Morley RSHE News

Protected Characteristics

It is important that all children understand the world they are growing up in; learning how to live alongside and show respect for a diverse range of people.

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to:
"(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

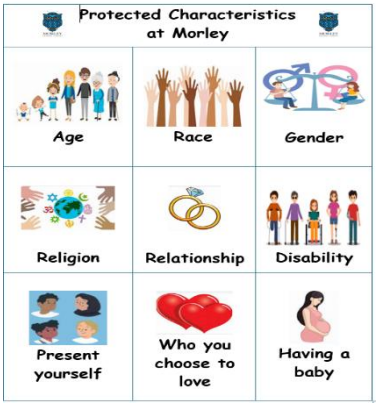
Although the DfE's RSHE statutory guidance states that pupils must learn about the protected characteristics by the end of secondary education, primary-aged children should also develop an age-appropriate understanding of them. Therefore, we need to teach the Protected Characteristics explicitly.

What are the 'Protected Characteristics'?

There are 9 characteristics:



At Morley, we have chosen to name them:



As a school we use 'Jigsaw' to teach our RSHE lessons, and their teaching materials help promote protected characteristics in a pupil-centred way. Rather than including a specific lesson where all characteristics are listed, these are introduced naturally as part of the spiral curriculum. This inclusive approach starts in the early years and develops progressively through the age ranges. Foundational concepts such as similarities, differences, family diversity and respect are established in the early years, with vocabulary like "stereotype" and "discrimination" built over time. The term "protected characteristic" is not explicitly introduced until ages 8-9 and some characteristics, such as gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity, are left to be explicitly taught in secondary school, in line with the RSHE curriculum expectations for older pupils.

If you have any questions about 'Protected Characteristics' please speak to us.

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What is RSHE and how you can help your child?

RSHE is Relationships, Sex and Health Education. The government provide guidance to schools on what we should teach – the new guidance will be statutory in September 26.

Why do children need this education?
Children today are growing up in a complex world. They need age-appropriate knowledge and skills to:

- Stay safe – recognising unsafe situations, knowing who to tell, understanding their bodies belong to them
- Build healthy friendships – being kind, resolving disagreements, knowing what makes a good friend
- Look after their physical health – healthy eating, exercise, sleep, hygiene, and understanding how their bodies change as they grow
- Look after their mental health – understanding feelings, building resilience, knowing when and how to ask for help
- Navigate the online world – staying safe online, understanding that not everything online is true or kind
- Understand families – appreciating that families come in many forms and all are equally valid

This learning helps children thrive now and prepares them for adolescence and adulthood.

As parents and carers, you are the most important people in your child's life. You know them best, and the conversations you have at home about relationships, growing up, and staying healthy are important and invaluable for their understanding of themselves and the world around them. To help your child you need to be able to have an open and factual discussion without feeling embarrassed or worried that you may say the wrong thing.

To support you, I will be establishing a working party that meet 3 to 4 times a year to discuss the school policy, the teaching of the subject and how we can support you as parents/carers to initiate and navigate these discussions. If you are interested, in joining the working party, please contact Mrs Willis.

I would also be grateful if you could spend two minutes completing the questionnaire about your views (link below)- please complete honestly as this will help me provide the best support going forwards.

Morley Primary Parent and Carer survey for RSHE (Relationships and Health Education) – Fill in form

Mrs Willis
RSHE Co-ordinator