



Tuesday 23rd March 2021

Dear Nova Parents and Carers,

As part of your child's educational experience at Nova Primary school, we aim to promote personal wellbeing and development through a comprehensive taught programme of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education that gives children and young people the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live healthy, safe, productive and fulfilled lives, both now and in the future.

From September 2020, the Department for Education made Relationships and Health Education compulsory in all primary schools. I shared information about these changes, our draft RSE policy and proposed curriculum with parents and carers in term 6 last year, seeking feedback from you. Only a small number of parents responded to the questionnaire, however 100% agreed with our planned curriculum.

We have been teaching relationships education since September as part of our PSHE curriculum. However, in term 5, our PSHE unit in Y1-Y6 will be 'growing and changing', which focuses more heavily on relationships education, including some RSE (relationships and sex education) teaching.

Therefore, to keep you informed about our RSE curriculum and what your child will be learning next term I have:

- Included an RSE information video presentation (Part 1 <https://youtu.be/rVsUDZra3nE> Part 2 https://youtu.be/b_GQMsQcKe0)
- Attached PSHE and RSE coverage teaching overview for your child's year group
- Added an FAQs section below with key information

Unfortunately, our usual RSE parent information sessions are unable to take place due to current restrictions. However, if you have any further questions after reviewing the information that we have shared with you, then please contact the school office with your query.

In term 6, we will be consulting with children, parents and staff to review our RSE policy and curriculum for next year and I would appreciate your feedback then.

Yours sincerely

Helen Thorpe
Deputy Headteacher

Relationships and Sex Education FAQs

What does the new guidance mean?

The new guidance focuses on healthy relationships and keeping children safe in the modern world. It also covers a wide range of topics relating to physical and mental health, wellbeing, safeguarding and healthy relationships.

Learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, it will give children and young people the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships and will help them take responsibility for their own well-being.

DfE guidance can be found on the follow link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781150/Draft_guidance_Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education2.pdf

How will this be delivered at Nova?

This guidance will form part of our school's PSHE education programme which is taught throughout the school in every year group and will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

We use the SCARF scheme of work (which promotes safety, care, achievement, resilience and friendship) and ensures progression in knowledge, attitudes and values, and skills – including the key skills of social and emotional learning, known to improve outcomes for children.

The attached coverage document for your child's year group shows the content and outcomes for each lesson in more detail for each PSHE unit, including 'growing and changing' units which will be taught next term. The overviews include how lessons taught meet the DfE requirements for relationships and health education.

All teaching in PSHE will take place in a safe learning environment and be underpinned by our school ethos and values. A variety of opportunities will be provided for pupils to ask questions to further their understanding and to find out more about what affects them personally.

What will my child learn in SCARF PSHE lessons?

For each year group, we follow six themed units which provide a complete PSHE and wellbeing curriculum. They are:

Me and My Relationships

Explores feelings and emotions, develops skills to manage conflict, helps identify our special people and equips children to recognise the qualities of healthy friendships and how to manage them.

Valuing Difference

Includes a strong focus on British Values, supports children to develop respectful relationships with others, recognise bullying and know their responsibilities as a bystander.

Keeping Myself Safe

Covers a number of safety aspects from statutory Relationships Education including being able to identify trusted adults in their lives, what to do when faced with a dilemma and recognising appropriate and inappropriate touch.

Rights and Responsibilities

Explores broader topics including looking after the environment, economic education and the changing rights and responsibilities children have as they grow older.

Being My Best

Includes a focus on keeping physically healthy, developing a growth mindset to facilitate resiliency, setting goals and ways to achieve them.

Growing and Changing

Has age-appropriate plans to cover the physical and emotional changes that happen as children as they grow older, including changes at puberty and how to approach this with confidence. Age-appropriate lessons on relationships and sex education are also included.

How does RSE learning progress through the school?

SCARF RSE-specific lessons are designed to cover key skills, attitudes and values children need to explore in order to develop healthy relationships with their peers. Children also learn how to keep themselves safe and to ask for help when they need it.

4-5 year-olds: being the same and different, our special people, different families, different homes, our feelings, being unique and special, being kind, caring and friendly, keeping safe, keeping healthy, resilience, life stages and growing from young to old.

5-6 year olds: explores themes around families and their special people, the importance of respecting others including those that are different from us, recognising that genitals are private and their correct names; develops understanding of the difference between surprises and secrets (good or bad secrets) and when not to keep bad adult secrets; helps develop judgement of what kind of physical contact is acceptable or unacceptable and how to respond to this (including who to tell and how to tell them).

6-7 year-olds: looks at the process of growing from young to old and how people's needs change; explores the opportunities and responsibilities that increasing independence can bring, recognising that they share a responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe.

7-8 year-olds: introduces themes about change, including menstruation and bereavement, healthy and unhealthy relationships (friendships), how images in the media do not always reflect reality and the impact of this on people's thoughts and feelings; the nature and consequences of discrimination; the importance of protecting personal information online;

understanding risk and building resilience; making informed choices; resisting pressure and recognising when and how to ask for help.

8-9 year-olds: builds on the themes covered in previous years, looking more closely at body changes as they approach and move through puberty including: menstruation and human reproduction; conflicting emotions; what positively and negatively affects their physical, mental and emotional health; understanding good and not-so-good feelings; recognising and challenging stereotypes; consequences of their actions; pressures to behave in an unacceptable, unhealthy or risky way and that marriage is a commitment freely entered into by both people.

9-10 year-olds: builds on the themes covered previously and in greater depth, looking more closely at: body changes and feelings during puberty; how their changing feelings can affect those they live with; what makes relationships unhealthy; exploring risky behaviour in more detail; different types of bullying including homophobic and transphobic; how to keep their personal information private online (and why this is important), and how to use social media safely.

10-11 year-olds: builds on and reinforces all the themes of the previous years, with new content built into the lesson plans looking at: body image and the media; forced marriage; sexual intercourse; HIV and managing pressure online.

Why do you teach menstruation in Year 3?

The statutory guidance states puberty should be covered in Health Education and should be addressed before onset so, as far as possible, pupils are prepared in advance for changes they will experience. Best practice states that menstruation education should be delivered to both boys and girls, as learning about menstruation is a concept of reproduction, as covered by the national curriculum science and fosters good relationships by breaking down the stigma of going through these changes leading to less bullying.

The NHS states that girls as young as 8 years old start menstruating. Children turn 8 in Year 3, so it is a timely point for them to receive the information before the changes take place.

Do I have the right to withdraw my child from any lessons?

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education or any content from the statutory science curriculum. This means that pupils cannot be withdrawn from lessons on the changing adolescent body. For our curriculum at Nova, this means that children cannot be withdrawn from lessons in Year 1 to Year 6 as all content taught is statutory.

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from non-statutory sex education delivered as part of the statutory RSE. This applies only for children in Year 6 at Nova. Year 6 parents will receive further information about aspects of planned non-statutory teaching

Will lessons be delivered in single sex or whole class groups?

All planned scheme lessons will be taught to both boys and girls as part of whole class teaching. We believe that teaching everyone together, with the right group agreement in place to create a safe environment, can have a positive impact by reducing bullying and increasing empathy and understanding as children go through puberty. This approach is also inclusive for transgender children as it ensures that they learn about the puberty they are likely to experience related to the sex they are rather than the gender they identify as.

Each class will have a question box where children will be able to anonymously ask any questions they are curious about. If needed and appropriate, (particularly in upper key stage 2), teachers may plan additional short single sex group sessions where children can ask questions relating to changes as their sex.

Do you include the teaching of LGBT identities in RSE?

Our PSHE curriculum anticipates and encourages the inclusion of people with LGBT identities in discussions from the early years, where children are also encouraged to talk about the people who are special to them and who provide a nurturing environment; for some children this will include having two mummies or two daddies, or a lesbian aunty or a relative who has transitioned.

Our curriculum includes LGBT identities content throughout the school years as part of a spiral curriculum and teaching about this is integrated into lessons about families, marriage, civil partnerships, similarities and differences, stereotyping, prejudice, media, puberty, bullying, body image and diversity, as required by the guidance.

If we are to avoid stigmatisation and promote inclusion, then children must be able to recognise themselves and their circumstances (such as having a family with two mums or two dads) in the lessons they are being taught. They can then see their own lived experiences validated and valued. We have a responsibility to normalise the diverse range of trusted people in children's lives.

In England, teaching about gender identity is a statutory requirement (section 75) and falls within the End of Primary School Statements of *Respectful Relationships*. It's clear that children develop ideas about what it is to be a boy or a girl from the messages they pick up from the world around them. It's therefore important that children are provided with opportunities within RSE to explore, discuss and challenge these messages so they feel free to express themselves in a way that feels authentic to them, in order to fulfil their true potential.

What do you teach for non-statutory education?

The DfE is not very clear in its definition of sex education except to say that it continues to recommend that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. However, it does state that (p. 23):

*"The national curriculum for science also 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."*

*"It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively...It (the sex education programme) 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.**"*

We interpret this to mean that sex education includes puberty, conception, reproduction and birth. **All of these themes, with the exception of conception, are statutory and are included in either Health Education or National Curriculum: Science.**

Puberty is already statutory under Health Education and National Curriculum Science (and so there is no right to withdraw). Birth and reproduction are also included in Science (again, no right to withdraw) and so this leaves conception.

We interpret 'how a baby is conceived' to refer to what happens during sexual intercourse before an egg and sperm meet (reproduction). We therefore include sexual intercourse as well as IVF in our Year 6 *Making Babies* lesson.

Therefore the small amount of non-statutory sex education that is included in our planned curriculum includes both sexual intercourse and IVF and this can be found in our Y6 Making Babies lesson. Year 6 parents will be able to see plans and resources used and given the right to withdraw from this part of the lesson. *Note: this lesson can be adapted to ensure no non-statutory sex education is taught (this would be by omitting the sexual intercourse elements).*

What can I do to support my child's learning at home?

The statutory guidance is clear in recognising that a parent/carer is a child's primary educator in these matters. There are a many things you can do to support your child's understanding and encourage them to ask questions. Here are some;

1. If you feel it is time to talk to your child about growing up and the changes they are likely to experience it's best to offer it in small chunks, rather than do it in one go, often known as 'The Talk'. This gives children time to digest the new information and ask you further questions as they develop more understanding.
2. If your child asks you questions try to stay calm, and not worry if you don't know the answer. There are plenty of websites that you can use together to help you find the answers to their questions in a factual, honest, age appropriate way (see details below for resources on our website).
3. Use everyday opportunities to bring up the topic; things you see on TV or hear on the radio can be great conversation starters to talk about topics such as relationships, sex

and body image. Reading books with your child is also a great way of introducing topics and helping children to understand themselves, their bodies and the world around them.

4. If you do have family names for genitals, ensure your child also knows their scientific names too. Nobody likes to think their child is at risk of abuse, but knowing the correct words for their genitals will help them report abuse if it did ever happen.
5. By showing your child that you are comfortable with them asking you questions now, you are helping to develop a relationship with them where they can seek your advice and support in their adolescent years.
6. Visit the specially created Coram Life Education SCARF [webpage](#) for more information including a list of books and websites that will support both you and your child along with some activities you to support their learning.