



Relationship and Sex Education Policy

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Introduction

This Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy builds on and replaces our school's Sex and Relationships (SRE) Policy (2016). This policy has been revised in line with Department for Education (DfE) legislation which comes into effect from September 2020.

This policy details our school's approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). It aims to ensure that staff, visitors, parents and carers are clear about the statutory requirements for RSE; the responsibilities they have to ensure pupils receive the education they are entitled to; and to inform parents of their rights.

High quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. (DfE Guidance 2019)

Rationale and ethos

Our aim at Elm Wood Primary School is for pupils to be given the knowledge and skills to be confident, curious and creative members of their community. This is underpinned by our commitment to support them to grow and develop academically, socially, emotionally and morally and to be resilient. Our school's ethos is to support and promote the achievements and confidence of all our pupils, celebrating everyone's success in a happy, creative environment where differences are valued.

Relationships and sex education, integrated and timetabled into our PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education) curriculum, has been taught consistently for many years at our school. It is an important aspect of our pupil's education, enabling them to make informed choices throughout their development.

We encourage and support the partnership between home and school so we can all help our children to understand and enjoy the process of growing up, making informed choices throughout their development.

Statutory regulations and guidance

Current regulations and guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) state that from September 2020:

- All primary schools must now deliver relationships education to all pupils. It is important for all children to receive this content and parents cannot withdraw their children from these lessons.
- Primary schools must ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science about how a baby is conceived and born.
- Primary schools are recommended to teach a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils (in addition to the science curriculum) so pupils learn more than just the biological facts. RSE is delivered in a manner which encourages pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life. Parents have the right to ask for their children to be withdrawn from these lessons.

Definition of RSE

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils. It involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values so pupils can learn to respect the variety of ways we are individual and human, and to uplift each other. It involves learning about relationships, personal identity, diversity, healthy lifestyles, sexual development and sexual health. RSE is not about promoting sexual activity.

RSE is a complex, lifelong process of learning involving growth of knowledge, development of skills and exploration of attitudes. RSE does not, therefore, only take place through the taught curriculum. It also occurs in other aspects of school life, such as:

- Opportunities for social interaction and development (e.g., in the classroom, playground, dining centre, extra-curricular activities and school visits).
- Giving quality feedback to pupils on their pastoral and academic achievements.
- In the ICT/Computing curriculum (e.g., when using ICT equipment in the classroom) supporting pupils to recognise ways children may put themselves at risk when using technology and teaching pupils how they can keep themselves safe from harm.

Research demonstrates that good, comprehensive RSE does not make young people more likely to become sexually active but empowers young people to delay sexual activity.

Policy and curriculum review

Building on the positives from previous sex and relationships policy and practice at our school, we wanted to ensure that the RSE we continue to teach would be right for our pupils. Our policy and curriculum review therefore involved an extensive process, placing the pupils at the heart of developments by researching what pupils wanted to learn in RSE. See Appendix 1 for a detailed explanation of the review process.

We carried out a research project to find out what pupils want to learn in RSE. This was a Year 6 pupil voice focus group project facilitated by our Pupil Voice Champion and the PSHE/RSE consultant. In the main activity, pupils were asked to rank RSE topics in order of how important it was for children in their school to learn about and to give the reasons that informed their decisions. The top results from the focus group were:

- Keeping safe and decision making
- Reproduction and how babies are made
- Puberty Changes / periods and wet dreams / girls-only lessons about periods

Curriculum design

Our RSE curriculum is based on DfE intended outcomes of what pupils need to learn about by the end of primary school. It is also in consideration of the Year 6 pupil voice feedback and based on empirical evidence, DfE training modules and planning tools from the PSHE Association and the Sex Education Forum. As positive, respectful relationships with ourselves, our families, our friends and others are central to pupil's development and the building blocks for positive relationships, our RSE approach places respect as the core thread throughout all the year groups.

Our planned RSE is provided in a spiral curriculum where topics and themes could be explored and revisited in a way that is appropriate for the age, maturity, feelings and needs of our pupils. For instance, in the 'Being Safe' module in relationships education, the body safety spiral starts in Key Stage 1 with pupils learning about the importance of respecting and caring for their bodies, learning the names of body parts and learning the NSPCC Pants Underwear rule.

These safety messages are explored further in Key Stage 2 and new topics introduced to develop pupils' understanding of personal space and boundaries; body image and treating other people's body respectfully too; leading to discussions about what 'consent' means and how people can protect their bodies in different relationships; and discussions about laws that serve to protect us from harm. Lessons are carefully planned and pitched at the right level for each year group to:

- Create a respectful, inclusive environment where sensitive discussion takes place and pupils feel comfortable to ask questions and have their questions answered.
- Develop appropriate vocabulary and communication skills necessary for pupils to understand and express their feelings.
- Develop feelings of self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence in our pupils.
- Develop knowledge of loving relationships which are based on mutual respect, kindness, care, and sensitivity to others and to develop sympathy and empathy skills.
- Provide information about how to assess risks and harms and for pupils to develop the skills needed to keep themselves safe.
- Learn the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies and to develop their understanding of how to take care of their bodies.
- Prepare pupils for puberty by giving them information about body changes, emotional changes, sexual development and the importance of hygiene on health.
- Provide information about why the body and mind change during puberty and develop pupils' knowledge of human reproductive processes.
- Explore values and moral issues, evaluating the physical, emotional and moral risks associated with certain behaviour.
- Signpost pupils to people and agencies they can turn to for information, help and support and to develop the skills necessary to identify and accessing support when needed.
- Reflect on their learning and to progress and build on their learning as they mature.

Delivery of RSE

An overview of the topics for each year group can be found in the RSE curriculum map (see Appendix 2).

Our RSE provision reflects a curriculum all our pupils can relate to. Lessons are delivered in a variety of ways using a range of teaching and learning styles to support pupil participation and the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes. There may be times when single gender groupings are appropriate and are built into the scheme (e.g., single-gender lessons and drop-in sessions in Year 5 and Year 6). At other times, single gender lessons will be at the discretion of the class teacher, who is most familiar with the needs of the class.

Selected resources, such as books, video clips and creative activities which support and promote pupils' understanding within a moral, values context will be used. Lessons and resources will be reviewed regularly and the curriculum may need to be adapted as necessary.

Statutory relationships education we have to teach:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

Statutory health education we have to teach includes:

- Key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes.
- About menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.

Statutory sex education within national curriculum for science we have to teach includes:

- Providing knowledge of human reproductive processes
- How a baby is conceived, including IVF, and born

Non-statutory sex education we intend to teach at our school:

- Will be mainly taught towards the end of the Year 6 provision
- There is likely to be some sex education content in Year 5 Lesson 4 'Puberty and the Reproductive System'.
- Parents have a right to withdraw their children from these lessons.
- Further details are provided in the curriculum map in Appendix 2.

Safe and effective practice

Our approach uses a spiral curriculum where relevant themes and topics are revisited and developed in ways that are relevant to the age, maturity, needs and feelings of the pupils. We will ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for RSE by:

- Ensuring that pupils are aware of our expectations of behaviour in RSE lessons.
- Staff establishing ground rules from the pupils' suggestions of how they would like to be treated in the lesson and how they will treat and support others, and to reinforce these ground rules whenever necessary.
- Providing pupils with tips and strategies for coping with any embarrassment or discomfort, including teachers giving pupils a five second giggle if necessary.
- Giving guidance about what is appropriate to share in RSE, what is private, and what needs careful consideration before deciding contribute to discussions.
- Advising pupils to think carefully before saying anything they might regret or cannot take back once it is said in a group.
- Using distancing techniques to help displace and de-personalize topics.
- Encouraging pupils to ask questions with the reassurance that staff will answer their questions age-appropriately, sensitively and without judgement.
- Ensuring staff have appropriate training in the teaching RSE.
- Ensuring staff are aware that they can turn to members of the senior leadership team for help and support in the teaching of RSE if issues arise

Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and every pupil is entitled to learn in a supportive environment free from fear.

Managing harassment and bullying

Schools have a duty to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) or who have LGBT families. The inclusive approach our school takes in the teaching of RSE aims to foster good relations between pupils, tackle all types of prejudice, including homophobia, and to promote understanding and respect.

Some pupils may use terms associated with sexuality as a way to harass other pupils. This is unacceptable. All staff strongly oppose discrimination and harassment of any kind, including homophobia. These incidents are dealt with and monitored in accordance with our Behaviour and Equal Opportunities Policies.

Confidentiality, child protection and safeguarding

Whilst encouraging a trusting relationship between staff and pupils, it is important to remember that complete confidentiality cannot be offered. Should there be any concerns about a pupil, the member of staff has a responsibility to share their concerns with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, SEND co-ordinator or Family Services Team (Designated Persons for safeguarding and child protection). The Designated Person will then act in accordance with the school's Safeguarding (child protection) Policy.

Answering pupils' questions

Asking questions is an important aspect of learning. We encourage pupils to ask questions in RSE too and in every lesson, we create an atmosphere where pupils can feel comfortable to ask questions and to be reassured of having their questions answered in a way that is appropriate for their age and stage of development. We want pupils to be informed so they do not need to seek answers online or in other ways that may be unsafe. We aim to answer questions in a non-judgemental and non-dismissive manner, based on facts and the law, and not from personal opinion.

If a pupil asks a question or makes a statement that is of a sensitive nature, is considered inappropriate for class discussion, or is outside the scope of this policy, the teacher will use their professional judgement in deciding how to respond. The teacher may ask the pupil to clarify the question to be sure of what the pupil is asking; facilitate a general class discussion; have an individual discussion with the pupil; or encourage the pupil to talk to their parent/s.

It is recommended that teachers provide a 'questions box' in the classroom for pupils who may prefer to post questions anonymously. 'A questions box' may be helpful to teachers as well, giving the adult time to consider an appropriate answer and, if needed, seek support from a member of the senior leadership team in how to answer the question appropriately.

Roles and responsibilities

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

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school. The headteacher will inform parents before a module starts as different year groups will have their module (six lessons on average) delivered in different terms throughout the year. The headteacher is responsible for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE.

Staff are responsible for delivering RSE in a sensitive way, modelling positive attitudes to RSE, monitoring progress; responding to the needs of individual pupils; and responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory 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 are expected to fully engage in RSE, to treat others with respect and sensitivity and to follow the expectations of our school's Behaviour Policy, Equal Opportunity Policy and the ground rules set by the class teacher and the class at the start of every RSE lesson.

Working with parents

We hope parents and carers find our RSE curriculum complements and reinforces what they are teaching their children at home. As part of a whole school approach to RSE, regular parent information sessions and opportunities for parents to view the materials and resources used in school will be available before lessons are taught. A member of the Senior Leadership Team and/or the PSHE/RSE specialist will be available to answer any queries or questions parents might have. Alternatively, parents and carers may speak enquire at the school office about arranging to view the curriculum resources at a suitable time and on an individual family basis.

To further inform and support parents, our school's RSE parent booklet provides more detailed information about what will be taught in each year group. This booklet will be made available on our school's website for parents to view, together with this policy document.

Parents' rights

Department for Education regulations state that:

- Parents have the right to be informed and consulted; to ask questions; and have their feedback considered.
- Parents have the right to view the RSE policy and the RSE scheme of work
- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education or health education.
- If parents do not want their child to take part in some or all of the lessons in sex education which is taught outside of the national science curriculum, parents have the right to ask for their child to be withdrawn.

Any request for withdrawal from sex education (outside what is taught in the science curriculum) should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 and addressed to the headteacher.

A member of the senior leadership team will discuss the nature of the concern with the parent and, if appropriate, try to reassure them and may point out that pupils withdrawn from RSE may receive inaccurate information from peers. However, the school has to grant a parent's right to have their child withdrawn from part, or all, of the sex education element of the RSE programme. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education in RSE.

Parents feedback will be taken seriously. However, parents do not have the right to veto the RSE scheme of work and care will be taken to protect the integrity of the curriculum.

Staff training

Staff will receive training on the content and delivery of RSE as part of their induction. RSE training is also included in our school's continuing professional development calendar. On-going training and support is available from a PSHE/RSE consultant in the teaching of RSE. The headteacher may also invite visitors from outside the school, such as the school nurses or other health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

Monitoring

To ensure we are continually supporting and meeting the needs of all our pupils, the school-wide community will be informed about our RSE policy and practice and asked to give feedback.

The RSE scheme of work has been developed to include learning objectives, needs assessments and opportunities for assessment of learning which enable the teacher to make judgements about pupils' learning and progress. Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team at least every two years to ensure it continues to meet the needs of pupils and continues to be in line with DfE regulations and guidance. Pupil voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities in the future to ensure our RSE programme continues to matching the ongoing needs of pupils.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

Appendix 1: Policy and curriculum review process

Parents/carer RSE Information sessions – these regular parent information sessions gave the opportunity for the PSHE/RSE consultant and the Deputy Headteachers for Inclusion to share relevant information about changes to RSE that were being considered by the DfE and the school. The DfE RSE parents’ leaflet was distributed and parents had the chance to ask questions and give feedback.

Staff working groups – the Inclusion team set up working groups to audit and research our school’s PSHE and RSE provision, to study the new guidance document and to identify developments needed.

Pupil voice consultation – groups of Year 6 pupils participated in a series of pupil voice focus group sessions facilitated by our Pupil Voice Advocate and the PSHE/RSE consultant. This research gave us quality feedback on the sex and relationships programme the pupils had been taught from Reception class through to Year 6, including ranking RSE topics into ‘most important’ and ‘less important’ for children in our school to learn about in the future, and to give the reasons behind their choices. The pupils ranked the most important topics as:

- Keeping safe and decision making
- Reproduction and how babies are made
- Puberty Changes / periods and wet dreams / girls-only lessons about periods

Pupils wanted to know more about:

- LGBT (hear from someone in LGBT community)
- Sexually transmitted diseases (using protection)
- Paedophiles & grooming (how to keep safe and protect ourselves)
- More information about how to keep safe (from attack, travelling alone) - Lesson was too quick
- RSE in science (cells, DNA, effects of Oestrogen & Testosterone on body, chromosomes)
- Becoming a parent (perhaps hearing from a young parent)
- More about puberty (mood swings, body changes)
- Not enough information about wet dreams (need a boys-only lesson)

PSHE curriculum review – a member of our Keeping Healthy team conducted an extensive audit of our PSHE education scheme of work to identify any gaps in our overall provision in relation to the new DfE regulations and guidance document.

RSE research and development - the PSHE/RSE consultant linked DfE guidance with local health profiles, and the pupil voice feedback to create a spiral curriculum in line with empirical evidence and best practice guidelines from the DfE, the PSHE Association and the Sex Education Forum. Findings were presented to the Inclusion team and the RSE working party.

Developing the RSE scheme of work – the PSHE/RSE consultant developed a bespoke scheme of work adapting trusted resources approved by the DfE, the PSHE Association and the Sex Education Forum as well as writing unique lesson plans to directly meet the needs of the pupils in our school.

Staff consultation - staff will be given the opportunity to review the policy and the new scheme of work and to give feedback.

Appendix 2: Relationships and sex education curriculum map (including health education – the changing adolescent body)

| Year One | Year Two | Year Three | Year Four | Year Five | Year Six |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Different Friends | Similar and Different | Everybody Needs Respect | Manners and Respect | Body Image and Respect/1 (Single gender groups) | Puberty Recap |
| My Special People | We can be whatever we want to be | Body Differences | Growing and Changing | Body Image and Respect/2 (whole class) | 2a Puberty: What girls want to know (girls only) 2b Puberty: What boys want to know (boys only) |
| We Are Growing | Our Bodies | Personal Space and Boundaries | What is Puberty? | Puberty - Time to Change | Respecting Myself and Others |
| Our Needs Change As We Grow | My Body Belongs to Me | Respecting My Body | Puberty: Emotions and Feelings | Puberty and the Reproductive System | Healthy Relationships |
| Everybody Has A Body | PANTS Underwear Rule | Families - Help and Support | Healthy Relationships | L5a Girls and Puberty (girls-only lesson) PLUS Puberty Drop-in for Girls L5b Boys and Puberty (boys-only lesson) | Relationships and Reproduction |
| Respecting My Body | Families - Love and Care | There is only one me | Self-respect and happiness | Puberty and hygiene PLUS Puberty Drop-in for Boys | 6a Protecting ourselves in relationships - including protecting sexual health 6a Protecting ourselves in our communities - including FGM |
| | | | | Puberty - Emotions, Help and Support | Additional lesson: HIV and AIDS |

Appendix 3: Parent form – Request for withdrawal from sex education within RSE

| TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS | | | |
|--|--|-------|--|
| Name of child | | Class | |
| Name of parent | | Date | |
| Reason for withdrawing from 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 | <p>Include notes from discussions with parents and agreed actions taken.</p> <p>Eg: Joe Bloggs will be taking part in all relationships lessons and during the sex education lessons, he will be working independently on a project in the Year 5 classroom</p> |
| | |