



## St Nicolas and St Mary Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

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Associate Headteacher Mr A Lincoln

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Health and Relationships Education Consultation**

As you may be aware, in order to equip children with the key skills they need to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and in order to prepare them for successful adulthood, the DfE has recently introduced new changes to the National Curriculum which mean that the teaching of Relationships and Health Education will become statutory as of the Summer term 2021. Although we have always covered much of the content of this curriculum through discrete PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) lessons and assemblies, we are formalising our teaching and learning as per below:

*Extract from the DfE parent guide, which can be found in the PSHE/RSE section of our website*

**'Relationships Education** will put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships, including with family, friends and online. Your child will be taught what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who can support them. In an age-appropriate way, your child's school will cover how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect.'

By the end of primary school, pupils will have been taught content on: families and people who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

**'Health Education** aims to give your child the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, to recognise issues in themselves and others, and to seek support as early as possible when issues arise.'

By the end of primary school, pupils will have been taught content on: mental wellbeing, internet safety and harms, physical health and fitness, healthy eating, facts and risks associated with drugs, alcohol and tobacco, health and prevention, basic first aid and changing adolescent body.

### **Parent Consultation on the RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education) Curriculum**

Our preparation for the introduction of this new curriculum began in November 2019, when we hosted the first part of our parent/carer consultation, with a well-attended face to face forum, where we gathered your ideas and thoughts of what should be covered in each of the above curriculum areas. Following this, we have decided to use a range of lesson plans within our curriculum, some produced by

the Church of England in their Goodness and Mercy resource and some accredited by the PSHE Association.

We also held a preliminary discussion about parent/carer thoughts on teaching **Relationships and Sex education (RSE)**. Notes from this meeting can be found at the end of this letter. Although the teaching of RSE is only becoming statutory in Secondary Education, the DfE recommend that it is good practice to begin this at primary age. This is because by teaching key knowledge, for example naming the genitalia correctly from a young age, it can help ensure effective child protection. Other examples of curriculum content could be, teaching children about the fact that there are many different types of loving relationship within our diverse society and that everyone's family is unique and special. It could also be preparing older children with knowledge about biological sex and the law around this, including Christian views about the importance of marriage, in a safe environment in their final year of Primary, rather than them finding incorrect or shocking information about this online or on the playground. An initial draft of what could be taught in some year groups has been outlined below. Statutory health lessons are in blue.

Year Group	
Year 1	The statutory 'Different types of families' lesson could include pictures where a family may have two mums or two dads. NB this may be the case for a large number of reasons including fostering, adoption or LGBT families.
	In the statutory science lesson on naming the body parts – we could add correct names for the genitalia.
Year 4	<a href="#">Initial Changes to the Adolescent Body Lesson</a>
Year 5	<a href="#">Follow up Changes to the Adolescent Body</a>
Year 6	<a href="#">Follow up Changes to the Adolescent Body</a>
	The teaching of the Goodness and Mercy RSE suggested lessons. We could teach all or any combination of these depending on the results of the consultation.
Please note that the curriculum needs to be flexible depending on the needs of each cohort but parents would always be informed before specific RSE lessons were taught. It is also important to realise that children always raise questions and we never know what and when they will be asked and so teachers have always historically dealt sensitively with these as they come up and let parents know if there is something we feel that we be good for them to discuss with their child.	

### **Withdrawal from Relationships and Sex education (RSE)**

If, as a school, we decide to go ahead in teaching some or all aspects of RSE, parents/carers would have the legal right to withdraw their child from the sex education elements of these lessons. However, it is our hope, that if we work together well at this consultation stage, that this will not be necessary. It is important to note that parents/carers can no longer withdraw children from any lessons covering changes to the adolescent body (which is now statutory as Health Education) or anything linked to reproduction which is within the science curriculum. Lessons on Puberty have previously been taught in UKS2 (Years 5 and 6) but in the advent of the new curriculum, and the fact that many children are reaching physical maturity at a younger age, we are planning to begin delivering these lessons at the end of Year 4, as of this Summer. We will of course, give parents adequate notice, prior to teaching and details of the resources being used.

## **Relationships and Sex education (RSE) Materials**

Because the teaching of RSE is a sensitive and contentious issue, The Church of England have provided a lot of guidance on this and a full range of lesson plans with these objectives covered within a Christian theological context. As a leadership team, together with Governors, we have discussed and considered these materials and would now like to share these with parents as part of the next step of our consultation. Using the link below, you will be able to find the suggested RSE knowledge organiser and a range of suggested activities which we can draw from when planning. These have been written within a Christian theological context. You will also find the lesson plans we have begun to use covering the statutory Health and Relationships education: <https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/teaching-resources/>

It may also be useful to read through the DfE's frequently asked questions about RSE using the following link: [DfE relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-FAQs](#)

Parents may also like to refer to guidance from the Diocese of Chichester: [Guidance for Relationships Education](#)

### **Step 1: Preliminary Parent/Carer Consultation (Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March)**

Please take the time to look through the proposed materials, draft policy and the DfE's FAQ and share any questions you may have with the Senior Leadership Team, either in person on the gate, or via email to the office.

### **Step 2: Parent/Carer Update and Questionnaire (Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March to Thurs 1<sup>st</sup> April)**

We will then provide our own school FAQ in response and launch a parent questionnaire to further gauge your thoughts about the teaching of RSE for your child.

### **Step 3: Staff Consultation**

### **Step 4: Final Governor decision re the RSE curriculum (April 2021).**

As we think about what we teach our children, we are reminded of the words of Jesus, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' We need to love others in our diverse community, irrespective of their views or backgrounds. We also need to love ourselves which means learning how to be healthy – mentally, emotionally and physically.

You are your child's primary educator and so it is really important that we have your input on this most important of subjects.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Mrs Bishop, Mr Etherton and the Senior Leadership Team

## **Parent/Carer Thoughts During the First Consultation on RSE, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

Ensure that parents/carers have the materials in advance so that they know what will be taught in case they want to have pre-discussions at home.

It is important to also teach about online safety in terms of RSE, including the dangers of social media. Ensure that teaching and lessons cover respect for all.

Covering the fact that families are made up differently and there may be single parents, parents of the same sex, adoptive parents, foster parents and step parents within our school community. The fact that each family is different and special.

Teach children about the importance of self-respect to protect them from abuse and the importance of not succumbing to peer pressure.

Ensure that teachers are supported so that they are comfortable with delivering the curriculum.

To consider what is being taught in other locality schools.

Teach children that sex is something that happens within a loving relationship and is not just something which results in pregnancy.

Having an anonymous question box for the children to use. Questions can then be discussed later – either as a class, small groups or individually where relevant. If there is a question which the school feels is more appropriate for a parent to answer then we could let you know.

Make the curriculum age appropriate – don't save it up! Kids need information much earlier than you think.

Ensuring that information on sex is not taught through the playground.

RSE is important for preparing children for secondary school.