

St Michael's PSHE Policy – Frequently asked questions

How often do you teach PSHE?

PSHE is one lesson per week for an hour.

How can I talk to my child about relationships, puberty and human reproduction?

What we teach them in school is only half the curriculum and children can continue to learn with you at home. When speaking with children it is important to remember:

We all want children to be safe, healthy and happy

We need to consider their needs and the world they inhabit

We need to normalise talking about relationships, puberty and human reproduction so that they are encouraged to speak with us about any concerns or worries that they may have

Why are we teaching relationship education?

Relationship and Health Education were made statutory subjects by the government in 2020 in the same way that phonics, reading, maths and geography are. As a school, we are expected to cover all aspects of this document through our teaching of Personal, Social and Health Education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-education-primary>

More than ever before, children are exposed to representations of sex and sexuality through the social culture and media around them. The unregulated content on the internet or social media, can mean that children may be exposed to confusing or scary content. We can help to prepare them by presenting a balanced point of view about how to stay happy and healthy.

Why are you teaching sex education so early?

We are not teaching human reproduction until Year 6, which has always been the case at St Michael's. We will be teaching children about the changes to their bodies, that everyone will experience through puberty in a gradual way from the end of Year 4.

Why will you be using the scientific names of body parts when speaking with children in KS1?

The children need to understand which parts of their body are private and which are not. We believe that this is a safeguarding issue and in order to be able to safeguard themselves. When talking to the children, we will use the correct terms for the body parts should they ask. We will not be showing them pictures of these body parts currently until they are in Year 4. As part of this curriculum we focus on teaching the NSPCC Pants rule, which states:

Privates are Private

Always remember your body belongs to you

No means no

Talk about secrets that upset you

Speak up, someone can help

Why are you starting the teaching of puberty at the end of Year 4 rather than in Year 5 as before?

The statutory teaching of puberty is laid out in the Relationship Education in Primary Schools – DFE Guidance 2020. This document states:

H34 key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes.

H35 about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.

Puberty can be a very confusing time for the children and it is important that they learn the key facts about this from us as adults rather than other children. Children turn 9 in Year 4 and we believe that it is important to prepare children for the changes to their bodies rather than to teach them when these changes are happening. The teaching of puberty begins in Year 4 with the changes, that will begin to happen that are visible on the outside of their bodies leading to more about changes in Year 5.

Children in Year 5 begin to have more freedoms related to the internet. In Year 5, many children begin to get their first internet enabled phone and by Year 6, most children have one. As a school, we want to teach them the key facts related to puberty rather than them find out themselves online and possibly access false or misleading information.

When do you teach human reproduction?

In Years 4 and 5, a small part of our curriculum is focused on puberty and the changes to their bodies, we do not teach human reproduction then. Human reproduction is taught in Year 6 only as parents have the right to withdraw their children from these lessons. **Children will not be learning about Human Reproduction before Year 6 and this is something that parents can opt out of.**

What will my child be taught?

The policy document outlines everything your child will be taught from Year 1 to Year 6. At no point will a child be taught something that is inappropriate; and if a question from a child arises and the teacher feels it would be inappropriate to answer, (for example, because of its mature or explicit nature), the child will be encouraged to ask his/her parents or carers at home. The question will not be answered to the child or class if it is outside the remit of that year group's programme.

What can I withdraw my children from?

Parents will not be able to withdraw from Relationships and Health Education, and this includes lessons on puberty (Year 5 and 6), prejudice and discrimination, bullying, difference and diversity and different families.

You are able to withdraw children only from the one puberty lesson in Year 4 and the Year 6 lesson focused around human reproduction. A form is available at the end of the policy, which you can fill in. The rest of the teaching within our policy comes under the Relationship Education Statutory guidance.

What are we teaching in relationship education about families?

St Michael's Primary School is a place where all children feel safe and respected. There are a variety of family situations in British society; some children will have parents who are separated, some may live with a mum and a dad, two mums or two dads, some may have step-parents, live with other extended family and some may be fostered or adopted. Any family should not be made to feel less accepted, or that their family is any less loving and caring and so it is vital that we acknowledge all family groups and celebrate them. Every child should be made to feel valued and special.

In lessons that explore differences in families, pictorial resources are used as a discussion focus. Questions such as; 'Which photos show a family?' 'What is important about a family?' and 'What does your family mean to you?' help children understand about their own and other's families and how a family is founded in love and respect.

Within the context of these lessons, they will also be introduced to different cultures and ethnicities, people with different religions, beliefs and lifestyles, and about people with disability or special needs. When discussing any differences between people, our curriculum helps teach children to form opinions about others based on whether they are: kind, law-abiding, respectful, trustworthy, and responsible people, rather than judging them on appearance or whether a particular aspect of their lifestyle is different to their own. Children also learn about discrimination and prejudice including racism, sexism, and ageism.

What our curriculum does:

- teaches children to be kind, understanding and respectful of others
- teaches children that people have rights but there are also responsibilities that go with these
- teaches children that there are laws to protect them and others from being hurt or abused and helps protect them from bullying
- helps clarify (age -appropriately) questions that children may have about the world

What resources will you use to teach my child?

All of the resources, which we use in school, are age appropriate and paper based. If you would like to see any of these resources, please contact the school and we will be able to share a selection of them with you.

When does the Changing Me part of the curriculum begin?

This part of the curriculum will be taught from Monday 7th June onwards.