

Dear Parent/Carer,

Department for Education (DfE) statutory requirements for Relationships and Health Education

From September 2020, schools will have to teach Relationships and Health Education.

You can read about these changes in this DfE guide for parents < here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-sex-and-health-education-guides-for-schools>

The DfE also strongly encourages primary schools to deliver sex education to help prepare children for their transition to secondary school.

Most schools are already delivering very effective Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and the new guidance is simply about ensuring that **all** children get the information they need and want. The lessons will help children to learn about their bodies including the changes that take place at puberty, and will help keep them safe, so they can form healthy relationships (friendships) with others, now and in the future.

At our school we are using the leading children's health and wellbeing charity, Coram Life Education (CLE) to support us in meeting these legal requirements.

More information about Coram Life Education and SCARF can be found on their website:

www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk

Research shows that not delivering this vital education put our children at greater risk of poor mental health. We know this because every year, around 25% of girls start their periods learning about them at school. This can result in them agonising over why they are bleeding and how serious the cause might be. Similarly, 38% of boys experience wet dreams before having learnt about them, leaving them open to shame and stigma over a natural bodily function; this can lead to problems later in life. Current government Sex and Relationships Education guidance states that children should learn about puberty before they experience it, but clearly this isn't happening in some schools – one of the reasons why making this subject statutory in all schools is so important.

We also know that RSE has a protective factor when it comes to safeguarding children. 1 in 20 children are sexually abused and 1 in 3 of these not report this to an adult. Sexual abuse can happen to any child; the best way to safeguard children is to ensure that they receive information on naming parts of their body, knowing the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch, and having the skills and confidence to find and talk to a trusted adult to report any abuse.

Research now shows that children with better health (including mental health) and wellbeing are likely to achieve better academically. By learning about positive relationships, respect for themselves and others, and behaving appropriately and safely online, they are better able to enjoy their friendships and therefore focus more at school.

There is sometimes concern that RSE in school might promote sexual experimentation or cause confusion about an individual's sexuality. Research on quality Relationships and Sex education in the UK by the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles team consistently shows that men and women who reported that *lessons at school were their main source of information about sex* were more likely to have started having sex at a **later age** than those for whom parents or other sources were their main source.

You and your child will have the opportunity to give us valuable feedback regarding the programme; we will be conducting some evaluations with the children following their learning and you are very welcome to discuss and see the resources for yourself.

We recognise that parents play a vital part in their child's RSE, and we encourage you to discuss these themes with your child at home as well. If further advice or support is required, or if you have any questions about the programme or would like to view the resources, please don't hesitate to speak to your child's class teacher or the Head teacher.

Yours sincerely << sign off >>