



## **Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE)**

In September 2020, the government announced a range of changes to the PSHE curriculum, introducing the newly reformed 'Relationships and Sex Education' (RSE) curriculum. This was primarily due to the ever-changing challenges now faced by children. Statutory guidance from the Department for Education states that from September 2020, all primary schools must deliver relationships and health education. The 'Sex Education' component of these objectives is recommended but not compulsory at primary school. At Burlington Junior School, these new objectives have been structured to support pupils in becoming emotionally healthy, socially confident and understand how to have positive relationships with others.

We realise that parents may have a range of questions about these changes to the curriculum, which we will address below:

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Why are these changes being introduced now?**

Society has changed dramatically since this subject was last revised; the challenges that children face are dramatically different so it is only right that the national curriculum and programme of work provided by schools reflects this.

Also, the Equality Act came into force in 2010. The Equality Act 2010 states that it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation (Government, 2010, p1)

The public sector Equality Duty came into force on 5th April 2011 and requires that public bodies (including schools):

- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. (Government Equalities Office 2013, p1)

This makes it clear that promoting some of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act while ignoring others is against UK law.



### **What is teaching about equality?**

It is teaching about:

- Difference
- Acceptance
- Tolerance
- Diversity
- How to challenge discrimination

Teaching about equality helps our children to prepare for the next stages in their lives.

### **How has the government listened to the views of my community in introducing these subjects?**

The Government undertook a wide public consultation which involved discussions with over 90 organisations, as well as the public consultation on the draft regulations and guidance. This has informed the key decisions on these subjects.

### **Will my child be taught sex education at primary school? This is too young.**

Relationships education, whereby pupils learn about healthy respectful relationships, is a compulsory part of the new RSE curriculum. This part of the curriculum aims to put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships of all kinds. This will start with family and friends, how to treat each other with kindness, and recognising the difference between online and offline friendships.

The Health component of this part of the curriculum is also compulsory. This aims to help pupils develop healthy lifestyle choices, as well as considering the effects of food, exercise, drugs and alcohol on the body. This will be addressed in a sensitive manner that suits the needs of the pupils.

The Sex Education component of RSE is not compulsory. Parents do have a right to withdraw their child from these lessons if they feel that this is necessary. However, this part of the curriculum can be introduced in an age and stage appropriate manner in collaboration between staff and parents.

### **Will these subjects promote LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) relationships? My child is not ready to learn about this.**

The structure of the RSE curriculum does not aim to 'promote' any particular belief system, it only educates pupils about different family structures. At Burlington Junior School, we aim to foster a sense of respect for all people, regardless of personal lifestyles and family structures. Respect is one of our half-termly values. In terms of LGBT content, it is stated in the national curriculum guidelines that pupils should consider 'others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.' It is also noted that schools 'should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum



rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson.' All lesson planning and resources when discussing this content will be completed in a sensitive, age and stage appropriate manner.

### **Are primary children too young to be taught about gay or lesbian people?**

Society is varied and diverse; some children grow up in families with gay or lesbian people, even if you are not aware of this. We want to cultivate an inclusive, welcoming environment where all pupils are able to discuss their families in a safe, secure environment. To do so, this topic needs to be discussed where appropriate to the children's welfare. Throughout their daily lives, all children will interact with people from different backgrounds and it is important for them to treat all members of the community with the same level of respect that they want to receive. All schools have a duty of care to challenge any language that may cause offence to others, whether this has been used intentionally or not. Phrases such as "that's so gay" or "that's a girls'/boys' toy" when used in a negative manner may unintentionally cause offence. Staff will challenge this language in a non-confrontational yet informative way if it is used by children, parents or visitors as we want everyone to feel welcome.

### **What if my child asks difficult questions at home after these lessons? For example, what do I say when my child comes home and asks, 'How can two men love each other?'**

We will support parents where needed to address any questions that children may ask as a result of the content covered at school. The main concept of these lessons is that all people and family circumstances are different. These concepts will be addressed in school and there will be opportunities for pupils to discuss any concerns with staff throughout the day. If children do ask further questions at home that parents are not confident in discussing at home, staff will endeavour to support parents to address this.

### **What if my religious beliefs do not match the new RSE curriculum objectives?**

As a school, we teach tolerance and respect to people of all religious beliefs and backgrounds; this wide range of cultural beliefs is part of what makes the United Kingdom richly diverse. The new content aims to help pupils develop a caring, respectful attitude regardless of personal backgrounds. Staff will ensure that the content covered in each lesson will be approached in a manner that is sensitive to all religious or personal beliefs; however, as stated, the relationships and health education is compulsory so there is no legal right to withdraw your child from these lessons.

### **Where can I find out more information about what will be taught in my child's school?**

Burlington Junior School will be able to provide further guidance to you regarding this part of the curriculum if you want to know more about what will be taught as part of the new subjects. This can be through the curriculum part of the school website. Further details can also be requested from the school office.