

Relationship and Sex Education Policy



Approved by:	Penny Harris (Director) Jane Cox (Director)	Date: 1 st September 2024
Last reviewed on:	18 th September 2023	
Next review due by:	1 st September 2025	

All policies are generated and reviewed with an awareness of equality and diversity in relation to pupils, staff and visitors. All policies are generated and reviewed placing safeguarding and wellbeing at the heart of all that we do.

1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

2. Statutory requirements

- This policy meets the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- This policy is based on the statutory guidance document "Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education" (DfE, 2019) and the PSHE Association's supplementary guidance "Writing your school's relationships and sex education (RSE) policy" (PSHE Association, September 2018).

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

- Review – the directors pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
- Staff consultation – Firstly the SLT and those teaching staff responsible for the delivery of RSE were consulted. The SRE curriculum was then discussed with the remainder of the staff
- Parents were consulted by letter regarding the content of the RSE curriculum
- Students were consulted
- Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was approved by the Directors

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

Effective RSE can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by students if they are to establish and maintain positive, healthy relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and well-being.

Our curriculum is set out within our PSHE curriculum map but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary. We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, students and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

Relationships and Sex Education aims to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds. Students will be taught what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like and what makes a good friend, colleague and successful marriage or committed relationship. At the appropriate time, the focus will move to developing intimate relationships, to equip young people with knowledge they need to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life.

By the end of secondary school, students will have been taught content on:

- families
- respectful relationships, including friendships
- online media
- being safe
- intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum alongside e-safety - online relationships. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum. Where possible, students also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and friendships
- Safe Relationships, including online relationships
- Respecting ourselves and others

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

6.1 Managing difficult questions

During both formal and informal PSHE/RSE sessions, students are encouraged to ask questions. Any questions from students are answered according to the age and maturity of the student concerned, and if the teacher delivering the session deems it appropriate to answer.

Teachers will:

- use specific ground rules for this work which will clarify boundaries for children/young people, and mitigate disclosures in class
- clarify that personal questions should not be asked
- clarify that students should not give out personal information in class but speak to someone they trust after the lesson, e.g. teacher, support staff.

Teaching staff will endeavour to answer questions as openly as possible but if faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, or that is not age-appropriate (or within the school's RSE policy), provision may be made to address the individual child/young person's requirements. The teachers must use their professional skill and discretion in this area and refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are concerned about any question from a safeguarding perspective. If a teacher does not know the answer to a question or if a question is felt to be inappropriate, this should be acknowledged and, if considered necessary, this may be followed up outside of the classroom environment with individual students.

Children may also be signposted back to parents/carers who have ultimate responsibility in talking to their children about sensitive matters. We will also encourage parents to talk with school if they have any questions or queries, and if they would like advice on how to better support their child and continue learning outside of the classroom.

6.2 Safeguarding

In providing children with an understanding of healthy relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider RSE to be an important part of our school's approach to safeguarding. Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. Teachers will take these matters seriously and speak to the child away from the class as a matter of priority. Teachers will draw their concerns to the attention of the Headteacher /DSL. The Headteacher will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals as appropriate. (See also Safeguarding Policy).

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Directors

The Directors will approve the RSE policy, and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Keeping their subject knowledge up-to-date
- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher.

As a school we are aware that the primary responsibility for providing children's RSE lies with parents and carers. We recognise the need to work with parents and carers to ensure a shared understanding of RSE and to deliver an effective programme that meets the needs of our students.

7.4 Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity. Our students have different needs based on their emotional and physical development, life experiences, and learning differences, but we aim to ensure that all students are properly included in RSE. Teachers will plan and deliver work in a variety of ways, in order to meet the needs of individual students with SEN or learning differences. We focus on activities that increase a student's assertiveness, communication and relationship skills, their self-esteem and understanding.

8. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in the Appendix of this policy and addressed to a head teacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The head teacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

9. Training

Relevant staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The school will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Directors (Jane Cox and Penny Harris) through half termly visits to the school and including work scrutinies, learning walks and conversations with staff and students. Students' development in RSE is monitored by teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. The information is recorded on SOLAR assessment system.

This policy will be reviewed by the directors annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Headteacher.

Links with other policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Online E – safety Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- PSHE Policy

Appendix: Parent form: withdrawal from non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	