



Our Lady Catholic Primary School



Woodhall Lane, Welwyn Garden City

Hertfordshire AL7 3TF

Tel: (01707 324408)

Email: admin@ourladys527.herts.sch.uk

Website: www.ourladys527.herts.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr. R. Curry

Relationships, Health and Sex Education - Key Decision

23rd November, 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following on from our consultation in 2021, the results showed us that parents trust the school to teach their children RHSE from a Catholic viewpoint and approved of the scheme, 'Life to the Full' from TenTen, which has also been approved by the Diocese of Westminster.

The RHSE policy is in the process of being reviewed by our Governing Body and we have amended the order of how classes deliver the lessons - dividing them equally across the phases of education throughout the year.

Below is a reminder of specific teaching areas which were agreed following the consultation in 2021.

- Menstruation - Previously, this was taught in Year 4. It will now be taught in Year 5 (in the summer term) and revisited in Year 6.
- How Babies are Made will be taught in Year 6.
- Puberty and changes to the body will be taught in Year 4.
- The names of body parts will be taught to all age groups in the school.

A change to the above is that 'How Babies are Made' will be taught in Year 5 as well as revisited in Year 6. This makes sense when teaching about menstruation in Year 5.

An additional key decision, which means it should only be taught after consultation with parents and carers, is the teaching of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) at an age appropriate level. A summary of how TenTen supports Catholic primary schools in this teaching through the programme, Life to the Full, is attached to this letter. I have also attached a very useful leaflet from the DfE entitled 'Understanding Relationships and Health Education in your child's primary school: a guide for parents.'

What is the DfE guidance on teaching about FGM?

The Life to the Full programme fully meets the government statutory Relationships and Health Education (RHE) guidance for primary schools, which amongst other things states that by the end of primary school children should learn:

- About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.



- That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.
 - How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult.
 - How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.
 - How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
 - Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.
- (DFE RHE Guidance for Primary Schools) (DFE RHE Guidance for Primary Schools)*

The guidance on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) makes it compulsory for **secondary schools** to teach pupils about FGM and other harmful practices, including forced marriage and honour-based abuse.

Although the duty to teach about FGM is not statutory for primary schools, it can optionally be applied following consultation with parents and governors. The National FGM Centre advises that girls are most at risk between the ages of 5-12 and therefore recommends that primary schools also teach about FGM where possible.

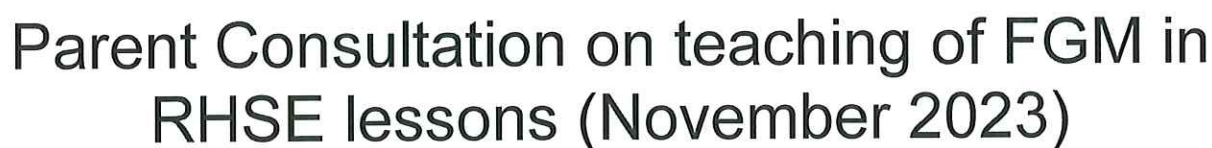
Your views are very important to us. The school is consulting with parents on this key decision. I ask you to please complete the survey on the following page by Friday 1st December at the latest.

We truly appreciate your support.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard Curry".

Richard Curry



We Learn to Love and Love to Learn with Jesus

Understanding Relationships and Health Education in your child's primary school: a guide for parents

We want all children to grow up healthy, happy, safe, and able to manage the challenges and opportunities of modern Britain. That is why, from September 2020, all primary age children will be taught Relationships and Health Education.

These subjects are designed to equip your child with knowledge to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships as well as preparing them for a successful adult life. The world for all young people looks very different from the way it did 20 years ago when this curriculum was last updated – these changes bring the content into the 21st century, so that it is relevant for your child.

Your child's school will have flexibility to deliver the content in a way that is age and developmentally appropriate and sensitive to the needs and religious background of its pupils.

Relationships Education

Relationships Education will put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships, including with family, friends and online.

Your child will be taught what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who can support them. In an age-appropriate way, your child's school will cover how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect.

By the end of primary school, pupils will have been taught content on:

- families and people who care for me
- caring friendships
- respectful relationships
- online relationships
- being safe

You can find further detail by searching '**relationships and health education**' on GOV.UK.

Health Education

Health Education aims to give your child the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, to recognise issues in themselves and others, and to seek support as early as possible when issues arise.



By the end of primary school, pupils will have been taught content on:

- mental wellbeing
- internet safety and harms
- physical health and fitness
- healthy eating
- facts and risks associated with drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- health and prevention
- basic first aid
- changing adolescent body

You can find further detail by searching '**relationships and health education**' on GOV.UK.

Your rights as a parent

The important lessons you teach your child about healthy relationships, looking after themselves and staying safe, are respected and valued under this new curriculum. Teaching at school will complement and reinforce the lessons you teach your child as they grow up.

Your child's school is required to consult with you when developing and renewing their policies on Relationships Education. These policies must be published online and be available to anybody free of charge.

You can express your opinion, and this will help your child's school decide how and when to cover the content of the statutory guidance. It may also help them decide whether to teach additional non-statutory content. Schools are required to ensure their teaching reflects the age and religious background of their pupils.

Some schools will start to teach these subjects from September 2019 – if you'd like to know more, please speak to your child's school about what they plan to teach.



Right to withdraw your child

You cannot withdraw your child from Relationships Education because it is important that all children receive this content, covering topics such as friendships and how to stay safe.

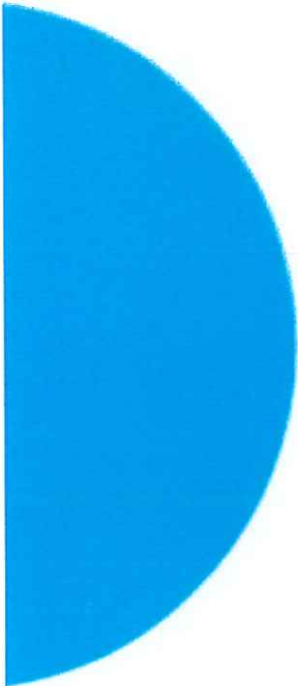

Your child's primary school can choose to teach Sex Education. If you'd like to know more about this, we recommend speaking to the school to understand what will be taught and when. If you do not want your child to take part in some or all of the lessons on Sex Education, you can ask that they are withdrawn. At primary level, the head teacher must grant this request.

The science curriculum in all maintained schools also includes content on human development, including reproduction, which there is no right to withdraw from.



Department
for Education

If you want to know more about what will be taught as part of the new subjects, the best thing to do is speak to your child's school.



Ten Ten's Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Last updated: 27 July 2023

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Further reading/resources

Introduction

This document provides guidance on teaching **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** and a summary of how Ten Ten Resources supports Catholic primary schools in this teaching through our programme, **Life to the Full**.

In doing so, we are drawing together key insights from charities and organisations working towards ending the practice of FGM and demonstrating how this knowledge and guidance has been integrated as optional teaching in **Life to the Full**, presented within a framework of a Christian understanding of the human person.

What is the DFE guidance on teaching about FGM?

The **Life to the Full** programme fully meets the government statutory Relationships and Health Education (RHE) guidance for primary schools, which amongst other things states that by the end of primary school children should learn:

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- How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.
- How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

([DFE RHE Guidance for Primary Schools](#))

The guidance on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) makes it compulsory for secondary schools to teach pupils about FGM and other harmful practices, including forced marriage and honour-based abuse:

'By the end of secondary school, pupils should know the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and **FGM**, and how these can affect current and future relationships.'

([DFE RSE Guidance for Secondary Schools](#))

Although the duty to teach about FGM is not statutory for primary schools, it can optionally be applied following consultation with parents and governors.

The **National FGM Centre** advises that girls are at most risk at primary school age, and therefore [recommends that primary schools also teach about FGM](#) where possible.

What does the Welsh Code for RSE say about teaching about FGM?

The Welsh [Relationships and Sexuality Code for Education](#) does not specifically mention FGM. However, for secondary schools it can be included in teaching to fulfil the following criteria:

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- An understanding of laws around RSE issues that are in place to protect us from all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse, neglect and harassment, and that laws are intended to protect not criminalise young people.
- An understanding of how to advocate for safe environments and the rights and understanding of everyone on a range of RSE issues.
- Appreciate the importance of safely speaking out against sex and gender based and sexual violence.

For primary schools in can be included in teaching to fulfil the following criteria:

- Understanding of the right for everyone to be free from harm or abuse.
- An awareness of different kinds of harmful or abusive behaviour including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect, including peer on peer harassment and bullying and the role technology can play.
- How to seek support for oneself, and offer support to others. How to be a good friend and advocate for others.

What does 'Life to the Full' primary teach about FGM?

The **Life to the Full** programme offers schools the opportunity to include teaching on FGM at KS1, LKS2 and UKS2, as part of **Unit 4: Keeping Safe** which is part of **Module 2: Created to Love Others**. An outline of the teaching content is provided below:

Early Years Foundation Stage

EYFS 2.4.2 'My Body, My Rules' does not mention FGM, but introduces children to the idea of bodily privacy (including the NSPCC PANTS message that 'privates are privates') and the importance of talking to their 'special people' if anything troubles them. This is all underpinned by the religious teaching that we are created and loved by God, with bodies and minds that He wants us to keep safe.

Key Stage One

The **KS1 2.4.2 'Physical Contact'**, session incorporates (with kind permission) the PANTS resources from the NSPCC to teach children that:

- Privates are private
- Always remember your body belongs to you
- No means no
- Talk about secrets that upset you
- Speak up, someone can help

Children discuss the way different kinds of touch can make them feel. They gain a basic understanding of when touch is appropriate or inappropriate, and the importance of talking to trusted adults about anything concerning them.

There is an optional section which briefly mentions the illegal practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and reinforces the key teaching that privates are private. FGM is not named explicitly, but described in the following terms:

'You might want to mention that in some cultures people want to harm girls' private parts, and that is not OK. Reinforce and expand upon the PANTS rules: privates are private and should stay the same as when a girl was born.'

The whole session is framed in the core belief that our bodies are made by God and given to us as wonderful gifts that deserve the respect of ourselves and others.

Lower Key Stage Two

LKS2 2.4.3 'Safe In My Body' builds on KS1 learning to consider more deeply what physical contact is appropriate and inappropriate. Children are introduced to the term 'abuse' and discuss different kinds of abuse, including sexual abuse, here referred to as 'abuse of private parts'. Children are invited to think of trusted adults that they can talk to about any issues they may face. There is also an optional section which briefly explores another kind of abuse of private parts: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

In terms of FGM teaching content, there is a reduced version which teachers can share from the session notes, or a longer version in **Appendix 3**, which we have copied below to give an overview of key knowledge for teaching staff:

- **FGM is when the outside part of a girl's genitalia (private parts) are changed or harmed**, not because the girl is ill and needs medical treatment, but for other reasons (see below).
- FGM is practised in at least 28 countries in Africa, parts of the Middle East and Asia. Some people from those countries continue to practice FGM among their communities when they come to the UK to live.
- These communities believe that cutting or changing and harming a girl's genitalia will uphold family honour, preserve tradition or ensure a girl's cleanliness and readiness for marriage.
- These are myths; **FGM can have serious consequences for a woman's health and in some instances can lead to death**. It is not a religious requirement and world religious leaders have spoken out against it.
- Female bodies change during puberty, and some of these changes affect the vulva (a girl's external genitalia), but otherwise **the vulva needs to stay the same as when a girl was born** – no one else should change it for them, unless for medical reasons that are very clearly explained by a doctor in the UK.
- **FGM is considered to be child abuse in the UK and it is illegal (not allowed)**. Anyone who involved in carrying out FGM faces up to 14 years in prison, and anyone found guilty of failing to protect a girl from FGM faces up to 7 years in prison.
- If anyone is worried about FGM they should never stay silent – there are lots of support services available. Any teacher, or trusted adults in or out of school can help. **Childline, run by the NSPCC, also has a free telephone help line** for anyone in the UK worried about FGM happening to them or someone they know, which can be found by searching 'FGM help'.
- **In an emergency situation, 999 should always be called**. It's always OK to seek support – there will always be someone who can help.

The session finishes by discussing appropriate touch that makes us feel positive, and a reflection on how much God loves us and wants us to stay safe.

Note that there are two versions of the Presentation for this session, one which includes the FGM content and one which does not.

Upper Key Stage Two

Through 4 fictional stories, the [UKS2 2.4.1 'Types of Abuse'](#) session further deepens awareness of different kinds of abuse, including sexual (*which in LKS2 was described as 'abuse of private parts'*). Children are introduced to the concept of rights (including the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** and how abuse violates their rights. They are asked to think of trusted adults that they can talk to about any issues they may face.

There is also an optional section which explains that children have the right to be safe and to be in control of their bodies, so that they need to be aware of a practice which violates these rights: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Children watch a film which goes beyond LKS2 learning by answering the following questions:

- What is FGM?
- How does FGM affect health?
- Who is at risk?
- Why does it happen?
- How are people trying to stop it?
- Who can I tell?

Appendix 1 contains the script from the film, so teachers and parents can review content in advance and make decisions accordingly. There is then a selection of reflections, activities and tasks for teachers to choose from to help children respond to their learning about FGM.

The session finishes by discussing how, although bad things happen, that is not God's plan for us: He designed us, made us, loves us and wants us to love others too.

Note that there are two versions of the Presentation for this session, one which includes the FGM content and one which does not.

At each Key Stage where there is optional FGM teaching content, teachers are also signposted to this guidance and also resource provision higher up in the curriculum, so that teaching can be tailored carefully for the age, stage and risk level of the children in your care.

Consulting with parents and carers

For Schools in England

The RSE statutory guidance recommends that all schools should work closely with parents when planning and delivering FGM lessons in schools, particularly at primary school where this topic is optional.

In terms of the **Life to the Full** programme, it is crucial that schools in England consult with parents over Key Decision #6, and then ensure parents know what will be taught and when.

Key Decision #6

Where content in **Life to the Full** involves Sex Education (therefore, not statutory at primary level) or where there are particularly sensitive topics, **Ten Ten Resources** classes the topic as a 'Key Decision' which means it should only be taught after consultation with parents and carers.

For Schools in Wales

In Wales, parents do not have a legal right to withdraw their children from statutory sex education. The information given is a tool to enable schools to be aware of the sensitive topics that are part of the curriculum in order to inform parents and answer any queries they may have about the topics being taught. In the Parent Consultation Course, these will be presented under the heading of 'Sensitive Topics in Relationships and Sexuality Education' rather than as Key Decisions.

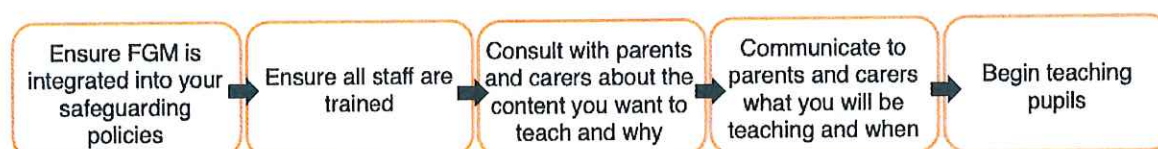
It is, of course, good practice for all schools in Wales to share with parents about the resources you intend to use for Relationships and Sexuality Education to build confidence and trust through transparency. There is an opportunity for consulting parents on the timing of when certain topics are taught. Schools may wish to consult their Diocesan Advisor for RSE regarding any further guidance they may have on these areas of teaching.

How do you recommend integrating a whole school approach to tackling FGM?

Given that girls are at most risk between the ages of 5-12 years old, primary schools play an important part in safeguarding girls from FGM.

[Integrate UK](#), a charity committed to raising awareness of the issue of FGM within the context of violence against the rights of women and girls, explains that school governing bodies have a statutory duty to have a named governor responsible for Safeguarding. This person needs to be kept informed of work around FGM safeguarding and education in the school; they should ensure that the full governing body is aware of how the school is working to address the issue of FGM through Child Protection Policy, Staff Training, Attendance Policy and Lessons.

Inspired by the [National FGM Centre](#), we have put together the following graphic which illustrates well the steps required to integrate a whole school approach to teaching about and tackling FGM in your school:



Additionally, you might like to work with charity or governmental partners in your area to increase teaching provision and training opportunities. This will be particularly important in high-risk communities. The links below provide further guidance about how to raise awareness, safeguard children and engage them in the campaign to end FGM.

Further reading/resources

[A Statement Opposing FGM \(GOV.UK\)](#) – This printable statement makes it clear that FGM is a serious criminal offence in the UK with a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison for anyone found guilty of carrying it out.

[Department for Education Guidance on Relationships Education \(GOV.UK\)](#) – This guidance was announced in 2019 and came into effect in September 2021.

Discussing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) with Pupils in Primary Schools (Integrate Bristol) – This document offers guidance for schools in terms of policy, staff training, consultation with parents, teaching content, risk factors to be aware of etc.

Female Genital Mutilation: Guidance for Schools (National FGM Centre) – This document offers a really useful overview of what FGM is and the responsibilities schools have to talk about it and safeguard their pupils against it. There is also a comprehensive 'further reading' list at the bottom of this document.

Female Genital Mutilation: Resource Pack (GOV.UK) – This resource was developed in response to requests for clearer direction from central government about the safeguarding responsibilities of local authorities. Section 13 relates to Schools in England and has some useful documents on policy guidance, resources, videos etc.

FGM Awareness Video (The Norbury School, Harrow) – This video, from a Knowledge Centre school in London, shows why talking with primary aged pupils about FGM is so important, and the benefits of implementing a whole school, whole community approach to tackling FGM. The Norbury School also offers bespoke FGM Awareness training for schools, SENCOs and Inclusion Managers.

FGM: The Facts (GOV.UK) – This colourful, large-font document, outlines the facts and figures about FGM. Some schools might consider allowing UKS2 pupils to read and research from this document.

FORWARD: Schools and Higher Education (Forward UK) – Forward is the leading African women led organisation working to end Female Genital Mutilation, child marriage and violence against women and girls. They offer training and programmes for schools, parents, educators to understand the key issues that affect girls from affected communities.

Integrate UK – Integrate UK is a youth-led charity which works towards gender and racial equality. It provides FGM training to front-line professionals, such as teachers and medical professionals.

'My Body, My Rules' FGM animation (Forward UK) – This short, animated film, developed by FORWARD and Animage Films, is aimed at raising awareness of female genital mutilation (FGM) amongst primary school aged children in the UK. It is shared in the UKS2 session as optional activity but it might be appropriate for some LKS2 classes to see it too.

PANTS (NSPCC) – Integrated with kind permission into our EYFS and KS1 resources, the NSPCC has lots of lesson plans, classroom activities and more to help children talk PANTS. (The PANTS rules are: **P**rivates are Private; **A**lways remember your body belongs to you; **N**o means No; **T**alk about secrets that upset you; **S**peak up, someone can help!)

Petals (Coventry University) – Petals is the UK's first FGM web app, a young person-friendly platform which gives information about FGM and advice on how to get support.