

What Will My Child Learn about Relationships in Primary School?

Guidance for Parents and Carers

As part of a high-quality Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) scheme, schools have always aimed to deliver accurate, relevant and age-appropriate information about Relationships - one of the three core strands of PSHE and Citizenship (the other two being Health and Wellbeing and Living in the Wider World).

The term 'relationships' covers all relationships we, as humans, have with others - family members, friends, the relationships children have in school with their peers and members of staff. In a broad sense, Relationships Education encompasses all interactions we have with others.

PSHE and Citizenship, as a whole subject, is not currently a statutory part of the curriculum, yet good schools will endeavour to teach children from a young age all about values, social skills and life skills. Recently, after thorough research and much consideration, the government have decided that the core strand Relationships Education is to become statutory in primary schools and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is to become statutory in secondary schools.

Professionals in both the education and the health sector welcome this news as it means that full guidance and resources will be developed to enable schools to teach children about relationships in an engaging, meaningful and age-appropriate manner.

What Will Relationships Education in Primary Schools Cover?

Relationships Education will form a part of children's learning about the world around them and how they interact with others. Like all areas of the curriculum, Relationships Education will be taught objectively, without bias. Children will not be taught to question their own gender identity but will become aware that we are all different and that our differences should never be a cause for fear, conflict or disrespect.

In the early years (nursery and reception), children will begin to:

- develop a positive sense of themselves and others;
- form positive relationships with others;
- develop respect for others;
- develop an awareness of similarities and differences between people.

In KS1 (years 1 and 2), children will learn more about topics such as:

- working collaboratively with others;
- being kind and treating others with respect;
- bullying and unkind behaviours;
- understanding their own and others' emotions;
- the importance of families and friends in our lives;
- different family structures.



In KS2 (years 3, 4, 5 and 6), children will build on this and will cover learning on:

- teamwork and shared responsibilities;
- resolving conflicts with others;
- conveying their emotions to others appropriately;
- the different types of relationships people have with others;
- effective communication with others;
- healthy and unhealthy relationships, including all forms of bullying;
- peer pressure and dares.

Celebrating Diversity through Relationships Education

Teaching children about the wonderful differences among humans has always been considered an important message in education. Just as we want to encourage children to celebrate their many different talents, strengths, goals and dreams, we also aim to promote the celebration of diversity among cultures, religions and traditions. Celebrating diversity among family structures and relationships is exactly the same principal and a whole-school approach is vital.

An Inclusive Relationships Education

Schools will have flexibility in determining how they teach and deliver Relationships Education. However, it will be expected that all Relationships units of work used in schools will be inclusive and representative of relationships and family structures in modern Britain and should promote tolerance and acceptance, in line with British values. Ofsted fully support the notion that children should be taught about different families and relationships.

To ensure children with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT+) family members, as well as those who are beginning to feel they themselves might be LGBT+, feel represented through the school environment and the curriculum, schools will endeavour to use resources that feature a range of families and relationships. This encourages understanding, acceptance and respect of different relationships from a young age.

Why is it Important for Relationships Education to be LGBT+ Inclusive?

'Pupils should be able to understand the world in which they are growing up, which means understanding that some people are LGBT, that this should be respected in British society, and that the law affords them and their relationships recognition and protections. Pupils growing up in families with LGBT members, or who are beginning to understand that they are or may be LGBT themselves, should feel that Relationships Education and RSE is relevant to them. Schools should make decisions about what is appropriate to teach on this subject and when, based on the age and development of their pupils and should involve their parent body in these decisions, informing them clearly and in a timely manner about what and how their pupils will be taught. The government believes that this is the right approach to teaching about LGBT, and as such, this is set out in the guidance and will be made clear to schools through communications and further support they receive to deliver these subjects.'

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education in England - Government Consultation Response, February 2019

What Should I Do If I am Concerned about Relationships Education?

If you have any queries or concerns, the most important thing to do is to contact your child's school and ask to speak to the PSHE lead or a senior member of staff. They will be able to provide specific information on the curriculum and resources they use to teach Relationships Education.