
Life Skills Primary Programme

Parent/Carer FAQ sheet – 2023/24

We want to reassure you that Life Skills Education are continuing to make the Health and Safety of your children a priority. Where required we will ensure the following –

- A complete risk assessment for all DAaRT Officers going into schools is in place.
- DAaRT Officers will be aware of the school risk assessment and guidelines, and will work within this.
- DAaRT Officers will adjust lessons on the direction of the school to adhere to local Health and Safety guidelines.
- All DAaRT Officers have been trained to deliver remotely where required.

Who is this page for?

This page is for any parent/carers who has a child in Year 5 or 6 and who will be taking part in the programme. You may know this programme from when it was called 'DARE'. At the beginning of the course (if a DAaRT Officer is involved in the teaching) the school will be offered a parent/carers briefing by the DAaRT Officer. This gives parents/carers the opportunity to meet the DAaRT Officer and learn about the programme and ask any questions they might have. Do ask your child's teacher about the briefing if you have not had a letter about it.

How can I be involved?

At the beginning of the course, you will be sent a letter about the programme from the school. Once the workbook has been given to your child (in lesson 1) they may bring it home for you to read together and there is a place for you to sign to say that you consent for your child to undertake the course.

As the course progresses, we encourage children to take books home and to talk to their parent /carer about what they have learned. The graduation at week 11 is a celebration of your child's learning and usually parents/carers are invited to this – again, ask the school about this.

What is the programme about?

The programme is a 10-week course for Year 5/6 pupils which teaches children about making safe and healthy choices. We give basic information about drugs and alcohol so that they can learn about the law and health effects associated with their use. There are also lessons which look at knife crime and at the differences in our communities and in society. We also teach many other important life skills that your child will need as they are growing up including resistance strategies, decision making, reporting problems, communication skills, peer pressure and dealing with stress.

How do you know the programme works?

By 2023 we will have been delivering this programme in the UK for over 27 years (it is regularly updated!) and have schools that have been working with us from the very beginning. In 2016, a report was published by Nottingham Trent University which details how successful the programme has been. From this survey we know that children who have graduated from the programme have the ability to deal effectively with stress, peer pressure and bullying, and will make safe and healthy choices by knowing the facts and health effects of tobacco, drugs and alcohol. They will also have developed improved communication skills and a higher likelihood of asking for help.

Please click here for more details of the evaluation 2016 report <https://lifeskills-education.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Summary-of-DARE-Evaluation-Report-29th-September-Version-AT.pdf>

Our latest evaluation, conducted by Sheffield Hallam University, in 2021 further supports the positive impact of the programme.

How long does it last?

The programme lasts for 10 lessons with each lesson lasting about an hour. At the end of the programme there is a graduation (on week 11) where parent/carers are invited and where the children can show off what they have learned during the programme. The pupils and teacher will organise this. Certificates are given for those who have fully completed the programme and there is usually an opportunity to speak to the DAaRT Officer involved with your school.

Will you be showing drugs to my child?

No – we do this through animated pictures, we do not bring drugs or anything else into the classroom, and we do not use scare tactics.

Are drugs or knife crime a problem in my area?

We know that incidents are more common in some areas but also that young people may move between communities as they grow older so a knowledge of such topics and how to stay safe when faced with them is vitally important.

Why does my child need to know about drugs at such a young age?

We give all information in an age-appropriate way - we do not scare children into just saying no to drugs as we know that this approach is less likely to work. Providing the children with the facts allows them to make safe and healthy choices in the future – whenever that may be. Age restricted legal drugs (Nicotine and Alcohol), illegal drugs (e.g. Cannabis and psychoactive substances) and legal drugs (medicines) can all be harmful at any age.

I smoke/have a drink and that's OK, isn't it?

You are an adult and as such have the knowledge and judgement to make your own choices. We do not tell children that they should never smoke or drink, but we do highlight the dangers of drug use, smoking and the abuse of alcohol. We give children the information they need and encourage them to weigh the risks and consequences and give them the tools to make positive decisions in the future.

What else do they learn about?

We also include lessons about being respectful to all and about the different communities and individuals in society and how and why it is important to live positively together. Your child will learn the facts including the law on knives and knife crime but will also be given the reassurance they need that the majority of young people are not involved in any ways with knives; again, we won't scare your child but will teach them how to manage any tricky situations they may come across and where to go to if they are worried or concerned.

What happens in class?

All classes are different; some are taught fully by our DAaRT Officers and sometimes the teacher will deliver the programme, sometimes there is a little of both throughout the course. This will depend on what the school has asked for.

We use a workbook that the children have responsibility for filling in during and after class. To graduate at the end of the course, the workbook must be filled in. If your child is absent for any lessons, then they have the responsibility to talk to the teacher and decide on a plan to make up the work.

We use videos to highlight real life situations and the best way to deal with them.

During the class the children will be encouraged to explore and discuss issues through question and answers, small and large group discussion.

I still have questions

We hope that we have been able to answer your questions but if you are still unsure about anything, please ask your child's class teacher, see the DAaRT Officer in school, ask to see the Parent/Carer video, or please feel free to contact us through the form on our website.