

## **Delivering Relationships Education lessons and how to answer difficult questions**

### **Teaching**

- Prepare thoroughly. If some of what you will be saying feels odd to be saying out loud in front of children practise beforehand!
- Know what is and is not covered in the year group you are teaching (look at learning objective overview and vocabulary list).
- Establish clear ground rules from the outset (in Ealing planning, we use ROCK rules, see explanation below)
- Maintain a relaxed and confident manner. It will help the children to relax too.
- Expect giggles and reaction: some of it is an expression of nervousness or embarrassment from the children. Respond calmly and refer to the ground rules if necessary.

### **Dealing with difficult questions from children**

- Find out the context first e.g. 'What makes you ask that question?' 'Where did you hear that word before?' this will help determine if the child has a genuine question or has misconceptions.
- If a question is 'beyond' the curriculum content for your year group do not answer. Explain that in this year group we don't cover that content, but they will learn about this in older year groups. If a child asks a question beyond the curriculum, it is worth following this up with the child's parent and explain that you cannot answer the question in class but it may be something they would want to answer at home.
- If you are unsure how to answer, or whether it is appropriate to answer in your year group say e.g. 'I can't answer that right now, but I'll get back to you'. Follow up with DSL /PSHE Lead who will support you in deciding on your answer (which may be briefly factual, or an explanation that we don't cover that yet / in school, see above).
- Question boxes are a useful way of allowing you time to plan your replies.

### **Question box:**

- A question box is a very useful tool for managing questions during Relationships Education lessons. At the start of the lesson hand out post it notes. Explain to the class that if they have a question during the lesson, they should write it on the post it note. At the end of the lesson, explain that if their question has not been answered, they should put the question in the question box. The teacher can then read through the questions, decide what will/will not be answered and then answer questions at the start of next lesson. It is worth explaining to the class that although they can ask any question they like, you may not be able to answer all their questions. Remember it is important to only answer questions relevant to your groups content (see learning objective overview and vocabulary list).

### **ROCK rules:**

- R: respect. We are respectful of questions that are asked, we do not ask any personal questions. We show respect for everyone, even when we don't agree with them. You can ask questions during this lesson, there is no such thing as a silly question. However, remember the teacher may not be able to answer all your questions.
- O: Open. We are open to being part of this lesson. Even though things may make us embarrassed or shy, we are open to learning. The teacher will not force you to discuss or share but you have to be open to learning.
- C: Confidentiality. We will not share what people say outside the classroom (teacher or pupil) but if someone says something worrying/upsetting it should be shared with someone who can help (teacher will have to talk to someone, pupils should talk to teacher)
- K: Kind. We do not laugh at people; it is ok to laugh with people but never at.

Below are some common questions asked by pupils during Relationships education lessons. We have provided some stock responses for these answers. As always, you as a class teacher know your class the best, so please edit these responses as needed.

Question	Sample response
If a baby is made by a man and a woman, why do some children have two mummies or two daddies?	Usually asked in year 6 – during sex education lessons. However younger children may ask why do some children have two mummies or two daddies? Families are all different. Not all families have a mum and a dad. Some families have one mum, or one dad. Some families have two mums or two dads. Some families live with grandparents or aunts and uncles. It doesn't matter what your family looks like, what is important is the love and care families show to one another.
Does everyone have a mummy and a daddy?	No not everyone had a mum and a dad. See response above.
What is a condom?	First, I would initiate 1: conversation with pupil who asked this question. I would ask: what makes you ask the question? Where have you heard that word before? This will help determine why the pupil is asking the question. Explain that this is not something we will learn about in primary school (contraception is not covered in primary school curriculum). I would recommend having a discussion with Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) about this pupil's question following discussion with DSL you may want to inform parent if appropriate.
Someone I know says it's wrong to be gay – is this true?	No this is not true. Gay refers to a relationship between 2 men. This is not wrong; this is someone's family. It may look different to your family, but it is not wrong. We should be respectful of all types of families. The word gay should never be used as an insult

What does transgender mean?	First, I would initiate 1: conversation with pupil who asked this question. I would ask: what makes you ask the question? Where have you heard that word before? This will help determine why the pupil is asking the question. Gender identify is not covered in the primary curriculum. I would explain that we don't learn about gender identify in primary school, but they might want to ask this question at home. Inform parents about the question that has been asked and explain they may wish to follow this up at home.
What is an erection?	Covered in year 6 only. An erection is a common change that happens to boys during puberty. An erection happens when extra blood flows to the penis. This causes the penis to harden and lengthen. Most erections are not straight and tend to either curve upwards or to either side. erections can happen at any time. This is not an unusual change and happens to boys.
What is a wet dream?	Covered in year 6 only. Wet dreams are a normal change that happen during puberty. Sometimes sperm will leave your body, through your urethra when you are asleep. This is called a nocturnal emission, more commonly known as a "wet dream." It happens without you knowing about it. You may notice that your pyjamas or sheets feel wet or sticky when you wake up. Most males experience wet dreams between the ages of 12 to 18. You will experience wet dreams less frequently as you grow older, you will have more control over your body.
Have you had sex?	Refer to ground rules. We do not ask personal question during this lesson. Then move on swiftly.
Why do boys have willies and girls have vaginas?	Explain that the private parts of girls and boys help doctors and nurses tell our parents that we are a boy or a girl. Explain that when a baby is born, if it has a penis, they the parents know they have a son and if the baby has a vagina they know they have a daughter. Remind the children that these parts of our bodies are private.
Why can't children have babies?	Explain that puberty is the time when our bodies are getting ready for becoming an adult. Explain that children's bodies have not gone through all the correct changes to have children. If covering in year 6, it is worth stating that once a girl has menstruated, her body has gone through the changes needed to have a baby.
How does sperm get into the vagina?	Should be answered in year 6 sex education lesson only. During sexual intercourse, the sperm will enter a

	woman's body via her vagina. This sperm then travels through the woman's body towards the fallopian tube. In the fallopian tube, the sperm may meet with the egg. This is called fertilisation.
Do you have to be married/live with someone to have children?	No some families have parents who are married some parents are not married. Some parents live in the same house, some parents live in different houses or even different countries. All families look different. It doesn't matter what your family looks like, what is important is the love and care families show to one another.
Why don't girls bleed to death when they have their period?	During your period, you lose a very small amount of blood, on average around 2.4 tablespoons. The blood you lose during your period is waste blood, i.e. your uterus shedding its lining because it is not needed. This is not the same as the blood in your circulatory system. Therefore, we are shedding a small amount of waste blood not blood that is needed in our body.
How old do girls have to be to wear a bra?	Lots of girls start wearing a bra around age 11. Some girls need one by age 8, though, and some girls don't need one until they are 14. Every girl is different. If you feel uncomfortable or feel like you would like extra support you can speak to someone at home about wearing a bra.
How do girls know if they are going to have a period?	It's hard to tell when your first period will arrive. It can be different for every girl. It usually happens about two years after the first signs of puberty (usually breast development), and about a year after you begin growing pubic hair, but this can vary for every girl. You may also notice some white or yellow discharge in the few months leading up to your period. This is nothing to worry about and is a normal change.
Where do babies come from?	Sex education is covered in year 6 only – therefore if asked in year 6 sex education lesson, the scientific explanation should be given (see year 6 sex education lesson). This question is also commonly asked in EYFS/KS1. If asked in these year groups, ask where do you think the baby comes from and let pupil lead conversation. Usual responses to this question are babies grow in mummy's tummy. If a child asks this question it is worth following up with their parent.

If you are asked a question you do not know how to answer, or unsure of how to answer, do not feel pressured to answer the question. You can say 'I can't answer that right now, but I'll get back to you'. Follow up with DSL /PSHE Lead who will support you in deciding on your answer.