

## Appendix 4

### Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)

'It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department (of Education) continues to **recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.** It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born.'  
**Statutory guidance, Relationships education (Primary), Updated 25 July 2019**

Parents and carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request it would be good practice for the headteacher to discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Schools will want to document this process to ensure a record is kept.

Good practice is also likely to include the headteacher discussing with parents and carers the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher. It should be noted that the detrimental effects maybe mitigated if the parents propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead.

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances for example where there are child protection concerns, the school should respect the parents' and carers' request to withdraw the child.

This process is the same for pupils with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities. However there may be exceptional circumstances where the headteacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. **There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.**

Headteachers **should** grant a request to withdraw a pupil from sex education covered in the '**Changing adolescent body**' unit, which includes:

- key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes.
- about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.
- to identify and name the main parts of the body including external genitalia (e.g. vulva, vagina, penis, testicles)

Headteachers **cannot** grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered in primary schools, as part of the science curriculum. This includes:

#### Key Stage 1 - Year 2

## **Animals, including humans**

### **Statutory requirements**

Pupils should be taught to:

- notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults
- find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)
- describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food, and hygiene.

### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Pupils should be introduced to the basic needs of animals for survival, as well as the importance of exercise and nutrition for humans. They should also be introduced to the processes of reproduction and growth in animals. The focus at this stage should be on questions that help pupils to recognise growth; they should not be expected to understand how reproduction occurs.

The following examples might be used: egg, chick, chicken; egg, caterpillar, pupa, butterfly; spawn, tadpole, frog; lamb, sheep. Growing into adults can include reference to baby, toddler, child, teenager, adult.

Pupils might work scientifically by: observing, through video or first-hand observation and measurement, how different animals, including humans, grow; asking questions about what things animals need for survival and what humans need to stay healthy; and suggesting ways to find answers to their questions.

## **Key Stage 2 - Year 5**

### **Living things and their habitats**

#### **Statutory requirements**

Pupils should be taught to:

- describe the differences in the life cycles of a mammal, an amphibian, an insect and a bird
- describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals.

## **Animals, including humans**

### **Statutory requirements**

Pupils should be taught to:

- describe the changes as humans develop to old age.

### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Pupils should draw a timeline to indicate stages in the growth and development of humans. They should learn about the changes experienced in puberty.

Pupils could work scientifically by researching the gestation periods of other animals and comparing them with humans; by finding out and recording the length and mass of a baby as it grows.

### Parent / Carer Form: Withdrawal from Sex Education

To be completed by parents / carers	
Name of child	
Class	
Name of parents / carers	
Reasons for withdrawing from sex education	
Any other information you would like school to consider	
Parents (s) / carer (s) signature	
Date	
To be completed by school	
Agreed actions from the discussion with parents / carers Include notes from the meeting	

## **Parental Responsibility**

**Where there is shared parental responsibility, both parties should, where possible, should reach a shared agreement to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education.**

Either parent can request to withdraw a child from sex education. If there is a disagreement the other parent would need a prohibited steps order.

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility/understanding-and-dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility>**

**Key effects of a father or second female parent acquiring parental responsibility** *Is this a title? If so, maybe should have capitals, otherwise a little confusing.*

When a father or second female parent acquires parental responsibility they:

- can withdraw a child from sex education and religious education classes and make representations to schools concerning the child's education

## **Prohibited steps order**

A prohibited steps order imposes a specific restriction on the exercise of responsibility. This means that no step specified by the court, which a parent could take in meeting his/her parental responsibility, can be taken without the consent of the court.

**Example** One parent wants to take the child abroad for an extended period or prevent the child from attending a form of religious worship, against the wishes of the other parent.