any misunderstanding. Body parts are just science words and knowing them will enable and empower children to talk in lessons, to teachers, parents and doctors about puberty, health and safeguarding.

6. What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the term we use to describe how all people within the school work together to keep everyone safe. Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means: protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to children's health or development, and ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care. We use our PSHE and RSE curriculum to help to support this.

7. What is actually taught about same-sex relationships?

Same-sex relationships are part of British life. We do not teach lessons just about LGBTQ+ people, but lessons to all pupils may include story books or case studies where a same-sex relationship is included, e.g. a child with two dads. Families include more than just a mum and dad with two children, so we aim to use resources that represent a wide range of family types. Children in foster families, children living with a single parent, children living with grandparents or children with same-sex parents may all be represented. Children in modern Britain are very used to seeing different types of people and families on television in programmes on Cbeebies and CBBC, or on programmes aimed at adults and teens.

8. Will the content go against my religious beliefs?

Absolutely not. All our PSHE and RSE content is from a scheme called SCARF. They value diversity and respect the beliefs of all. British Values are taught at school and it is very important to us that respect, tolerance and equality are part of our curriculum. The Government believes that all children should know how their bodies work and be prepared for puberty. All children should be taught to respect and tolerate different beliefs, religions, sexualities and races.

9. Why is the teaching of puberty starting in Year 3 now?

Many children now start puberty at around age 8. Some girls start their periods between ages 8 and 11. The age has been getting younger due to children being bigger and healthier than in the past. This has tricked the brain into triggering sex hormones slightly earlier. Therefore, we teach puberty from Year 3. Periods are introduced in year 4, with more detail on this in year 5 and 6. The content in year 3 is very basic and more of an introduction.

10. What can I do if I have any further questions?

Have a look at the resources and information on the website. You can ring or email school, or speak to the class teacher. Mrs Barron is the lead teacher for PSHE and RSE. She will be happy to answer questions or give further information. Mrs Brudenell will also be able to help.

You can read the PSHE and RSE policies by following this link:

<https://www.sundridge.bham.sch.uk/key-information/policies>