



# Relationships, Sex & Health Education (RSHE) Policy

Date approved: Autumn 2024

Date to be reviewed: Autumn 2026

Governing Body Committee: Education and Standards Board

## 1. Rationale and Ethos

From September 2020, Relationships and Health Education became compulsory for **all** pupils receiving primary education. Sex education is currently **not** compulsory in primary school, however the DfE continues to recommend that all primary schools should have a sex education programme that is tailored to the age and maturity of the pupils.

As part of the Education Act 2002/Academies Act 2010 all schools must provide a balanced and broad-based curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, whilst also preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life in a digital age.

All schools are required to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and should pay particular attention to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the Protected Characteristics). All schools must ensure that RSHE is accessible for all pupils and should comply with the SEND Code of Practice.

Whilst as a school we are aware we need to be mindful of and respectful to a wide variety of faith and cultural beliefs; equally it is essential that young people still have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. We acknowledge that all young people deserve the right to honest, open and factual information to help better form their own beliefs and values, free from bias, judgement or subjective personal beliefs of those who teach them.

## 2. Policy Development Process

This policy was formulated in consultation with the whole school community. This ensures that the RSHE curriculum continues to meet the needs of all our school stakeholders, and that it is in line with current DfE advice and guidance. The Policy is available online through our school website and by request at the School Office.

## 3. Parental Rights to Withdraw

We are committed to ensuring that the RSHE provided to our pupils is appropriate to their age and level of development, and compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

We recognise, in accordance with statutory guidance, that parents have the right to request for their child to be withdrawn from some or all of the Sex Education delivered as part of the statutory RSHE, but **not from Relationships & Health Education or the Sex Education delivered as part of in the National Curriculum in Science.** Parents wishing to exercise this right must do so in writing to the Head Teacher.

Following receipt of such request, the Executive Head Teacher or Head of School will directly discuss with the parent the benefits of receiving this important education, and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in class, rather than what was directly said by the teacher. Should the withdrawal request be upheld, then alternative provision will be made for the child(ren).

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

**The Executive Head Teacher** has overall responsibility for;

- the policy and its implementation,
- liaising with the governing body, parents/carers, LA and outside agencies,
- identifying a Lead Teacher.

**The Lead Teacher** will take responsibility for;

- policy development and review involving pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers,
- implementing the policy and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice,
- coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate,
- developing curriculum materials where needed,
- liaising with external agencies to deliver specific elements of the programme as appropriate,
- quality assuring continuity and progression of the programme within the whole curriculum,
- ensuring evaluation occurs through Pupil Voice opportunities to inform any policy review.

## **5. Aims and Objectives**

The aim of RSHE is to help children build healthy friendships and positive relationships in an age appropriate way. The overall objectives of the RSHE curriculum are concerned about raising awareness of attitudes and values, developing personal and social skills and promoting knowledge and understanding. RSHE covers more than biological facts and information. It endeavours to help children develop self-esteem, self-responsibility, as well as the acquisition of understanding and attitudes, which prepare children to develop caring, stable, healthy relationships. Appreciation of the value of self-respect, consent, dignity, marriage, civil partnership and parental duty should be encouraged in all pupils; together with the sensitivity to the needs of others, loyalty and acceptance of responsibility. RSHE looks at all aspects of diversity in an inclusive and non-judgemental way.

## **6. Staff Training**

RSHE can be a sensitive issue and teachers may welcome support and training. Provision is available for teaching staff to clarify legislation, curriculum requirements and to consider appropriate teaching approaches and materials. The school supports the use of visitors from outside, such as health professionals, police and voluntary sector, and other organisations to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE.

## **7. Curriculum Design**

The RSHE statutory content (See RSHE Long Term Overview) is woven through our existing curriculum subjects for Science, RE, Computing and PE, as well as through bespoke Values Days and discrete RSHE lessons. The objectives that are delivered to each cohort are age appropriate and progressive, year on year building upon previous learning (See RSHE Progressive Overview). RSHE content is delivered to the children by an adult who is familiar to them; usually their Class Teacher. There are some occasions where outside providers are used to enhance provision, such as the DARE programme, Bikeability or NSPCC Schools Service.

As the RSHE content is woven throughout our entire curriculum across the academic year, the objectives planned for each year group are shared with parents at the beginning of each academic year, so parents feel well informed about the RSHE their child will experience in every phase of their learning. A letter will also be sent home before any sex education content is covered within the science curriculum or as discrete RSHE lessons. The letter will outline the main learning objectives for that unit and allow parents the opportunity to discuss learning with their child at an age and stage appropriate level. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of teaching and learning approaches to ensure effectiveness, impact and differentiation. During the discrete RSHE lessons teachers will endeavour to create a supportive environment for all pupils and will establish 'ground rules' at the beginning of every lesson to enable everybody to discuss openly and honestly without fear and embarrassment or judgement.

## **8. Managing Difficult Questions**

It is inevitable that controversial issues may be raised as part of RSHE, any issue will be addressed with sensitivity and at a level appropriate to the age group and developmental stage,

and will take in to account any additional SEND, in an objective manner free from personal bias. During RSHE sessions pupils will be given the opportunity to discreetly write any questions for the teacher to answer to the whole class to avoid any embarrassment. Consideration will be given to the potential for small group or 1-1 discussion for specific questions to be discussed. Account must be taken of different viewpoints such as different religious beliefs. Discussion should be set within the legal framework and students made aware of the law as it relates to these issues. Pupils are made aware that some information cannot be held confidential, and should understand that if certain disclosures are made, certain actions will ensue. At the same time pupils will be offered sensitive and appropriate support.

#### **9. Confidentiality and Child Protection**

It is inevitable that effective RSHE, which allows for open discussion to take place, may lead to disclosures from pupils. It is essential that those teaching RSHE are completely familiar with the child protection procedures. Pupil disclosures or suspicion of abuse must be followed up with the pupil concerned that same day, and referred to a Designated Safeguarding Lead who will deal with disclosures or suspicions in line with the Child Protection Policy.