

New Statutory Requirements for teaching Relationships Education and Health Education in PRIMARY

What the new requirements are and what they will mean from September 2020 Frequently Asked Questions for PRIMARY parents

November 2019

What are the new statutory requirements?

The government is introducing new compulsory subjects from September 2020:

- All primary schools will have to teach Relationships Education
- All secondary schools will have to teach Relationships and Sex Education
- All schools will have to teach Health Education

All schools includes free schools, academies, Independent and faith schools

Government Guidance

The DfE published the final version of the statutory Guidance on June 25th 2019

The government's guidance sets out the detail about what pupils should know by the end of primary.

What will be taught in Relationships Education in primary?

Pupils will be taught about 5 topics

1. Families and people who care for me
2. Caring friendships
3. Respectful relationships
4. Online relationships
5. Being safe

The main focus is on teaching in an age-appropriate way about what makes positive, healthy relationships- friendships and family relationships and relationships with other children and adults. Very young children will be taught about taking turns, being kind and respectful. As they get older, this will include online safety and appropriate online behaviour.

What will be taught in Health Education in primary?

Pupils will be taught about 8 topics

1. Mental wellbeing
2. Internet safety and harms
3. Physical health and fitness
4. Healthy eating
5. Drugs and alcohol and tobacco
6. Health and Prevention
7. Basic first aid
8. Changing adolescent body

How will schools decide what to teach in each Year?

The government guidance sets out what schools should teach by the end of primary school and does not divide the content into Years. Schools will develop their own curriculum and teaching programme which meets the needs of their pupils and which takes account of the government guidance about what pupils should know by the end of primary, as well as comply with the Equality Act 2010, as they do now. Schools will need to take account of the age and maturity of pupils when deciding what to teach in each Year and consider how to

link this with related subjects such as science, computing and PE. This flexibility enables schools to respond to local public health and community issues and ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all their pupils.

Schools should develop the curriculum in consultation with parents. What is taught, and how it is taught, is ultimately a decision for the school. Schools will make decisions on the curriculum based on a consideration of parents views, the requirements to meet the statutory guidance and wider duties including the Equality Act and British Values.

Schools are free to determine how they deliver the content of the new subjects. The guidance acknowledges that effective teaching will be within a planned programme or lessons, with the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work as for other curriculum areas. Many schools will choose to deliver the new requirements within their established PSHE programmes.

Is this very different to what is being taught now?

If your school has been teaching a comprehensive PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) curriculum that covers, healthy eating, physical activity, drugs, alcohol and tobacco education, sex and relationships education, safety (including online safety) and mental health and wellbeing, they will be well prepared to teach the new curriculum and will only need to make a few changes.

Does the new Relationships Education take account of my faith?

The government has introduced the subjects to help children from all backgrounds to understand what makes a happy, healthy and safe relationship (including friendships) and to develop tolerance and understanding of all aspects of diversity to help them thrive in modern Britain. Schools must take account of the religious background of pupils when planning and teaching the subjects.

Will parents be able to withdraw their child from Relationships Education?

No. Relationships Education will be compulsory for all children in primary school

Will primary schools have to teach sex education?

The government is not making sex education compulsory in primary schools. There are biological aspects of sex education covered in the national curriculum for science, which is currently compulsory for all pupils and will remain compulsory. From September 2020 all primary schools will have to teach about puberty as part of statutory health education.

It will be up to schools to decide whether they need to teach any additional content on sex education, in addition to the biological aspects in science. Although this is not compulsory the government guidance recommends that all primary schools should have a sex education programme "tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils".

Schools who choose to teach additional content on sex education, should consult with parents on what is to be covered and let parents know what will be taught and when, and the resources that will be used. Parents should be consulted before Year 6 about what will be taught.

Many schools offer parents support in talking to their children about sex education and how to link this with what is being taught in school.

Will I be able to withdraw my child from Sex Education in primary?

Parents will not be able to withdraw their child from any of the biological aspects of the science national curriculum eg human life cycle, as is the case now. Parents will not be able to withdraw from puberty in statutory Health Education from September 2020.

Parents have the right to request to withdraw their child from the sex education that is in addition to the science curriculum, and the request will be automatically granted. However, if parents have concerns about any additional sex education that is taught, they should discuss this with the school.

If a school chooses to teach any sex education in addition to the statutory elements in science they will set this out in a policy and include a definition of sex education and information about a parent's right to request to withdraw their child.

Will primary schools teach about different families?

Yes. Pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. The new subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships.

The government guidance states that in primary schools, pupils should know "that other's families, either in school or in the wider world sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences" and 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".

The government guidance states that "families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children. Families can include for example, single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures."

What does the government guidance say about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender identities and relationships?

Government guidance states that "In teaching Relationships Education in primary, schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics".

When teaching Relationships Education, schools should ensure that it is age-appropriate. It will be up to schools to decide when they teach pupils about LGBT, and government guidance states that "they should fully integrate it into the curriculum rather than deliver it as a stand-alone unit or lesson" and "expects that all pupils will be taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum. The government guidance states that primary schools should know that "there are different families and that they should respect those differences".

This will mean that pupils will learn and understand the importance of equality and respecting differences between people, the impact of bullying, prejudice and discrimination and learning about different relationships and family structures, such as a family with a mum and a dad, a single mum, two mums or two dads as well as children that are cared for by foster parents or who are adopted. When teaching about marriage, this will cover both opposite sex and same sex couples.

Will schools have to consult with parents and carers about what they teach?

Hearing parents views is very important and schools will be required to consult with parents when they develop their Relationships Education policy. The school's policy will be published on the school's website and freely available to parents on request.

Consultation will help to dispel any myths or misunderstanding and help parents understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education, as well as help schools understand parents' views for when the school decides on how and when to cover the statutory curriculum and whether to teach sex education in addition to the statutory science and health education curriculum.

Parents should be told what will be taught when and see examples of resources the school plans to use, so that parents can continue conversations at home. Parents should be given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education.

If a school chooses to teach sex education in addition to statutory science, they should consult with parents on what is to be covered. Parents should be consulted before Year 6 about what will be taught.

How will schools consult with parents and carers?

Schools have existing methods in place to engage parents and will continue to use these when engaging parents with Relationships Education. Schools will use a range of approaches to hear parents' views, such as questionnaires/surveys, parents' meetings for different Key Stages or Year groups, discussions at parents events, setting up a working group with parents, staff and governors and curriculum information meetings.