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Dear Parents/Carers,

As part of the compulsory Year 5 and 6 Personal, Social and Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Science, this half term we will be learning about human reproduction and puberty.

Children can start to go through puberty from the age of 8 (Year 3) and the physical and emotional changes that take place can be very confusing, and even frightening, if they do not accurately understand what to expect. Children need help to make sense of the messages they have may picked up (including from the media) about our bodies, puberty and how a variety of relationships work (e.g. with friends, parents and carers, family members, romantic and sexual relationships).

Being aware of and able to talk about their body, relationships and feelings is vital for children to stay safe and seek help if they feel at risk or are being harmed. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is embedded into our PSHE curriculum and is important to help and support children through their physical, emotional and moral development. It helps children grow up able to enjoy the positive benefits of loving, rewarding and responsible relationships. It makes sure they are informed and comfortable with their bodies; that they understand the changes during puberty; that they are healthy and are physically and emotionally safe.

Within the health and relationships aspect of PSHE/RSE they will learn:

- Consent is giving someone permission to do something.
- Consent may be removed at any time.
- Personal space is having enough distance between yourself and another person.
- Privacy is the right to be left alone and the right to have control over your own personal information.
- Puberty is the time of life when a child experiences physical and hormonal changes that mark a transition into adulthood.
- During puberty, physical changes happen to the male and female genitalia and other parts of the body.
- Pregnancy is when one or more babies grow in a female's uterus.

Year 5 and 6 pupils will be then concluding their human reproduction and puberty topic with a final session that covers: how babies are made and how pregnancy can be prevented. For this session, year 5 and 6 pupils will be taught separately. Year 5 children will focus on how a baby grows from an egg while year 6 pupils will cover sexual intercourse. The learning points from this session will be:

- Babies can be born through the vagina, or through a 'caesarean section'.
- Contraception can be used during sexual intercourse to stop a baby from being made.

Please note that the RSE curriculum is statutory in primary schools meaning the year 5 content is compulsory while pupils in year 6 may be withdrawn from the final sex education lesson at the request of a parent or carer. Permission letters have been sent out in the past requesting consent for pupils to take part in this lesson. If this is something you wish to reconsider or discuss further, please speak to your child's class teacher.

Parents and carers are the key people in educating their children about their bodies and how they change. Often, children want their parents/carers to be the first people who talk to them about these topics. Parents and carers have a unique emotional relationship with their child and knowledge of their maturity and they can respond to their questions more spontaneously as they arise. The teaching offered by school should complement and support the teaching you provide at home. We understand that some questions may be difficult to answer and some conversations are not always the easiest to have.

The following websites may be useful to you for further guidance and advice -

www.always.com

www.kidshealth.org

www.BBC.co.uk/teach - Relationships and Sex Education

We appreciate that some people may not be confident in discussing these topics, but open discussions between parents or carers and their children about puberty and sexual relationships means that children are more likely: to communicate when they have worries or questions or report abuse if they were ever to experience it. They are also more likely to form respectful relationships when they are older. Teaching children about sex, does not make them more likely to become sexually active in fact, it makes them more likely to delay sex until they are ready and make informed choices about contraception.

Our aim is to empower the children to make informed choices and speak up about concerns, by teaching them about age appropriate sex and relationships and the law surrounding this. Learning the correct information is key to stop children being misinformed by their peers or social media.

As always, if we can support you further in any way, please do not hesitate in contacting your child's class teacher.

Sincerely,

Miss Middleditch – PSHE Lead.