# Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Frequently Asked Questions

## Background information

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

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 must 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.

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, challenging 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.

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

**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 was introduced in Primary schools from September 2020, 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 Middlestown Primary Academy, we teach sex education to children in Year 6. This goes beyond the existing National Curriculum for science.

Before these lessons take place, the school gives parents the opportunity to understand what will be taught and how it will be approached.

If parents have any concerns, they have the right to withdraw from any sex education lessons that go beyond that of the science National Curriculum.

We will continue to teach sex education (which focusses on puberty and reproduction). This is part of the science National Curriculum for Year 5 and Year 6 and it is compulsory.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child 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 and from discussions in lessons 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 (e.g. friends, older siblings, websites, television) which may not be true or age appropriate. The information gathered during the Government consultation found that most children wanted this information and discussions to be provided in school with their teachers so they could ask questions in a safe space and have them answered in an age-appropriate way.

**Do I have the right to withdraw my child from Relationships and Sex Education?**

In a primary school, you have the right to withdraw your child 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 level as the contents of these subjects (e.g. family, friendships, safety) are important for all children to be taught.

**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 key decisions on these subjects.

**Will these subjects promote LGBTQ+ relationships?**

No, these subjects don't 'promote' anything, they educate. We are teaching about equality. 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 LGBTQ+ will be delivered through teaching about different types of families, including those with same-sex parents. All our planned learning will be taught in an age-appropriate way.

**Are primary children too young to be taught about gay or lesbian people?**

Children will interact with people from different backgrounds, and 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. School will challenge any negative language if it is used by children, parents or visitors in school.