

Developments in the curriculum: 'Relationships, Sex and Health Education' (September 2020)

Affecting:

- (A). Relationships Education (primary)
- (B). Relationships and Sex Education (secondary)
- (C). Health Education (primary and secondary)

Purpose of this update for parents

Parents and carers may be aware that the Department for Education has issued statutory guidance on:

- (A). Relationships Education in primary schools,
- (B). Relationships and Sex Education in secondary schools, and
- (C). Health Education in both primary and secondary schools.

Changes will come into force from September 2020.

The new statutory guidance about what should be taught reflects changes in society over the past 20 years and other legislation and statutory guidance about safeguarding, special educational needs and disabilities, mental health, and behaviour in schools, together with implications of the 2010 Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty for schools. The Secretary of State's forward sets the context:

"Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way"

The aim of this update is to inform parents of our planning, for schools in the Cranmer Education Trust, and how our schools will consult with parents.

What does the statutory guidance say about what children should learn?

(A). Relationships Education in our Primary Schools

Government requirements reflect what we already teach in our primaries. This currently includes:

- Families and people who care for them
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships – how to keep safe online, how to recognise risks and harmful content and contact, how to report; how information is shared and used online; how to consider online friendships, online information and the risks of online communication with people you have never met
- Being safe, appropriate boundaries, privacy and how to ask for help and where to get advice.

(B). Relationships and Sex Education in Secondary Schools

This builds on what is taught in Primary, introducing more depth, more age-appropriate content, and what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. Below are **some examples** of the types of issues to be explored. Mostly, these topics are already discussed, but we are reviewing how we do this in the light of the new guidance.

- **Families:** The different types of committed stable relationships; What marriage and civil partnerships are; including their legalities; why marriage is an important relationship choice and why it must be freely entered into.
- **Respectful Relationships:** The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equalities Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.
- **Online and Media:** Online risks, the potential for material to be shared online and the difficulty of removing it; What to do and where to get support to report material and manage issues online.
- **Being Safe:** The concepts of and laws relating to sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment and domestic abuse.
- **Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health:** How to get further advice, including how and where to discuss confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

(C). Health Education in primary and secondary

Physical health and wellbeing have always been part of the school curriculum, taught through Physical Education and Sport, and through Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE). The new regulations highlight the relationship between physical and mental wellbeing and link these with how young people develop the ability to cope with difficulties and challenges. This is often referred to as “resilience” and “character education”.

The Primary Curriculum

Focuses on teaching what good physical health and wellbeing means, including:

- Healthy Eating;
- Physical Fitness;
- Facts about legal and illegal harmful substances (drugs, alcohol, tobacco);
- The importance of sleep, visiting the dentist, handwashing, how to reduce the risk of sun damage;
- Internet Safety, the effects of online actions on others and how to recognise and display respectful behaviours online.

The Secondary Curriculum

Further develops the primary learning about mental wellbeing, including common types of mental ill-health;

- Examines in more detail the health implications and risks of legal and illegal substances and takes pupils through the legal consequences of possession and supply;
- Introduces topics such as screening and immunisation and wider issues such as blood/organ donation;
- Develops basic first aid, including to how to administer cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR);
- Develops an understanding of healthy eating (eating disorders is a specialist area and is not addressed except with qualified specialist support);
- Builds on the primary curriculum for internet safety, including the dangers of the curated image of life which gives rise to unrealistic expectations and anxiety.

The importance of Age Appropriateness

Our schools teach children and young people 3-18, so everything we teach has to be carefully planned with the children's age and abilities in mind. A Year 1 lesson on relationships may focus on developing empathy and understanding; a Year 9 lesson may examine the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, particularly the "protected characteristics" of the Equality Act 2010 and what it means to say that in law everyone is unique and equal.

Our timeline for consultation and the implementation of the new Relationships curriculum (September 2022)

Summer Term 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform parents of forthcoming changes through websites and newsletters • Take feedback from our pupils about relationships education and online behaviour • Take advice from Manchester Diocesan Board of Education • Develop first revision/outline of what will be taught, when and how • Present outlines to local governing committees in June 2019
Autumn Term 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review our planning in the light of published government advice and materials • Provide detail of the proposed curriculum, rationale and resources/materials to parents in each school through parent workshops/forum and seek feedback • Invite feedback from Manchester Diocesan Board of Education and the Oldham Interfaith Forum
Spring Term 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust our planning in the light of feedback • Present the final version, with rationale and evidence of consultation, to the March meetings of the local governance committees for their approval
Summer Term 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy/develop any new materials • Train teachers on the new elements • Publish details, plus examples discussed on websites
Autumn Term 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch new curriculum • Plan review and evaluation in Spring Term 2021 to feedback to local governance in Summer 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

This area of the curriculum can be a sensitive one. Some questions which have come up already are set out below, and we will add to this as we plan, so that parents have information directly from the Cranmer Education Trust and our schools.

Will our primaries teach Sex Education?

The national curriculum for science for primaries, teaches children about the development of the human body as it grows from birth to old age. This includes teaching about the main external body parts, body changes, hygiene and puberty.

Sexual behaviour/sexuality is not part of the primary curriculum.

However, primary-age pupils may start to discuss their thoughts with peers or often ask their teachers, or other adults, questions which relate to sex or sexuality. Our policy is that adults answers such questions factually when

they can or refer to senior leaders if they cannot or if they have any concern about the question asked. It is very easy for children whose questions are not answered to access the internet and potentially find sources of information which are not age-appropriate and which would be of concern to parents.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

We believe we have a responsibility to represent all members of our school community, including children, families and staff, within each school's curriculum, to celebrate identity and create a strong sense of belonging, empathy and appreciation.

We recognise that our children and young people come from different family arrangements and this is something to respect and value.

As our young people grow up, they may question their own sexuality, identity or their gender, or live within a family unit where family members or friends may be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender.

Our schools welcome all children, young people and families. We are committed to ensuring that all are safe, respected and not the subject of bullying or discrimination.

Therefore, in line with the Equality Act 2010, and our commitment to fundamental British Values about mutual respect, difference and diversity and tolerance, LGBT is integrated into the curriculum, as are all protected characteristics including also race, religion and belief, age, gender and disability.

In primary this means that pupils may listen to/read stories about same sex partners for example. We do not stereotype children and promote equality for all.

In secondary, LGBT is threaded through the relationships' curriculum.

When we run the workshops for parents, we will share the materials used.

Parental Right to Withdraw Pupils

1. In law, parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of **sex education** delivered as part of Statutory Relationships and Sex Education, i.e. this right of withdrawal only applies in secondary schools, as sex education is not taught in primaries.
2. There is no right to withdraw pupils from the national curriculum, e.g. science.
3. **Our aim is to achieve consensus through information and consultation**
We aim to prepare young people in life in a diverse and changing world. They need knowledge to navigate this successfully. If we do not discuss what affects their lives and answer their questions in school, they will look elsewhere, and that could provide inappropriate or damaging misinformation.

Some of the issues that may arise may be sensitive for some. However, the law is clear and the ethos is clear – it is important for our shared future that we all learn to live together respectfully and tolerantly. Everyone must be safe and there must be no discrimination. We owe our children the right to live and flourish in an equal, diverse and harmonious society and what we teach and model in schools is key to that.

We would like all our parents/carers to be on board and supportive so that all our children can thrive.



Summary

We will be introducing the new Relationships (primary), Relationships and Sex (secondary) and Health (primary and secondary) curriculum into our schools, in line with the statutory guidance, from September 2020.

We will be planning this in more detail later in the summer of 2019 and taking advice from Manchester Diocese and the Interfaith Forum.

We will consult fully with parents/carers through our website and through workshops/focus groups to build consensus.

The outcome needs to be provision that will enable our children and young people to be safe, to navigate their off and online lives successfully and to thrive in our diverse community where everyone is valued and respected.

