

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

GADE VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Carers

The Department for Education (DfE) has announced changes to Relationship and Health Education. Both Relationship and Health Education are now statutory. As a school, we are required to implement these changes next term. This means we are conducting a review of our current curriculum and policy in order to ensure that our provision is appropriate for our pupils based on their:

- Age
- Physical and emotional maturity
- Religious and cultural backgrounds
- Special educational needs and/or disabilities

For several years, we have provided a rigorous, age-appropriate approach to Relationship and Health Education. Our current policy and suggested changes are all based on the principles of respect and tolerance that are enshrined in our school values, school rules and our CHAMP ethos.

Under the Equality Act 2010 we are legally bound to teach about respecting those with lives that may be different from our own. We do not teach how to live those lives, or promote any one way of life over another - it is all about respect and tolerance.

At Gade Valley we value PSHE as one way to support children's development as human beings, to enable them to understand and respect who they are, to empower them with a voice and to equip them for life and learning. We include the statutory Relationships and Health Education within our whole-school PSHE Programme. To ensure progression within our curriculum, we use Jigsaw, the mindful approach to PSHE, as our chosen teaching and learning programme and tailor it to your children's needs.

At the end of this letter there is a form which you can print off and return to us with any questions which you don't feel we have answered or any comments that you have.

Relationships Education

What does the DfE statutory guidance on Relationships Education expect children to know by the time they leave primary school?

Relationships Education in primary schools will cover 'Families and people who care for me', 'Caring friendships', 'Respectful relationships', 'Online relationships', and 'Being safe'. The expected outcomes for each of these elements can be found attached to this letter.

It is important to explain that whilst the Relationships Puzzle (unit) in Jigsaw covers most of the statutory Relationships Education, some of the outcomes are also taught elsewhere in Jigsaw e.g. the Celebrating Difference Puzzle helps children appreciate that there are many types of family composition and that each is important to the children involved. This holistic approach ensures the learning is reinforced through the year and across the curriculum.

Talking about relationships begins at the very earliest stage of school life, when children are focussed on their families and friends. Whatever each child's particular family set up, it is the most important relationship in the children's lives, and we take the view that all should be treated with respect: all families may be represented in books, displays and during conversations with the children.

We also teach the children how to be a good friend. Friendships are tricky things, and even our Year 6 children are very young and still learning how to navigate their way through this. Anyone who has had to sit through a conversation along the lines of "And then she said . . . , so I said . . . , but she told . . . , so I said . . . " and so on, will know that it takes a lot of unpicking to know what's actually going on!

Changes

- We do not propose making any changes to our current relationships work with the children.

Health Education

What does the DfE statutory guidance on Health Education expect children to know by the time they leave primary school?

Health Education in primary schools will cover 'Mental wellbeing', 'Internet safety and harms', 'Physical health and fitness', 'Healthy eating', 'Drugs, alcohol and tobacco', 'Health and prevention', 'Basic First Aid' and 'Changing adolescent body'.

It is important to explain that whilst the Healthy Me Puzzle (unit) in Jigsaw covers most of the statutory Health Education, some of the outcomes are taught elsewhere in Jigsaw e.g. emotional and mental health is nurtured every lesson through the Calm me time, social skills are grown every lesson through the Connect us activity and respect is enhanced through the use of the Jigsaw Charter.

Also, teaching children about puberty is now a statutory requirement which sits within the Health Education part of the DfE guidance within the 'Changing adolescent body' strand, and in Jigsaw this is taught as part of the Changing Me Puzzle (unit). Classes from Year 3 to Year 6 learn about puberty.

Changes

- We don't propose to make any changes to the work we already do in this area.

Conception Education

At Gade Valley, we believe children should understand the facts about human reproduction before they leave primary school. Puberty is taught as a statutory requirement of Health Education and covered by our Jigsaw PSHE Programme in the 'Changing Me' Puzzle (unit). We conclude that in primary school, 'sex education' refers to Human Reproduction, and therefore parents have the right to request their child be withdrawn from the PSHE lessons that explicitly teach about the mechanics of conception. These lessons are:

Year 4 Piece 2 Having a Baby - I can correctly label the internal and external parts of male and female bodies that are necessary for making a baby.

Year 5 Piece 4 Conception - I understand that that sexual intercourse can lead to conception

Year 6 - Piece 3 Babies: Conception to Birth - I can describe how a baby develops from conception through the nine months of pregnancy and how it is born

In Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 we focus purely on answering the age old question "How is a baby made?" and that is all. This is the only part of the curriculum from which parents may withdraw their child. Much of this is also covered in the Science curriculum, and we will answer children's questions when they come up in conversation if it is age appropriate to do so.

Changes

We do not propose making any changes to the work we currently do in this area.

Below are some questions that we think parents may ask about all of this.

FAQs

Q. Can I request my child is excused from any of these lessons?

Children can only be excused from attending the lessons which are defined as conception education. All other aspects - relationships and health - must be attended.

Q. How do I withdraw my child from conception education lessons?

Please make an appointment to see either Mr Barron or Mr van der Westhuyzen.

Q. Can I withdraw my child from Science lessons which cover reproduction and/or puberty?

No. Children cannot be excused from any part of the science curriculum, including lessons which deal with reproduction and human development.

Q. Do you teach about contraception, abortion or any other tricky areas in sex education?

A. No! Our conception education teaching purely focusses on how babies are made. If we are asked questions beyond that we tell the children to ask their parents.

Q. I've read that there will be lots of teaching about LGBTQ+ issues. Is this true?

A. No! We will be saying that there are different types of families which may include same sex parents. We are promoting the British values of tolerance and respect.

Q. Don't schools have to consult parents about what they are teaching in relationship and health education?

Yes. Schools have to ask parents what they think about this part of the curriculum and listen to parents' views. This is why we are sending this letter and providing you with an opportunity to respond. However, parents cannot tell the school what to teach or not teach - we have to make that decision and comply with the law.

Relationships, Health and Conception Education

I have read the information about relationships, health and conception Education and would like to make the following comment/ask a question.

It will help us understand your comments if you tell us the year group for your child/ren.

Year groups:

If you would like a response please write your name clearly below.

Name of parent