



**Below, we have provided answers to questions you may have:**

When will RSE begin to be taught in Stepney All Saints, this 2020-21 academic year?

A: We will begin to teach RSE in the Summer Term 2021.

What resources are being used?

A: We are using resources recommended by the PSHE association: Medway resources and NSPCC resources

What are the different components of RSE?

A: Even though it is called 'relationships and sex education,' the focus of the mandatory portion of this programme is on:

- Understanding what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like
- Being safe online
- What makes good friendships and working relationships

This includes topics like sexual orientation and gender identity. It also includes sensitive topics like sexual grooming, domestic abuse and forced marriage. The government requires us to teach this because it believes children are at risk of harm if we don't teach them how to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are harmful.

We're also required to teach health education, so students can make good decisions about their own health and well-being. This includes science-based information about adolescence and is designed to teach children about changes to their bodies, including menstruation.

**Relationships education** is about:

- Understanding what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like
- Being safe online
- What makes good friendships and working relationships

It includes topics like gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as sexual grooming, domestic abuse and forced marriage.

This is because the government believes all children are at risk of harm if they're not properly educated on how to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are harmful.

The **sex education** component is about:

- Intimate and sexual relationships
- Sexual health

Our programme is fact-based and aims to help pupils make smart, safe decisions about their sexual health and well-being. It does not encourage early sexual experimentation.

Sex may be a confusing topic and misconceptions about it can have an impact on children's health and well-being. We want to work with all of our parents to help our students be smart and stay safe.



### Will Stepney All Saints engage with parents before teaching RSE?

A: Our school will consult with parents on the curriculum during the Spring Term 2021.

We recognise that 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.

We will provide parents examples of the resources we plan to use. We believe that effective engagement gives the space and time for parents to input, ask questions, share concerns and for the school to decide the way forward. We will listen to parents' views, and provide a response to parental questions. When and how content is taught is ultimately a decision for the school, and consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content. The school's policy will be published online.

### Does the RSE curriculum take account of my faith?

A: The subjects are designed to help students from all backgrounds build positive and safe relationships, and to thrive in modern Britain. When teaching these subjects, the religious background of students will be taken into account when planning teaching, so that topics are appropriately handled.

Whatever the make-up of pupils in a class, schools are obliged to give young people information which enables them to lead healthy lives, make informed choices and understand their rights and responsibilities. We have a rights-based and entitlement approach, informed by equality legislation and educational legislation and guidance.

Teachers will preface all RSE sessions with the acknowledgement that pupils may have particular beliefs about the content of a lesson, (for example a lesson on contraception), while stressing that the purpose of the lesson is to give information. Pupils can be invited to share and express their opinions; at the same time they can be given the option not to discuss their views if that is their preference. For some pupils it may be forbidden to discuss sex and the human body, which may be seen as a private matter. It is worth mentioning here that one of the ground rules for RSE is that 'you don't have to say anything if you don't want to'.

We understand that teachers of RSE should not promote any particular values or beliefs, or favour one set of views over another, but rather create an environment, as in all RSE sessions, where key information can be given and different values can be respected; however, it is still recommended that difference and diversity are addressed.

For example, the following will be taken into consideration when delivering RSE:

- For some young people, looking at images of the human body, particularly of the opposite gender, may be a sensitive issue. Careful consideration will be given to the resources used when teaching puberty, conception, contraception, transmission of STIs and so on. We will use diagrams rather than photos or videos.
- Pupils may believe that sex should only take place within marriage
- There may be strong views about contraception and abortion



- There may be cultural traditions, celebrations or particular practices within different faiths. This may impact on topics such as puberty, menstruation, hygiene, and relationships

### Do parents have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships and Sex Education?

A: Parents will continue to have a right to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, should be granted up to three terms before their child turns 16. At this point, if the child themselves wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements for this to happen in one of the three terms before the child turns 16 - the legal age of sexual consent.

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

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

A: A thorough engagement process, involving a public call for evidence and discussions with over 90 organisations, as well as the public consultation on the draft regulations and guidance, has informed the key decisions on these subjects. The consultation received over 23,000 responses from parents, young people, schools and experts and over 40,000 people contacted the Department for Education– these responses have helped finalise the statutory guidance.

### Will students be taught about LGBT relationships?

A: Students 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 students about healthy relationships. Students should receive teaching on LGBT content during their school years. The Equality Act 2010 places duties on schools to help to reduce prejudice-based bullying and in doing so to keep safe protected characteristic groups. Teaching students about the society that we live in and the different types of loving, healthy relationships that exist can be done in a way that respects everyone. RSE should meet the needs of all students, whatever their developing sexuality or identity – this should include age-appropriate teaching about different types of relationships in the context of the law.

Students are learning about all the different types of relationships in their communities and in the wider society in which they live. Stepney All Saints is reinforcing the common values of:

- Respecting one another
- Treating each other with kindness
- Living peacefully together

The statement from Tower Hamlets Legal Services reads as follows:

*“If schools exclude LGBT content from the statutory part of their curriculum, they risk failing to meet their statutory duties under the Equality Act and could therefore be in breach of the Act, notwithstanding the above statutory guidance in respect of LGBT content in Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).”*



### Why should we teach about pornography?

A: Making sense of pornography is taught in Year 11.

Research from the Office of the Children’s Commissioner shows that pornography and sexual images are widely available to young people. We also know that this can have an impact on the way in which they view sex, relationships and their own (and others’) bodies. For example, pornography often depicts a lack of communication about choices, consent, safer sex and contraception in sexual relationships; it can also depict violent or oppressive behaviours towards women in particular, which can be frightening and confusing for young people. Watching this kind of depiction of sexual activity may affect young people’s perceptions of healthy sexual relationships and may mean that they feel pressurised to mimic the behaviour they have seen portrayed. Similarly, the depictions of the human body in pornography may distort young people’s perceptions of their own and others’ bodies. Therefore, it is important that pornography should be addressed as part of the PSHE curriculum—in line with pupil need (PSHE Association 2018)

### What support will schools receive to deliver RSE well?

A: There will be staff training in March delivered by Tower Hamlets Healthy Team, followed by drop-in sessions (where staff will be able to receive further support). RSE materials will be evaluated in winter 2021.

### Where can parents find out more information about what is taught at Stepney All Saints?

A: The PSHE programme is published on our website. If you want to know more about what will be taught, the best thing to do is speak to our PSHE co-ordinator or the member of SLT leading on RSE.

RSE lessons are designed to equip students with knowledge to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships as well as preparing them for a successful adult life. The important lessons parents teach their child about healthy relationships, looking after themselves and staying safe, are respected and valued under this new curriculum. Teaching at school will complement and reinforce the lessons parents teach their child as they grow up.

### Are boys and girls taught separately?

A: Currently we are teaching puberty and change in the body to male and female students together, to allow for a more open conversation and awareness for all students and to ensure that learning for male and female students is consistent.

### Can I see the resources before the lessons are being taught?

A: A sample of lessons will be shared at the parent consultation meeting during the Spring Term 2021. Unfortunately, this year, because of exceptional circumstances, we are unable to host parents’ meetings in school but we can arrange this in the future. Because of copyright, lessons cannot be shared online, however, resources will be available to see when we are able to arrange meetings in the future.



Are students told who to see if they are affected by anything taught in lessons?

A: Our PSHE lessons include a slide with safeguarding information about who students can go and talk to.