

The Bellbird Primary School



Teaching Sex and Relationships Education (RSE)

Context

From September 2020, teaching PSHE and Relationships Education will be a mandatory part of the curriculum. Whilst Sex Education is not mandatory, we teach this alongside our Relationships Education module to form RSE.

At The Bellbird, we follow the Cambridgeshire RSE scheme and guidance which has been developed through working parties consisting of professionals, governors and parents.

The policy relating to RSE is on the School website.

Parents are informed before a unit of work is taught and have the right to withdraw their child from the Sex Education parts of the module, unless it is contained within the statutory science curriculum. However, it is compulsory for all children to participate in Relationships Education.

Talking to Children about Sex and Relationships

In school, we aim to help children to learn to respect themselves and others and to support them as they begin the move from childhood into adolescence.

As part of this work, we deliver an on-going programme of Sex and Relationships Education (RSE). This programme begins as soon as children arrive in school and continues throughout their primary and into their secondary education.

We are very aware that the RSE we deliver in schools is only a small part of children's learning about their bodies, emotions, relationships, sexual behaviour, sexuality, sexual health and themselves. The majority of children's learning in this area takes place with you at home.

Why should parents and carers talk to their children about sex and relationships?

- From research, children tell us they want their parents/carers to be the first ones to talk to them about puberty, sex and relationships. A good strategy is to begin these conversations with your children when they are young, and then continue the conversation as they grow.
- If families start talking to their children about puberty, sex and relationships, they are less likely to get ideas that worry or confuse them and they learn that it's alright to talk about these things at home and to ask questions. Children are often exposed to information about puberty, sex and relationships through social media at a much earlier age than is often expected.
- Children learn most about values and relationships from within family experiences. Close, loving relationships are the best way of showing a young person how your family 'does things' based on your values, culture, faith and beliefs.



How can I talk to my child about sex and relationships?

Whilst conversations about sex and relationships can be embarrassing and awkward for all parties, it is important to push these feelings aside and have these important talks. Tolerating the awkwardness gives your children the message that you're there for them to speak about these issues.

- Read a book, leaflet or watch a video with your child – the local library is a good starting point.
- Talk while you're doing something else like washing up or driving.
- Enjoy talking. Laugh with each other, not at each other – it can reduce embarrassment and stress.
- Listen rather than judge. Ask them what they think.
- Answer questions and don't be afraid to say you don't know.
- Have a phrase ready for awkward moments – 'That's a good question. Let's talk about it when we get home.'
- Always respond. Give the message it's good to talk about sex and relationships.
- If it feels too personal, talk about people in books, films or on the television.



What do children do/learn in RSE?

By the end of primary school, children at The Bellbird will have learnt that stable, caring relationships are important in a child's life, and will be able to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unsafe or unhappy, and how to seek advice or help if they require. Children will also learn what sort of boundaries are appropriate in friendships and the concept of privacy; every person's body belongs to them, and children will be able to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate contact.

Children at The Bellbird will:

- develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships
- name parts of the body
- consider ways to keep safe and ask for help
- consider how to prepare for puberty
- learn how a baby is made and develops

When asked how Yr5/6 children want their parents to support them, the young people said:

- Take responsibility for talking to us. Don't just wait for us to ask.
- If we ask you things, always tell the truth. Don't put it off or say 'I'll tell you when you're older.'
- Don't be angry and try not to be embarrassed.
- If we ask what a word means, ask us what we think the word means first.
- If you don't know something, be honest and say that you don't know.
- Give us books or leaflets, but talk to us too.
- Don't expect school to tell us everything – we want to hear from our parents too.
- Don't laugh at us or spread gossip about what we have been talking about.
- Don't save it all up for a one-off 'birds and bees' lecture. We'd rather you talked naturally, little and often.