

Lynch Hill School Primary Academy

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Headteacher
Mrs L. Tomlinson

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you to those of you who have taken such an interest in the changes to the teaching of Health, Relationships and Sex Education at Lynch Hill. Below are the responses to some commonly posed questions raised as a result of the information sharing session letter last term and any other questions we have received. I want to reassure you that we do understand that this is potentially a contentious issue for a number of you, however, as educators in the 21st century, our curriculum at Lynch Hill must reflect modern Britain, which is made up of different people and families, all of whom have characteristics that must be protected. Whilst we recognise that some of these characteristics may perhaps be in conflict with people's faiths, staff will always show great sensitivity and strive to teach our curriculum content in a non-biased way and with a commitment to avoiding prejudice and discrimination.

As you know, we had intended to host a series of information sharing sessions but, with the closure of all schools, these were unfortunately postponed. Without knowing when schools will fully re-open, it is important to provide you with as much information as possible, so please read the questions and responses carefully and take time to read the content of the information guides that have been attached. The guides have been produced by Jigsaw PSHE which is the comprehensive scheme of work that we have selected to follow, in order to feel confident that the content delivered to children at Lynch Hill is age appropriate and in line with government expectations and the need to adhere to the Equality Act of 2010.

There are 6 themes and, as recommended by Jigsaw, each year group will follow the same theme at the same time so that there is a cohesive approach across the school. The school year will begin with 'Being Me in My World' and 'Celebrating Difference' during the autumn term, followed by 'Dreams and Goals' and 'Healthy Me' during the spring term. The two topics explored in the summer term are 'Relationships' and 'Changing Me.' The DFE statutory guidance expects schools to deliver work on puberty and this sits under the Health Education statutory expectations. It is the DFE's belief that children need to understand this before they leave primary school so that they see that puberty needs to happen to enable them to have babies in adulthood and so that such knowledge can help to safeguard them. The specific sex education content (puberty and human reproduction) is taught through the Changing Me Puzzle (delivered in the last half term of each academic year).

I hope you will find the information useful. Thank you as always for your support. Stay safe and I hope to see you soon.

Lindsey Tomlinson
Headteacher

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Frequently asked questions and answers regarding Health, Relationships and Sex Education at LHSPA from September 2020

Q: Will my child be taught sex education at primary? This is too young.

A: The government are not introducing compulsory sex education at primary school. They are introducing Relationships Education at primary, 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. Some primary schools choose to teach sex education (which goes beyond the existing national curriculum for science), but this is not the case at Lynch Hill where we follow the national curriculum framework.

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

A: The subjects are designed to help children from all backgrounds build positive and safe relationships, and to thrive in modern Britain. In all schools, when teaching these subjects, the religious background of pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that topics are appropriately handled. In developing these subjects, the government worked with a number of faith organisations and representative bodies. We recognise that this is difficult and because we know this, we are mindful about how we teach. Therefore, we will be considered in our approach and language, we will take on board all comments and we will do the best we can to educate our pupils, whilst showing an awareness and understanding of the needs of all our community.

Q: Do I have a right to withdraw my child from Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)?

A: From September, all aspects of Relationship Education will be a statutory requirement and there will be no right to withdraw from these sessions. Parents do however have a right to withdraw their child from Sex Education delivered as part of RSE, which unless there are exceptional circumstances, should be granted. There is, however, no right to withdraw if these sessions are taught as part of science. What that means for Lynch Hill, following the Jigsaw programme, is that there would be the right to withdraw from one session in Y5 during the summer term and two lessons in Y6 during the summer term. If you would wish to withdraw your child from these three sessions, you should discuss this with the leader for upper KS2. Please be mindful of the fact that withdrawing your child could result in them hearing a version of the content from their peers rather than directly from the teacher and this could lead to misinformation and confusion.

Q: 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 this guidance. The consultation received over 11,000 responses from teachers, schools, expert organisations, young people and parents – these responses have helped finalise the statutory guidance as well as the regulations that have been laid and will be subject to parliamentary debates.

Q: Will these sessions promote LGBTQ relationships?

A: Pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. The subject content is designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships. RSE should meet the needs of all pupils, whatever their developing sexuality or identity – this should include age-appropriate teaching about different types of relationships in the context of the law. Pupils should receive teaching on LGBT relationships during their school years. The government expects secondary schools to include LGBTQ content but for us at Lynch Hill, any LGBTQ content will focus on relationships and not on sexual activity as this would be inappropriate in primary school. The raising awareness that some people within our society are LGBT is not done in isolation. During their Jigsaw lessons, pupils will learn about different cultures, ethnicities, faiths and about people with disabilities and special needs. They will recognise that some families will appear different to their own, for example single parent families, same sex parents, step families and adopted family members. Any child who lives in a family that is different from the stereotypical household of mum, dad, and children should not be made to feel less accepted, or that their family is any less loving and caring. Teachers would, of course, never set out to do this, however, if the only model of family life that is included in curriculum resources is that of mum, dad and children, what are the 'hidden messages' for children with families who sit outside of this pattern? Children who feel unaccepted or

isolated are more vulnerable to the effects of mental and emotional stigma and potentially less able to apply themselves to learning. All teaching will reflect the law (including the Equality Act 2010), as it applies to relationships. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils 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). Please be assured that we will be respectful and always try our very best to remain as respectful of the varying faith views.

Q: Will teachers receive training before delivering these subjects?

A: Training is a priority for us at Lynch Hill and we want our staff to feel confident when teaching your children. All staff have already received training on the Jigsaw programme and are being prepared for the changes in September 2020. Training has already included updating staff understanding of the statutory requirements; the progression of each topic under our new Jigsaw programme; the coverage and, very importantly, clear advice on how to answer any tricky questions. Jigsaw is a comprehensive programme and year group teams have spent time reviewing the resources and familiarising themselves with the planning and the vocabulary that will be used and taught. Ongoing guidance is provided by our PSHE lead and senior staff. In addition to Jigsaw, staff are supported by the school's clear policies on behaviour, bullying, safeguarding and inclusion.

Q: What kind of resources will be used to teach children these concepts?

A: At Lynch Hill, we will be using the resources provided by Jigsaw. In addition to these, we will also use some from the PHSE Association and the NSPCC Pants Rule. The Jigsaw resources have all been carefully planned and prepared to ensure that they are entirely age appropriate. As parents, you are welcome to request to come in and view the resources. As you know, we started using Jigsaw from October 2019 and have already covered units of study on celebrating Difference, Dreams & Goals and Healthy Me. Our pupils are becoming familiar and comfortable with the resources available to support learning.

Q: During the non-statutory lessons, will the pupils be taught in single gender classes?

A: Yes, as mentioned above, there are three sessions which would be considered non-statutory and where parents would still have a right to withdraw (one in Y5 and two in Y6). These sessions will be taught as single gender classes. The sex education covered within science lessons in Y6 will also be taught this way too and lesson coverage will be shared with parents in advance of these sessions.



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