

# Menston Primary School



## RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION POLICY (STATUTORY)

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**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. This is why we have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools, as well as making Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools. We are clear that parents and carers are the prime educators for children on many of these matters. Schools complement and reinforce this role and have told us that they see building on what pupils learn at home as an important part of delivering a good education. (Department for Education - Statutory Guidance for Relationships Education - 2020)**

## **1. Aim**

The aim of Relationships Education at our school is to help pupils develop self-respect, confidence and empathy. Pupils will learn about what makes healthy relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in a way that is age appropriate and sensitive to their faith. This will include online relationships, and how to seek help if they feel unsafe. Teaching will respect the diversity of families in our community.

Relationships Education in primary schools is not about sexual relationships. The Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools from September 2020. Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools within relationships and PSHE lessons. However, in the statutory national curriculum for science, pupils in upper Key Stage 2 are taught to '*describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals*' and '*describe the changes as humans develop to old age*'.

## **2. Policy Development**

This policy has been developed in line with Department for Education statutory guidance **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers (2020)**. There has been consultation with staff, pupils and parents as required by the Department for Education. We are committed to on-going consultation with families and stakeholders throughout the evolution of our school's Relationships Education programme. This process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a working group pulled together all relevant information including national and local guidance. A draft policy was shared with governors in March 2020 before being shared with other stakeholders.
2. Staff consultation – staff had the opportunity to look at the draft policy and make recommendations June – August 2020
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to work with us on the policy, look at examples of resources, and make recommendations April – July 2020
4. Pupil consultation – we spoke to pupils about the skills they would like to learn
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with the chair and vice-chair of governors and ratified – September 2020
6. Reviewed in March 2023 and shared with governors and ratified

## **3. Statutory Requirements**

Relationships Education is compulsory in primary schools from September 2020, so all pupils must take part in these lessons.

Sex education is not compulsory for primary schools. However, children in Years 4, 5 and 6 at Menston Primary School are taught about changes to the body during puberty and about aspects of sexual reproduction as part of our specialist programme of relationships & health education lessons. These lessons are delivered in the summer term by professionals from CORAM Education. A parent information session is held prior to these lessons being delivered. The content of these educator-led sessions can be found in Appendix A.

Other aspects of sex education will not be covered unless safeguarding concerns determine otherwise. Parents will be informed in advance if that happens.

#### **4. Links to other policies and curriculum areas**

##### **4a Curriculum**

At Key Stage 2, the science curriculum includes teaching about changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age, including puberty. This remains statutory and no child can be excused from these lessons.

Religious education links to Relationships Education by looking at family, values and morals, and the celebration of marriage in different traditions.

Health education, which is statutory in state funded schools from September 2020, includes teaching about feelings as they relate to mental wellbeing, the importance of friends and family, the impact of bullying, and how children can seek help if they have worries. It also requires schools to teach about the emotional and physical changes that take place during puberty.

##### **4b Policies**

The content of Relationships Education is supported by our anti-bullying policy, equality and diversity policy, PSHE policy and our safeguarding policies.

#### **5. Delivery of Relationships Education**

Relationships Education will be inclusive for all pupils, sensitive to all family and faith backgrounds and pupils' own identities. It will be respectful of all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Across all Key Stages, pupils will be supported to develop the following skills as appropriate to their age:

- Communication skills
- Forming positive relationships including self-respect as well as respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- Assertiveness and managing conflict and difficult emotions

These skills are taught within the context of family life and friendships, in an age appropriate and accessible way. The school environment will reflect, value and celebrate the diversity of friendships and relationships. Lessons will be delivered by school staff in all year groups, supported by specialist puberty and relationships lessons in years 4, 5 and 6 delivered by educators from CORAM Education. These specialist relationships lessons refer to reproduction in humans within the context of how and why our bodies change as we reach puberty (see Appendix A). To make sure that parents are fully informed of the content of these specialist lessons, we offer a parent information session prior to the lessons being delivered.

Children will sometimes ask questions pertaining to relationships, sex or sexuality that go beyond what is set out in the curriculum. If questions go unanswered by school staff, children may turn to inappropriate sources of information including the internet. We will answer any questions in a way that is sensitive to children's family and faith backgrounds, appropriate to their age and understanding, and consistent with the Relationships Education policy and scheme of work. This may necessitate discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, as not every child in a class will have the same type of questions. We may contact parents if we need guidance about a child's needs or if we think a child would benefit from their parents' input around a particular issue.

It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. Although sex education in primary schools is not statutory, the Department for Education (DfE) 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. (DfE July 2019)

The Department for Education has set out guidance on what children must learn by the end of year 6, under a series of themes. The statutory content as written by the DfE is set out below. Some themes will recur throughout school while others will be taught in the most appropriate years.

### **Families and people who care for me**

Pupils should know:

that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability

- the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives
- that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care
- that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up
- that marriage\* represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong
- how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed

\* Marriage in England and Wales is available to both opposite sex and same sex couples. The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 extended marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. The ceremony through which a couple get married may be civil or religious.

### **Caring friendships**

Pupils should know:

- how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends
- the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties
- that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded
- that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right
- how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.

### **Respectful relationships**

Pupils should know:

- the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- the conventions of courtesy and manners

- the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help
- what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive
- the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults

## **Online relationships**

Pupils should know:

- that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not
- that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous
- the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them
- how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met
- how information and data is shared and used online

## **Being safe**

Pupils should know:

- what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)
- about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe
- that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact
- how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know
- how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult
- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard,
- how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so
- where to get advice, for example family, school or other sources

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

### **6.1 The governing board**

The governing board will approve the Relationships Education policy, and hold the head teacher to account for its implementation.

### **6.2 The head teacher**

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that Relationships Education is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory sex education lessons, if applicable.

### 6.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering Relationships Education in a sensitive way, taking account of pupils' family and faith backgrounds
- Modelling positive attitudes to Relationships Education, as with any other subject
- Monitoring children's learning in order to ensure they make progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory sex education lessons, if applicable.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching Relationships Education. Staff who have concerns about teaching this subject are encouraged to seek support.

### 6.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in Relationships Education lessons and treat others with respect and sensitivity, as we expect all the time in school.

## 7. Parents' right to withdraw their children from lessons

Within our specialist puberty and relationships sessions that are delivered in the summer term in Years 4, 5 and 6 sexual reproduction is referred to in the context of how and why our bodies change as we go through puberty. Key safeguarding messages are also delivered in these sessions. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from aspects of sex education taught as part of the **Relationships Education or PSHE** curriculum. We strongly recommend that parents of children in years 4, 5 and 6 attend the parent information session which is held in the summer term so that they are fully aware of the content of the sessions before considering withdrawing their child from any part of these lessons. We have found that parents who attend the information session are fully supportive of the specialist lessons that are delivered.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the head teacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's file so that parents' wishes are on record. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from lessons (or parts of lessons) at parents' request.

Primary schools are required to teach the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum and there continues to be no right to withdraw from these lessons.

## 8. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of Relationships Education and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The head teacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses and CORAM Education professionals to provide support and training to staff teaching Relationships Education. The sessions delivered by outside visitors will be consistent with our policy on Relationships Education.

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of Relationships Education is monitored by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher through planning scrutiny, learning walks, pupil interviews and staff feedback.

Pupils' development in Relationships Education is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed and updated by the Senior Leadership Team annually. It will be reviewed by the governing board every three years.

Draft shared with governors: March 2020

Consultation period: March 2020 to July 2020

Approved by Full Governing Board: September 2020

Governor SICS Committee review: March 2023

Next governor review due: March 2026

## Appendix A

**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.** Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers (DfE statutory guidance 2020).

Content of the specialist puberty and relationships lessons delivered by educators from CORAM Education:

### **Year 4**

**Time for Change** puberty workshop:

Children will:

- Explore what the term puberty means
- Understand that everyone is unique and feels a sense of worth
- Understand that puberty involves physical, emotional and physiological changes
- Recognise the names of female and male reproductive organs, and begin to understand their function
- Identify ways girls and boys change during puberty including physical changes and possible emotional changes
- Understand that emotions are affected by hormonal changes and these can be confusing at first
- Understand the term 'menstruation' and know that this starts during puberty for girls but that different girls start at different ages
- Develop resilience to deal with situations they may face as they reach puberty.

**Growing and Changing and Keeping Safe** workshops

**Year 5** (some prior knowledge of puberty is required).

Children will:

- Be introduced to the theme of human reproduction
- Understand and empathise with how some children may struggle during puberty and body changes
- Know the correct terminology for reproductive organs and external sexual body parts
- Know and understand the meaning of consent in relation to their body.

**Year 6** (some prior knowledge of puberty is required).

Children will:

- Learn the correct terminology for reproductive organs.
- Know how sexual reproduction occurs between humans and other ways to create families
- Know when to share information and when to keep it private
- Reflect on and reinforce key information around privacy (in relation to their body).

These lessons are all delivered in mixed gender groups in with The [DfE teacher training: changing adolescent body](#) guidance which recommends that schools "Avoid segregating by gender unless there is a clear rationale for doing so in order to meet the needs of pupils (e.g. giving girls a chance to ask questions about menstruation in a female-only environment). Ensure pupils have opportunities to ask teachers questions in small groups or individually if they have personal concerns about topics."

Girls in Year 5 have the opportunity to attend an additional workshop on menstruation.