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Headteacher: Mrs J Luxon

Monday 24th May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

From September 2020 the Government made it compulsory for all primary schools to provide Relationship and Health Education. They recognise that schools may need time to implement this fully, especially due to the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Therefore we are expected to deliver the new requirements fully by the summer term of 2021. The Department for Education (DfE) also strongly encourages primary schools to deliver sex education to help prepare children for their transition to secondary school.

This new guidance is simply about ensuring that **all** children get the information they need and want. The lessons will help children to learn about their bodies, including the changes that take place at puberty, and will help keep them safe so they can form healthy relationships (friendships) with others, now and in the future.

At St George's we already use an excellent PSHE scheme called SCARF. It is an evidence based scheme written by a leading children's health and wellbeing charity, Coram Life Education (CLE). They support us in two ways:

- A visit from a trained educator who delivers aspects of the Relationships Education and Health Education programme. (This is the Life Education Van service which has been coming to St George's for years. I expect your children will have talked to you about it!)
- Using Coram Life Education's online SCARF teaching resources.

More information about Coram Life education and SCARF can be found on their website:

www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk

SCARF has been fully updated to include all the new Relationship Education requirements. As a school we believe it is the best way for us to ensure that we continue to provide the children with an age appropriate and high quality Relationships Education.

Why is Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RSE) so important?

Relationships Education will focus on:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

The over-riding aim of RSE is to keep children safe. Research now shows that children with better health (including mental health) and wellbeing are likely to achieve better academically. By learning about positive relationships, respect for themselves and others, and behaving appropriately and safely online, they are better able to enjoy their friendships and therefore focus more at school. RSE challenges stereotypes which in turn will reduce bullying. It normalizes the range of different relationships and families, and this is a key part of the statutory guidance from the DfE.

Research shows that not delivering Relationships and Sex Education can put our children at greater risk of poor mental health. We know this because every year around 25% of girls start their periods before learning about them at school. This can result in them agonising over why they are bleeding and how serious the cause might be. Similarly, 38% of boys experience wet dreams before having learnt about them, leaving them open to shame and stigma over a natural bodily function; this can lead to problems later in life. Current government Sex and Relationships Education guidance states that children should learn about puberty before they experience it, which is one of the reasons why making this subject statutory in all schools is important.

Children are starting puberty earlier. Research shows it can be as young as 7 and 8 years old. So at St George's we have decided to start teaching the children about menstruation in year 4. When children are taught about puberty and the changes that happen to both girls and boys it increases their empathy for one another which improves relationships between children and their peers. Also at St George's we are using the correct terminology when naming genitalia. Therefore from year 1 we will be using the terms penis and vagina, but with the acknowledgement that families will sometimes have other names for these body parts and this is okay.

RSE plays a vital role in safeguarding children. 1 in 20 children are sexually abused and 1 in 3 of these do not report this to an adult. Sexual abuse can happen to any child; the best way to safeguard children is to ensure that they receive information on naming parts of their body, knowing the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch, and having the skills and confidence to find and talk to a trusted adult to report any abuse.

What will my child learn in SCARF lessons?

SCARF offers a comprehensive PSHE curriculum, not just the new statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education. Below is a brief overview of what your child will be learning.

For each year group there are six themed units which provide a complete PSHE and wellbeing curriculum. They are:

Me and My Relationships

Explores feelings and emotions, develops skills to manage conflict, helps identify our special people and equips children to recognise the qualities of healthy friendships and how to manage them.

Valuing Difference

Includes a strong focus on British Values, supports children to develop respectful relationships with others, recognise bullying and know their responsibilities as a bystander.

Keeping Myself Safe

Covers a number of safety aspects from statutory Relationships Education including being able to identify trusted adults in their lives, what to do when faced with a dilemma and recognising appropriate and inappropriate touch.

Rights and Responsibilities

Explores broader topics including looking after the environment, economic education and the changing rights and responsibilities children have as they grow older.

Being My Best

Includes a focus on keeping physically healthy, developing a growth mindset to facilitate resilience, setting goals and ways to achieve them.

Growing and Changing

Has age-appropriate plans to cover the physical and emotional changes that happen to children as they grow older, including changes at puberty and how to approach this with confidence. Age-appropriate lessons on relationships and sex education are also included.

The RSE curriculum in SCARF is very much a spiral curriculum. It is developmental and appropriate to the age and stage of each year group. At St George's we teach this planned programme in a safe and supportive classroom atmosphere. When teaching some of the sensitive themes of RSE, SCARF uses distancing techniques such as role play, third person case studies or animation presenting safe, non-frightening situations, and an anonymous question box. Lessons contain a variety of teaching methods and strategies that encourages interaction, involvement and questioning: working individually, in pairs and groups; discussions; role play; quizzes; games; circle time and visiting speakers such as representatives from the NSPCC.

Does SCARF cover non-statutory Sex Education?

There is very little in the SCARF programme that is non-statutory. Sex Education means puberty, conception, reproduction and birth. All of these themes, with the exception of conception, are statutory and are included in either Health Education or National Curriculum Science. Therefore there are only three parts within the year 6 'Growing and Changing' unit that parents can request to withdraw their child from. These three sections all deal with conception. We will let you know in advance when these lessons will be taking place.

Parents and RSE

We recognise that parents play a vital role in educating their children about growing up, relationships, sex and health. As a school, we want to work in partnership with you to ensure that our RSE curriculum is completely successful. We will therefore let you know which unit we are covering each half term, and we will inform you before the specific sex education lessons in KS2, and the more sensitive issues that are also covered across both Key Stages. If you have any questions or would like to view some of the resources that we use, then please don't hesitate to contact Mrs Burdett or Mrs Luxon.

Kind regards,

Mrs J Luxon

Headteacher