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Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy 2024-25

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1. Aims

This policy covers our school's approach to teaching Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want
- Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships
- Avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex
- Communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues
- Develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity
- Understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity
- Understand the reasons for having protected sex
- Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV
- Be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- Know how the law applies to sexual relationships

In addition, the school will make best use of external agencies/visiting speakers to effectively best meet the needs of pupils' development. This includes the school nurse who helps in delivering the HPV vaccination programme.

Liaison

Liaison will take place with feeder schools to identify needs.

2. Statutory Requirements

As a maintained school (with Year 6), we must provide Relationships Education to key stage 2 pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017. We are not required to provide Sex Education to these age groups, but we need to teach the elements of Health Education contained in the Science curriculum. However, we must provide Relationship Sex Education to key stage 3 pupils as per the Children and Social work act 2017. In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

Rationale and Ethos:

Why Relationships and Sex Education?

The Law

It is important that young people know what the law says about sex and relationships, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of facts and rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This is to ensure young people know what is right and wrong in law, as well as providing a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussions about all types of relationships. Pupils will be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including:

- Marriage
- Consent, including age of consent
- Online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery and nudes)
- Sexuality
- Gender identity
- Substance misuse
- Violence and exploitation by gangs
- Extremism/radicalisation
- Criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- Hate crime

3. Policy Development

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

1. Review – a member of staff pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all staff currently teaching Life Skills were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
4. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, 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.

There are three main elements of RSE:

Knowledge and understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- Understanding human sexuality, sexual health, emotions and relationships

Attitudes and values

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations
- Learning the value of family life, marriage and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children
- Learning the value of respect, love and care
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision making

Personal and social skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- Managing conflict
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse

There are three core themes of Life Skills; Health and Wellbeing; Relationships; Living in the Wider World – these three themes are intertwined with the delivery of the Relationships and Sex Education programme.

5. Curriculum Programme of Study – Delivering RSE

RSE is taught within the Life Skills (PSHCE) curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

Pupils receive all lessons from their Life Skills teachers. This is because the staff have formed a relationship with the class and the pupils therefore should feel more comfortable about asking questions and seeking support.

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary. We have developed the curriculum in consultation with recent data, parents, pupils and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils 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 education at primary level focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Developing confidence and responsibility in all our pupils
- Allowing time to consider feelings and relationships
- Enabling pupils to protect themselves and ask for help and support
- Ensuring pupils appreciate the need for personal hygiene
- Preparing pupils for the changes that adolescence brings (including puberty)
- How a baby is conceived and born

- Enabling pupils to develop honesty and respect for themselves and others
- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

It incorporates the Key Stage 2 Science programme of study:

- the life processes common to humans include nutrition, growth and reproduction
- the main stages of the human life cycle

At Key Stage 3, RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- An awareness of their sexuality and understanding human sexuality
- Understanding the arguments for delaying sexual activity
- Understanding the consequences of their behaviour and behave sensibly in sexual and pastoral relationships
- Avoiding being exploited or exploiting others, including internet safety
- Avoiding being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex
- Understanding the link between the misuse of drugs and alcohol and unwanted pregnancy
- Understanding methods of contraception including teaching the correct application of a condom
- Understanding about sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS and how they are transmitted
- An awareness of how to access local health services
- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media

It incorporates the Key Stage 3 Science programme of study:

- that fertilisation in humans ... is the fusion of a male and female cells
- about the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence
- about the human reproductive system, including the menstrual cycle and fertilisation
- how the foetus develops in the uterus
- how the growth and reproduction of bacteria and the replication of viruses can affect health

Learning and Teaching

Pupils will be given frequent and regular opportunities to work on feelings and to practice personal and interpersonal skills. The school respects and values the learning that occurs in the community and in the home, believing that these links, together with the programme of study are essential dimensions of RSE. Wherever possible, parents should be involved and must be informed. 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).

Relationship and Sex Education takes place within mixed sex classes. Teaching is conducted in a safe learning environment through the use of ground rules and distancing techniques so that pupils are not put on the spot or expected to discuss their own personal issues in class without clear guidance. In circle time activities when personal issues arise confidentiality is always explained.

Ground rules and distancing techniques

- Pupils will be given preparation so that they will know how to minimise any embarrassment they feel
- No one (teacher or pupil) should be expected 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 a sensible and factual way

Answering difficult questions

Sometimes an individual child will ask an explicit or difficult question in the classroom. Questions do not have to be answered and can be addressed later. Individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in these situations and refer to the Life Skills Subject Leader.

Dealing with questions

- Teachers should establish clear parameters about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting
- Teachers should set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that pupils discuss issues in a way which does not encourage giggling and silliness
- Pupils should be encouraged to write down questions anonymously and post them in a question box (Ask it Basket); the teacher will have time to prepare answers to all questions before the next session, and will choose not to respond to any questions which are inappropriate
- If a verbal 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 attend to it later on an individual basis
- Teachers should not be drawn into providing more information than is appropriate to the age of the child
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse the Designated Safeguarding Officer should be informed and the usual safeguarding procedures followed.

Specific issues

Confidentiality and advice

Pupils will be made aware that some information cannot be held confidential and made to understand that if certain disclosures are made, certain actions will ensue in line with other school policies e.g.

1) Disclosure of suspicion of possible abuse – the school's safeguarding procedures will be invoked (see relevant policy)

2) Disclosure of pregnancy or advice on contraception:

As necessary, the school's safeguarding procedures will be invoked (see Safeguarding policy). Professional information and guidance will always be sought from a health professional such as the school nurse and pastoral support will be given using school systems. The school will always encourage pupils to talk with their parents first:

- pupils should be asked whether they can tell their parent(s) and whether they want help in doing so.
- if pupils refuse to tell their parent(s) the adult should refer them to a health professional.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-science components of RSE (see 7. Parental Partnership and Parents' right to withdraw).

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way

- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the 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.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

7. Parental Partnership and Parents' right to withdraw

Parents will not be able to withdraw their child from any aspect of Relationships Education or Health Education (which includes learning about the changing adolescent body and puberty). Parents of key stage 3 pupils have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE up to and until three terms before the age of 16.

Where pupils are withdrawn from sex education, the school will document the process and will ensure the pupil receives appropriate and purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 2 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

8. Training

Staff who teach Life Skills are trained on the delivery of RSE through amended PowerPoints provided by the Department for Education and through Subject Meetings. All Life Skills staff have the opportunity to attend training sessions run by the PSHE Association as all have access to the website.

9. Monitoring

The delivery of RSE is monitored by K Corby, LIFE SKILLS Subject Leader, through:

- Planning
- Learning walks
- Book looks
- Subject meetings with staff

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by subject teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by K Corby, LIFE SKILLS Subject Leader, annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

Signed M. Sladen Chair of Governors

Date approved: October 2024

Review date: July 2025