



Headteacher: Mrs S. Calveley B.Ed.(Hons)

Higher Bebington Junior School Frequently Asked Questions about Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Below is a list of *Frequently Asked Questions* compiled by other schools who have already gone through this consultation process.

The Department for Education has announced changes to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). These changes came into effect from September 2020 and all schools will be required to comply with the updated requirements, making Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education.

We believe relationships and sex education is important for our pupils 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 is about giving 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 is the recognition 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

We view the partnership of home and school as vital in providing the context to both complement and reinforce what pupils 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.

So why now?

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.

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)



Headteacher: Mrs S. Calveley B.Ed.(Hons)

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.

What is teaching about equality?

It 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

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 (postponed to summer 2021), 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 Higher Bebington Junior School, children begin to learn about puberty in Year 4- making links between the elements of the statutory science curriculum that looks at life processes and reproduction in some plants and animals as well as the discussing the changes in the adolescent body as part of health education.

We will teach sex education (focusing on puberty and reproduction) which goes beyond the existing national curriculum for science to children in Year 5 and 6 only. Before these lessons take place, the school will give 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.

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, tv) 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.



Headteacher: Mrs S. Calveley B.Ed.(Hons)

Will my child's school have to engage with me before teaching these subjects?

Schools will be required to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their policies for Relationships Education and RSE, which will inform schools' decisions on when and how certain content is covered.

Effective consultation gives the space and time for parents to input, ask questions, share concerns and for the school to decide the way forward. Schools will listen to parent's views, and then make a reasonable decision as to how they wish to proceed. What is taught, and how, is ultimately a decision for the school and consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content. (UK Gov)

Do I have the 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.

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

The DfE states that Relationships Education has been designed to help children from all backgrounds build positive and safe relationships, and to thrive in modern Britain – this means taking into account the religious background of pupils when planning teaching, so that topics are appropriately handled.

All pupils 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'. In developing these subjects, the government has worked with a number of representative bodies and faith organisations, representing all the major faith groups in England.

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. Pupils 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 pupils about healthy relationships. RSE should meet the needs of all pupils, 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. Teaching children about the society that we live in and the different types of loving, healthy relationships that exist is very important. The DfE states that Primary schools are strongly encouraged and enabled to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families.



Headteacher: Mrs S. Calveley B.Ed.(Hons)

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.

What are the topics covered in RSE?

Please see the RSE tab on the school website for further information.

At Higher Bebington Junior School, we will be following the *Christopher Winter Project's 'Teaching SRE with confidence in Primary Schools'* scheme of work. It has been awarded at Quality Mark from the PSHE Association for providing a comprehensive and balanced scheme of work that and in line with best practice in PSHE teaching and learning.

There are between 3 lessons for each year group (4 lessons in Year 6) that will be delivered in the second half of the summer term for each year group as part of RSE week.

Parents will get advanced notice of when this week will take place so that you can be prepared for any questions and discussion at home that may arise as a result.

Most sessions will take place as a whole class however, where appropriate, some sessions may be split into single-sex to allow children to discuss and ask questions more freely.

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

Parents will be given advanced notice of RSE week and the topic to be taught. The school website will provide more information about the subject covered in each lesson. 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.