



RE: RSHE education

Dear Parents and carers,

As you know, we have a legal duty to deliver Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education within our school.

These lessons aim to give young people the skills and knowledge they need to form happy, safe and healthy relationships throughout their lives. We have attached a summary of the topics covered, which shows the range of learning that will be delivered (lessons will be age appropriate and will consider the needs of our pupils). These include lessons on staying safe online, emotional and mental health, dealing with peer pressure, respecting others, and the risks of illegal drugs.

Relationships and Sex education also covers topics such as contraception, the law around consent and abuse, and knowing when we are ready for intimate relationships.

Research has shown that young people who receive this kind of information at school are more aware of the risks of harm and abuse, especially in their online lives, and are more likely to report any problems they may have. They are also more likely to delay having their first sexual experience and to practice safe sex.

As these lessons are so important, the right to take your child out of them has been changed. There is now no right to take your child out of relationships education or health education.

Parents do have the right to take their child out of sex education that is delivered as part of relationships or health education. However, we hope that you will agree with us that these lessons are extremely important to your child.

Please note that once a child is within three terms of their 16th birthday, they can choose to take part in the lessons without parental consent.

We have set out how we define these topics in our curriculum map and policy. We have included these definitions within this letter so you can see what will be taught in each subject.

We understand that parents may have questions about some aspects of these lessons and will be happy to discuss these with you. In the first instance please email me at: aishakhan@benshammanor.com

Thank you for your support with this.

Yours sincerely,

Aisha Khan (lead teacher of PSHCE).

Definitions – secondary school

Relationships and sex education

We define relationships and sex education as teaching the facts about how to form happy, healthy relationships with other people. This learning includes information on different types of relationship, such as friendship or marriage, how to decide whether someone is trustworthy, and knowing how to get help when something is wrong or unsafe. Lessons will cover respect, good manners, privacy and consent, as well as an understanding of the harms caused by stereotyping and prejudice. Pupils will learn the law around relationships, such as what constitutes harassment and sexual violence, and the legal requirement to treat everyone equally. They will learn about harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation and domestic abuse, and will study how to communicate and recognise consent in all contexts.

Pupils will also learn about how their rights and responsibilities when online, and the risks that they may encounter, such as the sharing of images and the harm caused by viewing online material such as pornography and hate videos.

Sex education within relationships education

The majority of learning within relationships education is concerned with relationships in general. However, some content is specifically designed to help young people prepare for adulthood so they are able to enjoy safe, respectful and healthy sex lives. This content is:

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women, and menopause.
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy, and options available.
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.
- about the prevalence of some Sexually Transmitted Infections, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour

- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

These elements are the only parts of the relationships curriculum from which parents may withdraw their child. Pupils can choose to take part without parental consent from three terms before their 16th birthday.

Health education

Health education covers both physical and mental health. Pupils will learn how to talk about their emotions using correct vocabulary, and to think about how their actions may affect their mental health. They will also learn positive ways to improve their mental wellbeing, such as physical exercise or connection with other people.

Pupils will learn about how their emotions may be affected by their online lives, for example through exposure to unrealistic ideas about body image, or gambling. They will consider issues such as cyberbullying and online abuse and learn where to get help if they have been affected by these behaviours.

Physical health will also be looked at in terms of risks such as smoking, alcohol and drug use, and the importance of a healthy diet. Personal hygiene and dental health will be taught together with facts about immunisation, the importance of sleep, and basic first aid.

Lessons will also cover the facts about puberty and how this can affect physical and mental health, together with information about periods and body changes as we grow up.