

RSE



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Background**

The Department for Education is introducing compulsory Relationships Education for primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for secondary pupils from September 2020 (In light of COVID-19, schools have been given additional time to plan and implement these changes). Also, it will be compulsory for all schools to teach Health Education.

## **Current situation in Luton**

We have adopted a Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Association approved programme for RSE- the Christopher Winter Project. The programme fully supports the council's values of embracing equality and diversity, cohesion and inclusion whilst showing respect for others. Our guiding principles are that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of the pupils and parents and promoting tolerance of difference, while always with the aim of providing pupils with the appropriate knowledge to thrive in today's society.

## **FAQs**

**Q. What is the difference between relationships education and sex education?**

A. Relationships education is teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.

This starts with children being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. From the beginning of Primary school, building on early

education, children are taught how to take turns; how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect; the importance of honesty and truthfulness; permission seeking and giving; and the concept of personal privacy.

Establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical contact- these are the forerunners of teaching about consent. The principles of positive relationships also apply online especially as, by the end of primary school, many children will already be using the internet.

In primary schools, Health Education includes some teaching that ensures that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that early adolescence brings.

**Q: Will my child be taught sex education at primary school?**

A: We are not introducing compulsory sex education at Maidenhall. Parent's will have the opportunity to request that their child receives one lesson of sex education in Year 6 if they wish and on condition of them filling out the consent forms.

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

A: Our guiding principles are that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, actively promoting tolerance and with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents while always with the aims of preparing pupils to thrive in today's society.

**Q: Almost everyone in my child's class is Muslim and feels the same as me. Shouldn't this be reflected in what is taught?**

A: The primary RSE curriculum promotes tolerance and fully supports Luton Council values of embracing equality and diversity, cohesion and inclusion whilst showing respect for others. The guiding principles are that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, actively promoting tolerance and with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents.

**Q: Do I have the right to withdraw my child from RSE in primary school?**

A: The new legislation brought in through the Children and Social Work

Act 2017 will bring about some important changes in relation to parental rights to withdraw children from school in relation to RSE:

- Parents will not be able to withdraw their child from relationships education in primary school
- Parents will be able to withdraw their children from sex education in primary school (remember, this is an opt-in lesson. No child will take part at Maidenhall, unless we have written consent from a parent)
- Maintained primary schools are required to teach the National Curriculum Science, which includes some elements of the human life cycle. Parents do not have the right to withdraw from this

**Q: Will RSE promote LGBT relationships?**

A: No. These subjects do not 'promote' anything, they educate. In primary schools we teach that families are made up of different forms and can include, for example: single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, and foster parents/ carers amongst other structures. The most important element of any family group is that it provides a nurturing environment for children. Luton primary schools promote tolerance of difference, respect and kindness.

**Q: Will teachers receive training before delivering these subjects?**

A: Yes. The council is committed to supporting schools to ensure they deliver RSE to a high standard- training is offered to all teachers. As well as outside training support, the Deputy Headteacher has undertaken training with The National College to become a certified RSE lead.

**Q: Teaching children about sex just encourages it- I don't want my child to know about adult matters so young.**

A: Primary RSE does not teach children about sex. It educates children about the importance of loving relationships within families along with scientific information regarding how the body changes during early adolescence and the human life cycle.

**Q: I teach my child that being gay is wrong in our culture. Surely school should respect this?**

A: Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against people because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). To undermine the rights of one of the

protective characteristics is to undermine the rights of them all. Relationship education nurtures tolerance allowing children to grow up to be respectful of people who are different.

**Q: It is my job to teach my child about sex and relationships- you are taking away my right to bring up my child within my values.**

A: The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.