

Dear Parents

I am writing to introduce myself to those parents of Year 5 & 6 children who are soon to receive the Transition Talk, part of PHSE, on puberty, pregnancy and birth on Thursday 2 May 2019.

I am a GP in Deal, and I have a daughter in Year 3 currently. My specialist interests as a GP are gynaecology, sexual health and reproductive health (along with perinatal mental health) and I look after many children from all backgrounds with regards to their reproductive health. I also train GPs in this area and I have achieved a Post-graduate Certificate in Medical Education so I am used to and experienced in teaching.

As a GP with an interest in this, I am only too aware of the problems children and young people face when they are not fully aware of what is happening to their bodies and also the consequences that occur during teenage years if they don't receive a good understanding of sex and sexual health when they are younger. This has to be age appropriate to ensure they understand and don't receive too much information that might scare them and I hope that the talks that I have done so far have provided that balance.

We speak to the boys and girls separately so that they feel more free to ask questions. I also provide an anonymous 'questions' box which they can write questions on that they might not wish to ask out loud. For the girls, as well as the sexual and childbirth education, I spend quite a lot of time dealing with puberty and periods in some detail, as this is something they have many questions about. With the boys, we deal with puberty and childbirth and I make sure they understand about periods but we don't spend quite as much time on it.

I base my talks around the 'Living and Growing (Adapted)' series of videos. These are age appropriate, good and compatible with the guidelines regarding the teaching of sexual and reproductive health.

The DVD is kept at school and the school will arrange a viewing of it for any parents who wish to see it before their children do as I understand that for some parents this can be quite an emotive topic. This will be shown on Thursday 21 March at 4.15pm in the 6W classroom. I respectfully request please that no parents ask to take the DVD home to watch as there is only one copy and it is expensive to replace.

The school does give the option for parents to take their children out of the talks if they have a strong belief that they should not take part. This is obviously your decision as a parent, but I would ask you to think about why you would want to remove your child from this teaching as it is something that they really must know about to stay safe and happy in the next few years of their lives. This age is about right for them to start knowing the 'facts of life' and from my clinical experience, ignorance is not bliss for the majority of children. Many girls now start their periods aged 10 or 11 and so this teaching really matters for them.

I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have. I can be emailed on stephaniedegiorgio@gmail.com and would really value your questions rather than have you worrying at home about what I am going to tell your child.

These have been really fun sessions so far and the Year 5 and 6 staff come in and sit with me and I hope would be able to confirm the success of them so far for you.

Regards

Dr Stephanie De Giorgio