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*Part of the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership*

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Thursday 11th March, 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

## **Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)**

### **What are the aims of RSHE in primary schools?**

*“Today’s children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.”*

- DfE

Since September 2020, Relationships and Health Education has been compulsory in all primary schools in England. However, due to the pandemic, schools do not need to implement the new guidance until the summer term.

For children in primary school, the statutory requirements in terms of curriculum content are under two headings:

### **Relationships Education**

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring Friendships
- Respectful Relationships
- Online Relationships
- Being safe

### **Health Education**

- Mental wellbeing
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy Eating
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Health and prevention
- Basic first aid
- Changing adolescent body



This DfE guidance states the statutory requirements, i.e. what children **must** be taught by the end of primary school. Health Education includes learning about *'the changing adolescent body'* to equip children to understand and cope with puberty.

### Why is the RSHE curriculum needed?

There are four main aims for teaching RSE within the context of Primary School PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education):

- More than ever before, children are exposed to representations of sex and sexuality through the social culture around them. The unregulated content on the internet or social media, can mean children may be exposed to dangerous, confusing or scary content. We can prepare them for this by presenting a balanced view of positive healthy relationships to help them to be discerning and to stay safe.
- There is much independent research showing most parents and carers value the support of schools in providing RSHE for their children. Parents and schools want children to be safe and happy.
- A range of independent research consistently shows that effective RSHE delays first sexual experience and reduces risk-taking in young people.
- Surveys of children and young people, as well as Ofsted, have repeatedly said that Relationship and Sex Education tends to be "too little, too late and too biological". This is one of the many reasons why the Department for Education has made Relationships and Health Education compulsory in primary schools from September 2020, with an emphasis on Relationships Education.

Please note that the science curriculum (also a compulsory subject), includes learning the correct names for the main external body parts, learning about the human body as it grows from birth to old age and reproduction in some plants and animals (which could include human beings). Parents **do not** have the right to withdraw their child from the science curriculum.

So, Relationships, Health Education and Science are compulsory subjects and parents/carers **do not** have the right to withdraw their children from these subjects.

### Sex Education

The DfE recommends, *'that all primary schools should have a Sex Education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.'*

As part of our school's Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum we use a scheme called **Jigsaw**.

Jigsaw's *Changing Me* unit is taught over a period of six week during Term 6. Each class will be taught appropriate to their age and developmental stage, building on the previous year's learning. At no point will a child be taught something that is inappropriate.

The Changing Me unit is all about coping positively with changes and includes the following:



## **Reception**

Growing up: how we have changed since we were babies.

## **Year 1**

Boys' and girls' bodies: correct names for body parts.

## **Year 2**

Boys' and girls' bodies: body parts and respecting privacy (which parts of the body are private and why this is).

## **Year 3**

How babies grow and how boys' and girls' bodies change as they grow older: Introduction to puberty and menstruation.

## **Year 4**

Internal and external reproductive body parts: Recap about puberty and menstruation. Conception explained in simple terms.

## **Year 5**

Puberty for boys and girls in more detail including the social and emotional aspects of becoming an adolescent: Conception explained in simple biological terms.

## **Year 6**

Puberty for boys and girls revisited: Understanding conception to the birth of a baby. Becoming a teenager.

All lessons are taught using correct terminology, child-friendly language and diagrams.

We will continue to work with our School Nursing service to enhance the delivery of RSHE which will help us with specialist knowledge and a different way of engaging with the children.

## **Right to be excused from Sex Education**

As a parent you have the right to request that your child be withdrawn from sex education that is delivered as part of our Jigsaw programme. If you are concerned, please do come and talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance as they will be able to show you what will be taught in more detail. If you are still concerned, please contact me to discuss the matter further.

## **Website**

Over the next few weeks, we will upload a number of resources to our website which you as parents can view to help you make an informed decision.

Best wishes



Elizabeth Ennew  
Headteacher

