



Hatfield Community Free School RSHE Parent/Carer Guide

Our RSE & Health Education Information

Why is there new guidance on Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education from the Department of Education?

Before this development, the Department for Education's guidance to schools on Relationships and Sex Education was last updated in 2000, and it clearly no longer accurately reflects the world we live in. The new guidance was finalised and passed into law by Parliament in 2019, with overwhelming support in both houses. It aims to create a curriculum that:

Fosters pupils' respect for themselves and others

Promotes equality and values difference

Educates pupils about positive relationships

Helps pupils understand how their actions can impact on their health, wellbeing and safety.

It also aims to meet the needs of all pupils, whatever their developing identity and family circumstances, and to prepare them for life and work in modern Britain.

The guidance states:

'These subjects represent a huge opportunity to help our children and young people develop. The knowledge and attributes gained will support their own, and others', wellbeing and attainment and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society.' In a great many schools, this curriculum will be delivered through the schools existing Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education and will require very little change.

Does the Department for Education's guidance state exactly what needs to be taught?

The guidance sets out the key learning that pupils must receive by the end of their primary education. Schools will decide exactly how they teach the curriculum and what resources they will use. Information about this can be found in the *HCFS RSE Policy*.

What are the key themes that will be taught in relationships education in primary school?

Families and people who care for me

Caring friendships

Respectful relationships

Online relationships

Being safe

Can I request my child is excused from Relationships Education?

No. Parents/carers will not be able to withdraw their child from any part of Relationships

Education.

What are the key themes that will be taught in Health Education?

Mental wellbeing

Internet safety and harms

Physical health and fitness

Healthy eating

Health and prevention

Basic first aid

Changing adolescent body

Can I request my child is excused from Health Education?

No. Parents will not be able to withdraw their child from Health Education. Health Education includes the teaching of the correct terminology for body parts and learning about the changing adolescent body in a timely way to ensure children are prepared for changes they will experience before they happen.

Will primary schools have to teach sex education? Isn't this too young?

Many primary schools currently teach sex education (which goes beyond the science curriculum), and it is strongly recommended by the government that this continues. The decision about if and when to teach sex education remains a decision that individual primary schools must make. At HCFS, we send out parent communication at least one half-term ahead of teaching. Parents will be sent documents relating to the lesson content and will have the opportunity to opt out of some lessons.

What has changed from the previous requirements regarding the delivery of sex education?

Nothing at all.

Who will be delivering the sex education teaching?

This will be the class teacher.

Can I request my child is excused from the Sex Education curriculum?

Yes. Parents/carers will be able to request that their child is excused from those parts of lessons that are defined as sex education in the school policy. It is hoped that when parents/carers have opportunities to find out more about what will be taught and how, very few parents/carers will want to do this. Parents/carers should note that the science curriculum includes discussion about human reproduction. Discussion of sex within relationships education, therefore, provides opportunities to set this learning in the context of meaningful relationships, personal values, health and safety. Parents/carers will be contacted at least one half-term before teaching commences to decide whether or not they would like to opt-out.

Will excusing my child from sex education mean they will not learn about sex?

No. The school cannot guarantee that pupils will not learn about sex from other sources outside the classroom. There are many places that children can get information from including: parents/carers, peers, older siblings and the internet. The accuracy of the information they access will be variable. The delivery of Sex Education within Relationships and Sex Education ensures that what pupils learn is age and developmentally appropriate, addresses their real questions and is based on important values and the law.

Can I request my child is excused from the elements of sex education taught through the science curriculum?

No. Parents/carers do not have a right to excuse their child from any part of the science curriculum, including lessons about reproduction and human development.

Can I request my child is excused from lessons about the changing adolescent body and puberty (including teaching about wet dreams and periods)?

No. Parents/carers cannot excuse their child from elements of Health Education. They can only excuse their child from what the school defines as 'sex education' in the school policy.

Will schools teach about a range of relationships: marriage, civil partnerships, relationships outside of marriage and same sex relationships?

Yes. The curriculum enables children to understand the importance of a stable, secure and loving environment for family life and will include the range of different family types that can provide this. Teaching will therefore represent the full range of committed and mutually supportive stable relationships in our society, including religious and civil marriages, civil partnerships, and relationships outside of formal commitment. The range of families represented will include step families, same-sex parents, grandparents as parents, adoptive families, and more.

Can I excuse my child from lessons about LGBT people and relationships?

No. The purpose of Relationships Education is to educate pupils, age appropriately, about relationships and diversity in the world they live in. It is important that pupils know that different families and individuals exist and are respected under the law.

LGBT-inclusive content is not new; it has been a legal requirement for all schools under the Equality Act 2010. The updated Relationships Education curriculum reinforces this by ensuring that lessons reflect the diversity of families and relationships in modern society. Teaching will:

- Promote equality and respect
- Present accurate and balanced information
- Be underpinned by legal rights and responsibilities

Content about LGBT people and families will be integrated throughout the curriculum, rather than taught in separate lessons. Parents cannot withdraw their child from these statutory elements.

Working together with families:

We believe that parents and carers play a vital role in supporting children's learning and wellbeing. Our approach to RSHE is built on partnership: schools will keep families informed about what is being taught in each year group, so you can continue conversations at home before or after lessons. This gives you the opportunity to share your own values and experiences with your child.

The Department for Education guidance recognises that parents are the first and most influential teachers in a child's life, helping them to grow, mature, and form healthy relationships.

Additional Information for Parents

In Year 2, Year 4, and Year 6, children will take part in Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) lessons as part of our wider RSHE curriculum. Parents will be notified at least one half term before these lessons begin. At that time, you will receive a Google Form to confirm and update whether you consent for your child to participate in specific non-statutory lessons. Please note that parents cannot withdraw their child from all lessons, as many aspects of RSHE are statutory. *Statutory* means these lessons are required by law and must be taught in all primary schools.

Curriculum maps for each year group are available on the school website. These maps show the full PSHE and RSHE learning for the year, and any areas marked with a star indicate where RSE content is included. If you have any concerns, please contact your child's class teacher in the first instance.

To support transparency, we offer an **Open Classroom** session a few weeks before RSHE lessons take place. Parents are welcome to drop in, review lesson content, and take part in a Q&A session with the class teacher. Our PSHE and RSHE curriculum leads, **Miss Millie Irish** and **Mrs Thea Atkin**, will also be available during these sessions and are happy to discuss any questions you may have.

Our curriculum is fully aligned with government guidance, and we place children at the heart of everything we do, ensuring their safety, wellbeing, and development.