



St Andrew's Junior School

RSE FAQs



The Department for Education has announced changes to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). These changes will come into effect from September 2020 and all schools will be required to comply with the updated requirements, making Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education. It has been 20 years since the last review of these curriculum areas, and in that time the world has changed significantly. Children now face new challenges: they have to process lots of information from different sources such as TV, the internet, social media, understand how society is changing, understand risks they may face, all putting pressure on their physical and mental health.

We believe RSE is important for our pupils and our school because:

- It is giving children the knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships.
- It is about giving children the opportunity to put knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts.
- It is the recognition that everyone faces difficult situations in their lives and how RSE can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.

We view the partnership of home and school as vital in providing the context to both complement and reinforce what pupils learn at home about healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online, as well as how to be healthy

Below, we have explained some of the common questions around these subjects.

So why now?

The Equality Act came into force in 2010. The Equality Act 2010 states that it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation (**Government, 2010, p1**)

The public sector Equality Duty came into force on 5th April 2011 and requires that public bodies (including schools):

- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination
 - Advance equality of opportunity
 - Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
- (Government Equalities Office 2013, p1)

This makes it clear that promoting some of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act while ignoring others is against UK law.

What is teaching about equality?

It is teaching about:

- Difference
- Acceptance
- Tolerance
- Diversity
- How to challenge discrimination

Teaching about equality helps our children to prepare for the next stages in their lives.

Will my child be taught sex education at Primary School? Is this too young?

Sex education at Primary school is not compulsory. However, compulsory Relationships Education is being introduced in Primary schools from September 2020, to put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships of all kinds. This will start with family and friends, how to treat each other with kindness, and recognising the difference between online and offline friendships.

At St Andrew's School, we currently teach sex education to children in Year 4, 5 and 6 (which goes beyond the existing national curriculum for science). Before these lessons take place, the school gives parents the opportunity to understand what will be taught and how it will be approached. If you continue to have concerns, you have the right to withdraw from any sex education lessons that go beyond that of the science national curriculum. We will continue to teach the elements of sex education which focuses on puberty and reproduction, as it is part of the science national curriculum and therefore compulsory.

Is school the best place for discussions about Sex and Relationships?

We know from surveys of children, that if they do not get the correct and accurate information about sex and relationships from a reliable source, they **will** find the information from other sources (friends, older siblings, website, tv) which may not be true or age appropriate. The information gathered during the Government consultation found that most children wanted this information and discussion to be provided in school with their teachers so that they could ask their questions in a safe space, and have them answered in an age-appropriate way.

Does the new Relationships Education and RSE curriculum take account of my faith?

The RSE curriculum is designed to help children from all backgrounds build positive and safe relationships, and to thrive in modern Britain. Our School has a Christian religious character, and we believe that teaching about Relationships builds on our Core Christian Values of Love and Equality and is in line with the Church's teaching. The Church of England's charter for Relationship, Sex and Health Education states:

'Everyone will be treated with dignity as all people are made in the image of God and loved equally by God. All pupils have a right to an education which enables them to flourish and is set in a learning community where differences of lifestyle and opinion (within that which is permissible under UK law) are treated with dignity and respect'.

Do I have a right to withdraw my child from Relationships and Sex Education?

In a Primary School, you have the right to withdraw from any sex education lessons ***that go beyond that of the science national curriculum.***

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at Primary or Secondary school as the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

Has the government listened to the views of my community in introducing these subjects?

The Government undertook a wide public consultation which involved discussions with over 90 organisations, as well as the public consultation on the draft regulations and guidance. This has informed the key decisions on these subjects.

Will these subjects promote LGBT relationships?

No, these subjects don't 'promote' anything, they educate. We are teaching about equality. Our school ethos says that we are respectful of everyone. We value ourselves and all others: This means that if someone is black, they are welcome in our school; if someone uses a wheelchair, they are welcome in our school; if someone is gay they are welcome in our school.

Pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. These subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships. RSE should meet the needs of all pupils, whatever their developing sexuality or identity – this should include age-appropriate teaching about different types of relationships in the context of the law.

In our school the teaching of LGBT will be delivered through teaching about different types of family, including those with same sex parents. All our planned learning will be taught in an age appropriate way.

We don't know children who are gay or transgender, so why does it need to be mentioned?

We want our children to grow up respectful and tolerant members of our community. As they grow up, make more friends, watch tv, go to different places they will meet people who are gay or transgender. We want them to understand that this is okay that some children when they grow up may be gay. We don't want children growing up thinking something is wrong with them or with people they recognise who are gay or transgender.

My religion says that gay is wrong, so why are you teaching about different sexuality choices?

We are teaching about equality. We understand and respect all faiths. We recognise the tension that it can present. We are teaching children not to be afraid of difference but to celebrate difference. Any discussion or resources used will be to help your child be respectful and tolerant towards others. We are preparing the children for life in Britain. Britain is diverse and they are going to meet people who are different to them as they grow up.

You are confusing my child because at home they are learning that being gay is wrong but at school you are telling them that being gay is OK.

As a parent it is your right to talk to your child about religious beliefs. In school we build our curriculum around UK law. We are teaching children that all people and relationships are equal. We are teaching children that all families are different and your child, as they grow up, is going to meet people who live in different families. It is important that children learn about people who are different. They need to learn to be tolerant and respectful of people with different views. When they grow up they can make up their own minds about what is right and wrong.

What are the topics covered in RSE?

In school, relationships education (and sex education that is part of the science curriculum) is taught throughout the year within science, Secrets of Success, collective worship and online safety lessons. However, many elements of RSE are taught together in one week towards the end of the Summer Term. If you would like to see what primary schools are required to teach, please refer to page 19-23 of the government guidance ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf))

If you would like to see the topics we cover specifically in RSE week, see our planned objectives on the RSE section of our website.

How will we know what is being taught so I can talk to my child about it at home?

Parents will be given opportunities to ask and understand how the curriculum is being planned to be taught. On the RSE section of our website, you will find the objectives that each year group plan to teach. You will also find the progression of vocabulary document, so you can see the sort of language which will be used in each year group. As the curriculum planning develops, parents may have the opportunity to look at materials that will be used. If you need to discuss this further, teachers will be happy to discuss this with you or signpost other resources that can be use at home to support discussions.

Will this work prompt my children to ask challenging questions?

Yes, quite possibly. Your child or children trust you and will be likely to ask you various questions to test your beliefs and opinions. Please don't avoid them, talk openly about diversity and equality.

In school, we encourage children to write their questions down on a piece of paper and put in our class 'question box' which the teachers will continuously monitor during RSE lessons. Children will be encouraged to put their initials on the piece of paper to allow teachers to address individual concerns although this is optional. If children ask questions which they feel they cannot answer, children can be reminded that they can speak to their parents. If a question is asked which is not anonymous and cannot be answered, the teachers are advised to consider informing the child's parents. If a question is too explicit or is inappropriate, the teacher will attend to it later, on an individual basis and, if appropriate, will talk to the child's parents/carers.