Relationship and Sex Education Policy (RSE)

Introduction

As part of our PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) curriculum we have always aimed to deliver accurate, relevant and age-appropriate information about relationships – one of the three core strands of PSHCE (the other two being Health and Wellbeing and Living in the Wider World).

The term 'relationships' covers all relationships we, as humans, have with others – family members, friends, the relationships children have in school with their peers and members of staff. In a broad sense, Relationships Education encompasses all interactions we have with others.

Following the most recent Government guidance in September 2026, we have updated our RSE curriculum accordingly.

Aims

We believe in providing every pupil with open, honest, accurate and age-appropriate lessons all about relationships. Through the school's ethos and values, we aim to develop children's knowledge, skills, opinions, strategies, confidence, communication skills and assertiveness - enabling them to cope with life, exoress needs and boundaries and live safely and happily in the modern world.

We highly value the partnership between school and home and will promote open and informative two-way communication. We aim to provide parents and carers with accurate information about what their child is learning in school and to provide the best learning environment and opportunities for our children.

Our Relationships Education curriculum is inclusive and meets the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). We also aim to promote gender equality and represent the LGBTQIA+ community through our Relationships curriculum.

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place;
- the knowledge and understanding of a variety of relationships;
- the ability to identify any concerns they have about a relationship;
- coping strategies and an awareness of how and where to seek support;
- an understanding of their rights and responsibilities within a range of relationships;
- an awareness of the process of growing up and the changes they and others will experience;
- an understanding of the characteristics of positive relationships;
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene;
- Help pupils understand their own feelings and develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy;
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.

What Does Relationships Education in Primary Schools Cover?

RSE forms part of children's learning about the world around them and how they interact with others. Like all areas of the curriculum, Relationships Education is taught objectively, without bias. Children are not taught to question their own gender identity but will become aware that we are all different and that our differences should never be a cause for fear, conflict or disrespect.

The importance of relationship and sex education is to support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. This policy covers our approach to Relationships Education; a statutory component of the PSHCE curriculum from September 2020. It aims to set out the purpose of Relationships Education and the intended outcomes for pupils, what is covered in our curriculum and how it is delivered.

We define Relationships Education as learning about the many strands of relationships and growing up. This includes family relationships, friendships and relationships with peers and adults, healthy and unhealthy relationships, the characteristics of positive relationships, relationships online and the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up.

Sex and sexuality should also be taught within the context of the subject. Sex education is part of the Science syllabus in our school, with certain aspects of the subject being covered in PSHCE eg. relationships.

Objectives

To create a progressive programme containing knowledge, understanding of values and communication skills. These are incorporated into the curriculum of all years within the school.

We teach the pupils about:

- the physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults and that there is variation in rates of growth and development (physical, social and emotional);
- The correct terminology for body parts, including genitalia;
- the way humans reproduce;
- respect for their own bodies and the importance of sexual activity as part of a committed, long term and loving relationship;
- the importance and value of family life, recognising the responsibilities and benefits associated with it;
- relationship issues;
- respect for the views of other people;
- having the confidence to resist unwanted touches or advances;
- to help them develop an understanding of risk and how they can keep themselves safe, including online.

The RSE framework specifies 5 areas of Relationship Education which must all be covered by the end of a child's primary school education:

1. Families and people who care for me
2. Caring friendships
3. Respectful, kind relationships
4. Online safety and awareness
5. Being safe

The RSE framework specifies 9 areas of Health and Wellbeing Education which must all be covered by the end of a child's primary school education:

1. General wellbeing
2. Wellbeing online
3. Physical health and fitness
4. Healthy eating
5. Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping
6. Health protection and prevention
7. Personal safety
8. Basic first aid
9. Developing bodies

In the early years (Pre-School and Reception), children will begin to:

- develop a positive sense of themselves and others;
- form positive relationships with others;
- develop respect for others;
- develop an awareness of similarities and differences between people.

In Years 1 and 2, children will learn more about topics such as:

- working collaboratively with others;
- being kind and treating others with respect;
- bullying and unkind behaviours;
- understanding their own and others' emotions;
- the importance of families and friends in our lives;
- different family structures;
- their developing bodies.

In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 children will build on this and will learn:

- teamwork and shared responsibilities;
- resolving conflict with others;
- conveying their emotions to others appropriately;
- the different types of relationships people have with others;
- effective communication with others;
- healthy and unhealthy relationships, including all forms of bullying;
- peer pressure and dares;
- their developing bodies.

Context

We teach sex education in the context of the school's aims and values. While sex education in our school means that we give our pupils information about sexual behaviour, we do this with an awareness of the moral code and values which underpin all our work in school. In particular, we teach sex education in the belief that:

- sex education is part of a wider social, personal, spiritual and moral education process.
- pupils should be taught to have respect for their own bodies and those of others.

- pupils should learn about their responsibilities to others and be aware of the consequences of sexual activity.
- it is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect. This is developed in all areas of the curriculum, but especially as part of our Positive Education curriculum.

Celebrating Diversity through Relationships Education

Teaching children about the wonderful differences among humans has always been considered an important message in education. Just as we want to encourage children to celebrate their many different talents, strengths, goals and dreams, we also aim to promote the celebration of diversity among cultures, religions and traditions. Celebrating diversity among family structures and relationships is exactly the same principal and a whole-school approach is vital.

An Inclusive Relationships Education

Schools have been given flexibility in determining how they teach and deliver Relationships Education, however, it is expected that all Relationships units of work used in schools will be inclusive and representative of relationships and family structures in modern Britain and should promote tolerance and acceptance, in line with British values.

To ensure children with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBTQAI+) family members, as well as those who are beginning to feel they themselves might be LGBTQAI+, feel represented through the school environment and the curriculum, schools will endeavour to use resources that feature a range of families and relationships. This encourages understanding, acceptance and respect of different relationships from a young age.

Organisation

Our inclusive Relationships curriculum supports the objectives set out by the PSHCE Association which meet the statutory requirements for Key Stage 1 and 2. It forms a core part of our comprehensive PSHCE curriculum and also relates to our Positive Education curriculum.

When teaching Relationships and Sex Education, the very nature of the content will have implications when it comes to safeguarding. The covering of certain topics may lead to some safeguarding concerns or disclosures. Discussions with parents about the RSE curriculum should always include the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is aware of wider contexts. When teaching RSE, staff should always refer to the school Safeguarding Policy as well as Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE).

We ensure that there are opportunities to teach safeguarding. We ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, and recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed.

RSE across the school, looks at equal opportunities, and therefore a whole school approach is needed. It is imperative that as a school we are following the Equality Act 2010. We ensure that we do not unlawfully discriminate against pupils for any reason. Within the school, we build a culture that does not accept everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes, and we educate throughout the day not just by words but by the actions of others.

Staff should be aware of the difference between bullying and peer-on-peer abuse and help the school create the culture that neither will be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up. This is further stated in the Safeguarding Policy and KCSiE.

We teach sex education through science where we feel that it contributes significantly to a pupil's knowledge and understanding of her own body and how it is changing and developing. In PSHCE we teach pupils about relationships, and we encourage pupils to discuss issues.

Special consideration will be given when teaching particularly sensitive content and staff will be fully aware of the children in their class and how they might relate to the lesson content.

We aim to create and maintain a safe environment within which all children feel able to ask questions and discuss issues openly. For any child wishing to discuss something confidential, relating to the lesson content, an opportunity will be provided.

Each class also has a question box, which gives children the option to write down their questions and receive an answer on a one-to-one basis, rather than in front of the whole class. Distancing techniques will be employed in our Relationships Education, as with other areas of the PSHE curriculum, meaning that children are able to discuss fictional characters and scenarios, rather than discuss their own lives and experiences.

We teach about the parts of the body and how these work, and we explain to them what will happen to their bodies during puberty e.g. menstruation (in Science lessons and PSHCE). We inform the pupils of the arrangements within the school to help them cope with menstruation including where to go for sanitary protection. We encourage pupils to ask for help if they need it.

In Science lessons in both key stages, we follow the guidance material in the national scheme of work for Science. In Key Stage 1, we teach the pupils to a basic level about how animals, including humans, move, feed, grow and reproduce. We also teach them about the main parts of the body. Pupils learn to appreciate the differences between people and how to show respect for each other. In Key Stage 2, we teach about life processes and the main stages of the human life cycle in greater depth, having initially looked at the life cycles of other animals in order to encourage the children to view human reproduction with a similar scientific mind to studying the biology of other animals.

It is important that the programme in the upper school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively so they can move to their secondary schools confidently.

By the time the pupils leave Year 6 we ensure that they know how babies are conceived and born; how their bodies change during puberty, what menstruation is and how to cope with it; when these changes are likely to happen and what issues may cause anxiety and how they can deal with these as well as the outward signs of puberty in boys.

We always notify parents when we are about to embark on this particular programme of lessons so they are aware that they may need to discuss issues beforehand or afterwards with their children. This gives them an

opportunity to see the teacher beforehand and watch any relevant videos if they are concerned. If they still have very serious reservations, then they are at liberty to withdraw their children from classes.

Assessment

There is no formal assessment of individual progress though there may be some written work in various forms completed on the subject. Assessment in Science will be made of the wider topic of 'Life Cycles' but this will not contain assessment on any aspects solely related to human reproduction.

All teachers have positive relationships with the pupils, thus, can always be sensitive to their anxieties. If there is a problem, the teacher will make the Form Teacher aware and, if appropriate, the concerns will be discussed with the parents. If it is deemed that the child may be at risk then the Headmistress will be informed in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

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 conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. In these circumstances the teacher will talk to the child as a matter of urgency. When the teacher talks to the pupil they will reassure them that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported as appropriate. Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality to pupils. In this instance, teachers will consult with the designated safeguarding lead and in her absence, the deputy.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Louise Lawrance

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Leah Harrington and Jane Sladdin

Visitors and external agencies which support the delivery of Relationships Education will be required to adhere to the school's safeguarding policy and policies relating to the subjects they are teaching or contributing towards.

The role of the parents

The school is aware that the primary role in children's sex education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. In promoting this objective we:

- Answer any questions that parents may have about the sex education of their child.
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise about this policy or the arrangements for sex education in the school.
- Inform parents when the topics on the main stages of the life cycle are being covered in depth.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education programme but not relationship education. If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from sex education lessons, they should discuss this with the Headmistress, making it clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The school always complies with the wishes of parents in this regard.

General guidance for parents

Parents need to be aware that their children pick up 'misinformation' and sexual language from television, magazines, books, older siblings and their peers. It is not appropriate for the school to teach or correct this 'misinformation' to a whole class as some children are not ready for it. This is best handled in a conversation at home, but parents should consider how mature their child is when deciding how detailed their responses should be to this perhaps transitory interest.

General Guidance for Teachers

Teachers must always remember that children will respond to the subject of sex education in varying ways. Teaching methods need to take account of the developmental differences of pupils and thus the potential for discussion in small groups.

Teachers, and all those contributing to sex education, will work to the framework set out in this policy.

A set of ground rules will help teachers create a safe environment in which they themselves or the pupils do not feel embarrassed or anxious. For example:

- no one will have to answer a personal question.
- no one will be forced to take part in a discussion.
- only the correct names for body parts will be used.
- meanings of words will be explained in sensible and factual ways.

Questions should be answered simply but frankly having set clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Often, by reversing the roles and asking children a few leading questions it is possible to discover just how much information they are ready to understand or absorb.

If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have been treated with respect, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information.

Helpful resources

- DfE advice for schools: teaching online safety in schools;
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance: Education for a connected world;
- UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people;
- The UKCIS external visitors guidance will help schools and colleges to ensure the maximum impact of any online safety sessions delivered by external visitors;
- National Crime Agency's CEOP education programme: Thinkuknow.

The role of the co-ordinator

It is the responsibility of the Deputy Head to work closely with the PSHCE coordinator to ensure that the Headmistress, staff and parents are informed about the Relationship and Sex Education Policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is the Headmistress's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

Monitoring and review

The Senior Leadership Team monitors the Relationship and Sex Education Policy on a regular basis. The team gives serious consideration to any comments from parents about the sex education programme. When appropriate, a record is made of such comments. The Governors are kept informed about the sex education programme.

The DfE published revised guidance on 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' in July 2025. This is now statutory from 1 September 2026: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/689c57087b2e384441636190/RSHE_Statutory_Guidance_-_July_2025.pdf

Linked Policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- PSHCE Policy