

HIGHFIELD ACADEMIES

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

THIS POLICY WAS APPROVED:	
THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED:	JAN 2024
MEMBER OF STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW:	ANDREW PRIOR/ JO HEESOM

'Relationship and sex education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of loving and caring relationships. It is about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.

Research demonstrates that good, comprehensive sex and relationship education does not make young people more likely to become sexually active at a younger age'

- Every child is entitled to receive SRE regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, culture, disability or sexuality.
- It is our intention that all children have the opportunity to experience a programme of RSE at a level which is appropriate for their age, ability and physical development with differentiated provision if required.

Aims and Objectives for Relationship and Sex Education are:

- To provide children with age appropriate information
- To provide the knowledge and information to which all pupils are entitled
- To clarify/reinforce existing knowledge
- To help gain access to information and support
- To promote self-esteem and emotional health and wellbeing
- To assist young people to prepare for adult life by supporting them through their physical, emotional and moral development
- To help them to understand themselves
- To respect others
- To form and sustain healthy relationships.
- To respect and care for their bodies
- To be prepared for puberty and adulthood
- To develop skills for a healthier safer lifestyle
- To help pupils understand their sexual feelings and behaviour, so they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives
- To develop and use communication skills and assertiveness skills to cope with the influences of their peers and the media
- To empower them to make positive decisions about their health-related behaviour

RSE is an integral part of the curriculum in that it involves consideration of different types of relationships at different levels. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the focus is on relationships in families and with friends. As children go through the school, they begin to consider other relationships. It is only during Year 6 and beyond that sexual relationships are considered.

Statutory requirements

As a Special School academy with primary and secondary aged students we must provide RSE to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

We are required by our funding agreement to have regard to section 403 of The Education Act 1996. This consolidated all previous legislation, and key points related to RSE are:

- The sex education elements of the National Curriculum Science Order are mandatory for all pupils of primary and secondary school age. These cover anatomy, puberty, biological aspects of sexual reproduction and use of hormones to control and promote fertility.

- Secondary schools are required to provide an RSE programme which includes (as a minimum) information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.
- Other elements of personal, social and health education (PSHE), including RSE, are currently non-statutory.
- All schools must provide, and make available for inspection, an up-to-date policy describing the content and organisation of RSE outside of national curriculum science. This is the school governors' responsibility.

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires that:

- Young people learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and bringing up children.
- Young people are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate, having regard to the age, and the religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned.
- School governing bodies have regard for the guidance.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of RSE provided outside national curriculum science.

Government guidance on personal, social and health education (PSHE)

The aspects of RSE that are not included in the science curriculum are delivered through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. PSHE was extended to include economic education in 2008 when a new secondary school curriculum was introduced.

PSHE and citizenship are supported by the National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP).

Both PSHE and citizenship are non-statutory at Key stages 1 and 2. At Key stages 3 and 4 citizenship becomes statutory along with PSHE in September 2019.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) publishes guidance on the whole curriculum, including PSHE programmes of study and end of key stage statements to help teachers assess progress. At Highfield we have bespoke assessment frameworks in order to assist teachers in assessing progress and planning next steps for our pupils.

Government guidance on RSE

In 2020, the Department for Education published guidance on the delivery of RSE through the PSHE framework. The guidance aims to help schools to plan RSE policy and practice and includes teaching strategies, working with parents, and confidentiality.

- There should be an emphasis on developing knowledge, skills and attitudes and appropriate teaching methods.
- Primary schools should ensure that both boys and girls know about puberty before it begins.
- Teachers should develop activities that will involve boys and young men as well as girls and young women.
- Policies should be developed in consultation with parents, young people, teachers and governors.

- All schools have a duty to ensure that the needs of children with special needs and learning disabilities are properly met.
- Puberty, menstruation, contraception, abortion, safer sex, HIV/AIDS and STIs should be covered.
- The needs of all pupils should be met, regardless of sexual orientation or ethnicity.
- RSE should be planned and delivered as part of PSHE and citizenship.

The Governing Body

The Governing body, in co-operation with the Head Teacher, determines / agrees the school's general policy and approach to RSE provision for all pupils.

The organisation of Relationship and Sex Education

Relationship and sex education is delivered through a broad and balance curriculum. Relationship and sex education is taught by classroom teachers, teaching assistants and if appropriate, outside visitors such as the school nurse.

Cross-curricular links include Science, RE, PSHE, and Citizenship

A range of teaching methods which involve children's full participation are used to teach sex and relationship education. These include use of video, discussion, visiting agencies, drama and role play presentations.

Relationship and sex education is usually delivered in mixed gender groups however, there may be occasions where single gender groups are more appropriate and relevant.

Resources to teach sex and relationship education include DVDs and accompanying lesson plans, reference books, Social Stories, leaflets and extracts from videos, contraception display kit and RSE (anatomically correct) dolls. Resources are located in either the upper school or resources room. Teaching and resources will be differentiated as appropriate, to address the needs of our students in order for them to have full access to the content of RSE

Teaching children about RSE is a whole school, on-going process and all teachers are sensitive to each individual pupil's needs. Teachers promote positive, healthy choices and relationships on a daily basis e.g. through everyday school life, in assemblies and through implementing our behaviour policy.

It is the responsibility of all staff to teach RSE in line with the principles and statements set out in this policy, and in particular, to:

- establish with pupils a set of ground rules which set the parameters for discussion
- promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school.
- prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life
- discuss all types of relationships with sensitivity and respect
- approach the teaching of RSE with an awareness of the pupil's needs in this area e.g. through informal assessment of their knowledge and understanding from other Science topics; through dialogue with the Headteacher about vulnerable pupils
- not be drawn into providing more information than is appropriate to the age of the child
- acknowledge questions that are too explicit which may need to be answered, at a parent's discretion, by the parent or carer.

Answering Difficult Questions

If a child asks an explicit or difficult question, the staff will use their professional judgement in deciding the best way to answer it. This may be through individual work or discussion with the child. If the staff member is concerned, they can refer to the Headteacher/child protection team who can discuss the matter with the parent, or follow other appropriate procedures.

Parental Involvement

Parents will be informed of the dates and times of the RSE sessions and asked for permission for their child to attend these. The content of this policy is shared with parents/carers and was put out to consultation prior to its ratification.

Withdrawal

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory 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. If parents decide to do so, the Headteacher must receive prior notification in writing. Any student withdrawn will be accommodated in another class for that session with alternative work activities provided.

For statutory components of the curriculum parents do not have the right to withdraw.

Child Protection

Teachers conduct RSE 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, or indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse, this will be dealt with in line with our Child Protection Policy.

Additional Needs

For all pupils, there is a need for clear, explicit and repeated teaching about sex and relationships to avoid confusion. Pupils with additional needs may need to specifically learn things, which others learn incidentally e.g. what being 'private' actually means. They may be more open to exploitation in the wider community and may need additional teaching to help them understand acceptable parameters and behaviours. Above all, they need the knowledge, skills and understanding to make informed, positive decisions about their own relationships and lives, and about their own safety.

RSE lends itself to study by students with a range of different abilities. Students can work on the same content at different rates and levels; some may be supported by a teaching assistant. We recognise due to the needs of our students there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages. We recognise that teaching needs to be sensitive, age appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.

Gender Issues and Sexual Stereotyping

We will consider the particular needs of boys, as well as girls, and approaches that will actively engage them. We shall also be proactive in combating sexism and sexist bullying. Teachers are careful not to reinforce stereotypes or traditional expectations of gender roles.

Ethnic and cultural diversity

Different ethnic and cultural groups may have different attitudes to RSE. The school will consult pupils and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for, and understanding of, the views of different ethnic and cultural groups as and if necessary

Sexuality

In accordance with DfES guidance, our approach to RSE will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. We shall actively tackle homophobic bullying. This would include the use of 'gay' or 'lesbian' in a derogatory term. Anti-bullying Week will address the issue of homophobic bullying specifically, otherwise, it will be dealt with as and when it arises. We aim to foster healthy and respectful peer to peer communication and behaviour, and provide an environment which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic within our inclusive, whole school approach.

Equality

We comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Under the provisions of the Equality Act, we do 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). Within our curriculum planning we make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage (as outlined previously in this policy).

Under the provisions within the Equality Act we take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting one group because of a protected characteristic. For example, we may take positive action to support students with particular SEN needs if there was evidence that they were being disproportionately disadvantaged due to their disability. These provisions would also apply to the other protected characteristics.

Child Protection / Confidentiality

Teachers need to be aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, may lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.

The staff member will inform the Head Teacher and Designated Child Protection person in line with the LA procedures for child protection.

A member of staff cannot promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The RSE programme will be evaluated by teaching staff. The views of students and teachers are used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an on-going basis. The policy will be formally reviewed for the following purposes:

To review and plan the content and delivery of the programme of study for RSE.

To review resources and renew as appropriate.

To update training in line with **Government** guidelines.

Overall monitoring is the responsibility of the head teacher and PSHE coordinator as part of PSHE in the school's development plan. As a result of this process changes will be made the relationship and sex education programmes as appropriate. PSHE and RSE teaching is a statutory requirement.