

Lanchester E.P. (Cont.) Primary School
A Caring Community Where All Can Flourish



Friday 14th May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing today about the statutory changes to the teaching of RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) that have come into place this academic year and the fact that from September 2020, all schools have to teach RSE. Our school has delivered very effective teaching of RSE for years but the new guidance is simply about ensuring that ALL children get the information they need and want.

In the past, we have delivered lessons through Science and PHSCE in each year group and the lessons help children to learn about their bodies including the changes that take place at puberty, whilst also helping them to keep safe so they can form healthy relationships (friendships) with others, both now and in the future.

We have always met with parents and carers of Year 6 children before delivering the more specific lessons around puberty and human reproduction. However, as far back as Summer 2019, I did explain to parents and carers that we were reviewing when to deliver certain aspects of this, as children are developing earlier and it had become quite evident to us that we need to talk about how the body changes and puberty, much earlier than Year 6. It is crucial that we get this just right though and deal with it as sensitively and honestly as possible.

We have carried out some very careful research over the last year to find a resource to support our teaching in RSE. For years, we have used an increasingly outdated Channel 4 resource, as we could not find anything else which we felt supported our children the way we wanted. However, I am delighted to say that after great research, discussion and deliberation, we have subscribed to a superb resource which will support our teaching of PHSCE as well as RSE.

We have decided to use the leading children's health and wellbeing charity, Coram Life Education (CLE) to support us in meeting these legal requirements. If you would like to find out a little more about Coram Life Education and SCARF, this can be found on their website: www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk

The DfE strongly encourages primary schools to deliver sex education to help prepare children for their transition to secondary school and this is what we have always delivered in the summer term for our Year 6 children. If you would like to read about these changes, please look at the DfE guide for parents: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-sex-and-health-education-guides-for-schools>

Research shows that **not** delivering this vital education puts 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 always happening and this is why we want to make

some changes to what is taught when at our school.

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 do not report this to an adult. Sexual abuse can happen to any child; the best way to safeguard our 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 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.

We know that parents play a vital part in their child's RSE and we always encourage you to discuss this with your child at home. This is why we have always informed parents and carers of Year 6 children what we will be teaching, before beginning their Sex Ed lessons. However, we realise that actually, we should inform parents of all year groups about what should be taught and when so that this can also be discussed and followed up at home with yourselves.

We would like to hear your thoughts and opinions about this as they will be invaluable in supporting us in finalising our policy and plan of learning. We would really appreciate you completing this online form by Friday 21st May 2021. All comments and opinions will be treated in confidence and will be anonymised. We will be discussing all comments at a Well-Being and Curriculum governor meeting where we will also be finalising our policy and programme of learning. Following this governor meeting, I will then hold a meeting over Zoom when we will share what will be taught when and give you the opportunity to see some examples of specific learning in each year group and ask further questions. Meanwhile, please feel free to contact me at any point if you have any questions at all. The link for the online form is [here](#).

Thank you for your interest and help in this matter. The content of what the children will be taught will not be that different to what has been taught in the past – you will just be more aware of what is taught and when.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Davis

Mrs Jane Davis
Head Teacher