



Monday 4th October 2021

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

PSHE

As you may know, last year the government made Relationships and Health Education (RHE) compulsory in all primary schools in England from September 2020.

We started teaching this curriculum last year and last September I shared with you what the children were going to cover. In July, I asked you for some feedback about the new scheme. Thank you to all the parents who replied – feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

We have evaluated and adjusting the curriculum for this year taking into account feedback from parents, teachers and children and will continue to look at it and change it as needed.

Lots of you expressed an interest in a parent information session and I was hopeful we would be able to meet this term. Unfortunately, Coventry LA has advised us against getting large groups of parents together for the time being due to COVID but I hope this guidance will change later in the term.

Lots of you also expressed an interest in looking at the books we use. Depending on numbers, we should be able to do this – even if it's outside! If you would still like to do this please use StudyBugs or email to let us know by the end of the week and once I know numbers I will let you know the arrangements to do this. This will also be a great opportunity to chat and ask any questions you have.

Finally, a few parents left their contact details and wanted to discuss the scheme more. I will be calling you later in the week once you've had a chance to look at the documents sent home today and discuss any questions you have.

Attached are 2 documents:

- Some information about what RSHE and PSHE is, what is included in the new curriculum, how we're teaching it at Stoke Heath and some general advice for parents
- An overview of what your child will learn this year

Please take some time to read the information and if you have any questions regarding any aspect of the revised curriculum, please don't hesitate to contact me. We are happy to meet with you to discuss any concerns you may have or to show you examples of any resources being used.

We will continue to share this annually so at the start of each school year you will get a copy of the overview for your child's new year group and the opportunity to ask questions.

We are really excited about this curriculum and the potential it has to bring our community even closer together. We have seen the positive impact it has had over the last year and we know our children are gaining valuable skills and knowledge through these lessons. Thank you for your continued support.

Mrs Danielle Craig
Deputy Head and PSHE Lead

Relationships and Health Education (RHE)

The opening paragraph of the Department for Education guidance states:

“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, 2019, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education)

What does the new curriculum teach?

The new guidance covers the following areas of learning:

Relationship education	Health education
Families and people who care for me Mental wellbeing Caring Friendships Internet safety and harms Respectful Relationships	Physical health and fitness Online Relationships Healthy Eating Being safe Drugs, alcohol and tobacco Health and prevention Basic first aid The changing adolescent body

The National Curriculum for Science (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.

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

It is up to primary schools to determine what is meant by ‘Sex Education’. At primary school age, it is usually agreed to mean ‘human reproduction’, and can be taught within Science. If, however, it is taught within PSHE parents have the right to request their child is withdrawn from these specific lessons.

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.’

What are we doing at Stoke Heath?

At Stoke Heath, we have written a personalised scheme which meets all the statutory requirements outlined in the new guidance alongside other elements of PSHE such as community, careers and finance. This scheme has been written specifically for the children in our community to ensure we are providing them with the knowledge they need. As part of the Coventry Safeguarding Audit, the school is also expected to ensure children feel supported to disclose a problem or concern and that they are explicitly taught about safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe.

There are seven units which will be taught on rotation. E.g. the first lesson from unit 1 then the first lesson from unit 2 then the first lesson from unit 3 and so on

The units are: Our safety, Our Community, Our Future, Our Feelings, Our Relationships, Our Bodies and Our Digital World.

Most lessons will use a picture book to introduce an idea to the children and learning will be depersonalised so that children do not have to share their own experiences during discussions. We are using a variety of well-known, accredited resources from sources such as the NSPCC and the PSHE association.

We have included Sex education within our PSHE scheme in Year 6 and have clearly marked these lessons so you know which lesson you have the right to withdraw your child from. If your child is in Year 6 and you wish to withdraw them from these lessons, please inform the school in writing. Everything else on all year groups is part of the statutory guidance and therefore children cannot be withdrawn from these lessons.

We believe PSHE is vital to support children’s development and learning as well as safeguarding children. Knowledge empowers them which helps them to stay safe. PSHE is most effective when parents and carers work in partnership with the school. We, like you, want children to be safe, healthy and happy. We are respectful of the faith, beliefs and contexts of our children’s families.

Advice for parents

Feeling nervous? Don't worry - it's perfectly normal to worry about children coming home with questions or learning things that are different to your family beliefs. What children learn at school is only part of the curriculum, and children can continue to learn from you at home.

For some parents/carers, it can feel totally natural to discuss relationships, puberty and human reproduction with their child, while for others it can seem uncomfortable. Either way, it is important to remember these key points:

- We all want children to be safe, healthy and happy.
- We need to consider their needs and the world they inhabit.
- We need to normalise talking about relationships, puberty and human reproduction to ensure children feel they can talk to parents/carers about any concerns or worries they may have.
- We may need to challenge our own ways of thinking about how we feel about relationships and sex education.

Here are some tips for talking to your child:

- Be honest. If you don't know the answer to a question, be honest and say so. Tell your child that you will need to find out and that you will get back to them with more soon.
- Remember that children are curious and want to know and understand. We tend to place our adult perspective on children's questions and comments, when actually a child just wants (and needs) a very simple, age-appropriate, matter-of-fact answer. This answer will not involve an 'adult' understanding of a topic – it needs to be at a child's level, with opportunity given for the child to be able to ask further questions if needed. Give yourself time to respond by asking something like, "What do you think that means?" or "Why do you ask?"
- Keep lines of communication open. Having an open and honest relationship with your child can really help make conversations easier, so make sure that you are always willing to talk when your child needs you; if you can't, explain why and find another time when it is more mutually convenient.
- Use correct terminology. It helps that children aren't confused by hints, euphemisms and innuendo; use correct terminology whenever you can, especially for body parts. This is hugely important for safeguarding too.
- Respond to what children say they need. Bear in mind that children's lives today are very different from even five years ago. Therefore, the education they receive needs to reflect this. Research shows us that children want and need to understand relationships, puberty and human reproduction, and want to be able to talk with parents/carers about this when they have had lessons at school. We may feel that they know too much, when actually ignorance is the enemy of innocence.
- Answer questions and don't be afraid to say, 'I really don't know – let's work it out or look it up together'. Have a phrase for awkward moments, such as, 'That's a good question, and let's talk about it once we get home'.
- Always respond. If you don't, they may think it is wrong to talk to you about relationships, puberty or human reproduction and as a result you may find your child clams up when you want to raise the subject, now or in the future.
- If it all feels too personal, try talking about people in books, films and favourite television programmes.
- Enjoy it. Laugh with each other! A lot of this makes adults giggle when they talk about it so it's normal for children to giggle too and it's fine for them to see you giggle. It doesn't have to be serious.