Relationships, Sex and Health Education

(RSHE)

Policy

Last reviewed date: 11th January 2023

Adopted by Trustees date: 23rd January 2023

Next review date: 11th January 2026

**Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy – Statement**

**Policy values, aims and objectives**

*Today’s children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and*

*living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting*

*opportunities but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.*

*These subjects represent a huge opportunity to help our children and young people develop. The knowledge and attributes gained will support their own, and others’, wellbeing and attainment and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society.*

-Secretary of State Foreword (2021)

This Relationships, Sex and Health Education policy coversSt Andrew’s School approach to teaching relationships and sex education (RSHE).

It will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if the RSHE curriculum is amended, in response to emerging themes, changing student needs, or introduction of new legislation and guidance.

Parents will be informed about the policy through referencing in the school prospectus and a link from the school website. If a hard-copy of the document is required the school will be happy to provide this upon request.

**Values, aims and objectives:**

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships and reproduction. It will equip children and young people with accurate information, positive values and the skills to enjoy healthy, safe and positive relationships, to celebrate their uniqueness and to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing now and in the future.

RSHE is taught in a way which is complementary to the wider ethos, values and principles of our school. RSHE in this school is learning about the body, feelings, beliefs, relationships, rights and responsibilities and knowing how and when to ask for help if needed. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

RSHE provision at St Andrews School

* Is an identifiable part of our school curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all the Key Stages.
* Is taught by staff regularly trained in RSHE (with expert visitors invited in to enhance and supplement the programme, where appropriate).
* Works in partnership with parents and carers, informing them about what their children will be learning and how they can contribute at home.
* Delivers lessons where students feel safe and encourages participation by using a variety of teaching approaches with opportunities to develop critical thinking and relationship skills.
* Is based on reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights, and distinguishes between fact and opinion.
* Promotes safe, equal, caring and enjoyable relationships and discusses real-life issues appropriate to the age and stage of students, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and safe relationships online.
* Gives a positive view of human sexuality with honest and medically accurate information so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health in ways that are appropriate to their age and maturity.
* Gives students opportunities to reflect on their values and influences (such as from peers, media, faith and culture) that may shape their attitudes to relationships and sex and nurture respect for different views.
* Fosters gender equality and LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans) equality and challenges all forms of discrimination in RSHE lessons and in everyday school life.
* Meets the needs of all pupils with their diverse experiences including those with autism, special educational needs and disabilities.
* Seeks students’ views and consultation about RSHE so that teaching can be made relevant to their real lives and assessed and adapted as their needs change. This is through questionnaires and student voice.
* Parents/carers views are consulted about the policy through questionnaires and presentations at coffee mornings.

RSHE empowers children to build self-esteem, offer positive and open views, support mutual respect and celebration of self and others, providing a strong foundation to be successful in life by:

* Providing a spiral curriculum, allowing for the development of knowledge relevant to the age and stage of our students with autism.
* Providing an inclusive learning environment which is safe and empowering for everyone involved, based on the belief that bullying, prejudice and discrimination is unacceptable.
* Promoting critical awareness of differing attitudes and views presented through society, the media and peers to enable the nurturing of personal values based on respect.
* Ensuring students are informed of their rights, including the legal framework and how to access confidential help to keep themselves and others safe.
* **Primary**

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| Relationships Education | Families and people who care for me  Caring friendships  Respectful relationships  Online relationships  Being safe |
| Sex Education | How a baby is conceived and born |
| Health Education | Mental wellbeing  Internet safety and harms  Physical health and fitness  Healthy eating  Drugs, alcohol and tobacco  Health and prevention  Basic first aid  My body/puberty  Changing adolescent body |

Secondary

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| --- | --- |
| Relationships Education | Families and people who care for me  Caring friendships  Respectful relationships, including friendships  Online relationships  Being safe |
| Sex Education | Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health |
| Health Education | Mental wellbeing  Online and media safety and harms  Physical health and fitness  Healthy eating  Drugs, alcohol and tobacco  Health and prevention  Basic first aid  Changing adolescent body |

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students, parents and Trustees.

This ensures the needs of our students can be met through the delivery of an age and stage-appropriate curriculum, however this may change due to the nature of our students who have autism and be based on individual students maturity and understanding. The curriculum addresses traditional and emerging issues, and relevant challenges as identified by students. Consultation with students/staff will be conducted on a regular basis. This will inform the RSHE curriculum review, ensuring it remains responsive to emerging needs.

Some elements of the RSHE curriculum are a statutory requirement to teach in order for the school to meet the latest government RSHE guidance September 2021 and The Equalities Act, 2010. It is important to teach RSE through a spiral curriculum. This means students will gain knowledge, develop values and acquire skills gradually by re-visiting core themes to build on prior learning. This developmental approach helps students to make informed decisions relevant to their age and stage. RSHE will support the school’s commitment to safeguard students, preparing them to live safely in the modern world.

**Entitlement and equality of opportunity**

All children are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum delivered in an age and stage, or maturity and understanding manner. Teachers will include a range of teaching styles and groupings to allow all children to make progress. Every child will be given opportunity to develop their skills independently and in groups, enhancing their own confidence and self–esteem.

We actively celebrate the diversity of our students, their families and the wider whole-school community. RSHE will always be taught in a non-judgemental, non-biased and fully inclusive manner through clear, impartial, scientific information as well as covering the law to ensure all pupils have equal access to our RSHE curriculum. We do not use RSHE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation over another.

Thorough consultation, continual assessment and regular reviews of the curriculum we ensure that we continually recognise and respect students’ different abilities, levels of maturity, personal circumstances (including gender identity, faith or culture and that of their family, friends and the wider whole-school community).

**Responding to pupils’ questions**

There will always be sensitive and controversial issues within the subjects of RSHE. These may be a matter of age and stage appropriateness or contrasting personal beliefs including those originating from faith perspectives and culture. We believe that children are best educated and protected from harm when they are provided with a safe and supportive space to discuss issues openly within the framework of a class working agreement. Students will be consulted about RHSE by completing a survey before commencing the lessons. Students will be provided with an opportunity to ask questions in an open setting and will also be provided with an opportunity to raise anonymous questions through the use of an anonymous ‘ask-it-basket’. Teachers will answer questions as fully as they feel age and stage appropriate based on the level of knowledge demonstrated by pupils during the lesson. Teachers may delay answering a students’ question if they need time to consult with a colleague or the school leadership team to construct an appropriate answer.

Teachers can refuse to answer a question that they feel is inappropriate and will never answer personal questions about their own body, personal circumstances or lifestyle choices. If a teacher does not answer a question, the student will have the reasons clearly explained and the teacher will work with the student to identify suitable sources of information where they can obtain an answer to their question. This may include encouraging the student to ask a parent/carer or trusted adult at home.

**Confidentiality, signposting and handling disclosures**

The school’s responsibility to safeguard pupils through a curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world will remain central to our curriculum content, teaching methodologies and supporting resources.

At the beginning of RSHE teaching the class will discuss and create a ‘working agreement’. Confidentiality will be included within this agreement so students are clear of the limits of confidentiality that can be guaranteed by a teacher.

Distancing techniques such as the use of characters within RSHE avoids students feeling under pressure to participate or disclose information beyond that which is appropriate or feels comfortable. This strategy makes RSHE more accessible to all students including those who may have experienced unhealthy relationships and/or abuse.

Teachers will signpost students to information relevant to the topic being taught to ensure safe sources of information, advice and guidance are provided. Teachers will also work closely with the school’s pastoral system to advise on topic coverage so that the school can be responsive to students’s pastoral needs and safeguarding arrangements can be actioned efficiently if required.

Teachers will conduct RSHE lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved) in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the reference 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. They will immediately inform the named person for child protection issues about their concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will then deal with the matter in line with our school’s safeguarding policy.

**Involving parents and carers**

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children in RSHE and that RSHE is most effective when it is collaboration between school and home. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with parents and carers of children and young people at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. Letters are sent to parents/carers informing them when RHSE will take place. A survey will also be sent out to ascertain views.

The school operates an open-door policy enabling parents to discuss RSHE at relevant times throughout the school year.

The vast majority of RSHE is compulsory. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents and carers are only able to request that their child is excused from Sex Education, taught outside of the national curriculum for science. If a parent wishes their child to be excused from some or all of the non-statutory Sex Education, they should discuss this with the headteacher, making clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The head teacher will outline to parents/carers 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 the classes rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents/carers propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead). Once a decision has been made, parents/carers must inform the school in writing stating their reasons as to why they would like their child withdrawn.

Once these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, our school will respect a parent/carers’ request to have their child excused from non-statutory sex education up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education, rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

The school will document this process.

This process is the same for student with Special Educational Needs Disability (SEND). However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a student’s specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.