



23rd April 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

The Department for Education has announced changes to Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) statutory guidance. These changes will come into effect from September 2020 and all schools will be required to comply with the updated requirements. Due to the impact of Covid-19 this has now been extended to the Summer Term 2021.

As a school, we successfully implement the PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) curriculum through the use of Dimensions 3D PSHE; a well-respected and highly valued scheme of learning that is used in many primary schools nationally. In light of these changes, we are reviewing our curriculum and policy, so we can be sure our provision is appropriate for our pupils based on:

- Age and maturity levels, as well as their cultural and religious backgrounds
- The values of our school community
- Every pupil's learning needs
- What pupils need to know to be healthy and safe in school, in their personal relationships and in the wider world
- What pupils need to know in order to be prepared for puberty and give them an understanding of, and the importance of, health and hygiene
- The importance of developing feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Creating a positive culture around issues of safe loving relationships

Our PSHE curriculum underpins our whole school ethos and in addition to this, is taught in discrete lessons, to help ensure our PSHE curriculum incorporates not only the statutory guidance, but also our school's needs. As a school, we are required to provide parents with a copy of the school policy for this and a clear outline of the content of our proposed approach. This information is available via the school website through the main 'Parent' tab and we are offering parents an opportunity to respond to this information through a consultation process, which is outlined on the school website. This consultation period will run until noon on Friday May 7th 2021.

There is a very serious safeguarding aspect to this work and obviously, the younger year groups are not looking at these issues directly and explicitly but rather learning correct terminology for body parts and doing the foundation work for later year groups. For EYFS, we will continue to follow the Development Matters guidance which incorporates Making Relationships strand within Personal, Social and Emotional Development and People and Communities strand within Understanding the World. Whereas the Year 6 lessons look more fully at puberty and human reproduction, following on from the related Year 5 Science objectives.

At Yew Tree Primary Academy, we believe that:

- Knowledge empowers and protects children as long as it is age-appropriate.
- At secondary school, sex education is statutory and we believe that primary schools should prepare children with accurate knowledge about puberty and human reproduction before they transfer to secondary school.

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- Teaching about puberty before children experience it is essential to ensure that pupils' physical, emotional and learning needs are met and that they have the correct information about how to take care of their bodies and keep themselves safe
- Correct terminology for body parts should be introduced early to normalise this biological vocabulary and to support safeguarding. These words are not used in isolation, ensuring children know these are private parts of their bodies.
- Puberty should be introduced gently in Y3 because some girls may start their periods early and it is necessary to prepare them for this, so they aren't scared or worried.
- Conception needs to be introduced age-appropriately in Y4 in the context of understanding why our bodies change during puberty. Understanding of Human Reproduction, conception and puberty is built upon in Y5 and then puberty (also linked to National Curriculum Science objectives), conception and childbirth is age-appropriately covered in Y6.

“Sex Education is not compulsory in primary schools.” Although, “the Department continues to recommend....that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.” Please note, the lessons focused on puberty fulfils the requirements that sit under the ‘Changing Adolescent Body’ strand of statutory Health Education, and parents cannot withdraw their children from this.

We have consulted with staff and governors on how we can make sure that our updated RSE curriculum meets the new requirements as well as the needs of our pupils. Unfortunately, due to these unprecedented times we are unable to hold a face-to-face group meeting with parents to discuss the policy. However, if you wish to discuss anything further, please can you ring the school or speak to your child's class teacher by Wednesday 5th May 2021. If we do not hear from you before this date, we will take it that you are happy with the information shared within the draft policy.

Further specific information will be shared with families of our Y6 pupils regarding the focus within each of the Relationships and Sex Education lessons for this class. At this point, these families will have the opportunity to meet with members of staff virtually to ask any questions they may have, before giving or withdrawing permission for their child to take part in these lessons.

Thank you for your continued support.

Mrs A Parkinson
(PSHE Lead)

Mrs R O'Hanlon
(Principal)

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