



MANOR COURT Community Primary School

incorporating Manor Court Early Years Centre

A Member of Preston Primary Academy Trust

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Wednesday 17th May 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

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

From September 2020, schools have had 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: "It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department continues to recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born."

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 Manor Court, we are using the leading children's health and wellbeing charity, Coram Life Education (CLE) to support us in meeting these legal requirements. We do this in two ways:

- A visit from a trained educator who will deliver aspects of the Relationships Education and Health Education programme
- Using Coram Life Education's online SCARF teaching resources.

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

www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk

Your child already receives Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons, which are taught by their class teacher, once a week, throughout the year in their usual classes, using a range of interacting teaching methods, e.g., activity sheets, drama, online activities, songs, and films. There are six units throughout the school year, one for each half term. The final unit of PSHE for all year groups will be after the May half term and incorporates RSE.

We interpret sex education to mean puberty, conception, contraception, reproduction, and birth. All of these themes, with the exception of conception and contraception, are included within either statutory Health Education or National Curriculum Science. The national curriculum for Science includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals.

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 before 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 cases are not reported 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, children 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.

The statutory requirements should be taught to all children by the end of Y6 in an age-appropriate, accessible way. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may not have the cognitive ability to access some of the SCARF lesson content, but it's also important to recognise that children's bodies will still be developing in line with their age. They need information to help keep them safe and also help them to understand how and why their bodies will develop.

Right to withdraw your child

You cannot withdraw your child from Relationships Education because it is important that all children receive this content, covering topics such as friendships and how to stay safe. Like the Science curriculum, this is statutory for all pupils. The science curriculum in all maintained schools also includes content on human development, including reproduction, which there is no right to withdraw from. However, if you do not want your child to take part in some or all of the lessons on Sex Education, you can ask that they are withdrawn. At primary level, the head teacher must grant this request.

If you would like to view the resources and ask any questions about our RSE provision, we are inviting in parents of children in Years 4, 5 and 6 to find out more about their workshops at 3.30pm on **Tuesday 20th June** in the hall. There will be a representative from Coram Life, who will also be able to explain which part of the lesson's pupils may be withdrawn from.

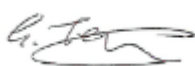
You and your child will have the opportunity to give us valuable feedback regarding the programme; we will be conducting some evaluations with the children following their sessions and you are very welcome to come into school to see the resources for yourself.

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 Headteacher, Mr Talmage, by Friday 26th May as each class will be receiving their 6-week block of learning in the last half term.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Jo Wilkins
PSHE Leader



Mrs Geri Terry
Assistant Head

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