



Personal Development and Relationship and Sex Education at The Acorns School

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the updates for KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) September 2024 and the Acorns School Safeguarding policy 2024.

Equality and Diversity

The Acorns School is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. This policy will be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics, and all will be treated with dignity and respect.

What are protected characteristics?

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of any of the following:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

At Acorns School we feel the importance of personal and social education is paramount to enabling learners to develop independence and address some of the barriers to learning experienced by the young people attending our school.

We do this by delivering Personal Development in small mixed ability form group classes in both Key stage three and Key stage four. There are two timetabled lessons for Personal Development to be delivered during the week with a detailed personal development program, but it is also delivered in form times, social times and ad hoc opportunities throughout the day.

Learners explore relevant topics and issues within their teaching group supervised by pastoral support via a teacher and keyworker. This teaching structure enables sensitive issues to be discussed and addressed within a nurturing environment. These topics are taught alongside weekly Cookery lessons which have been designed to promote independence and include aspects of food hygiene, home & financial management and emotional wellbeing. Personal Development also considers wider key issues and has focus sessions on eating disorders week, world mental health day, alcohol awareness, road safety week etc. Speakers and visitors attend to relay specific topics and themes to pupils bringing the curriculum to life.

Key Stage Three and Key Stage Four

Personal Development topics taught include drugs education, personal finance, emotional wellbeing, finances, personal safety and sex and healthy relationships, healthy lifestyles and citizenship, British values, democracy and the court System.

Relationship and Sex Education within Personal Development.

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE), makes an important contribution to the provision of the spiritual, moral, cultural, emotional and physical development of pupils in preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Effective RSE is important to ensure that pupils grow up able to enjoy the positive benefits of loving, rewarding and responsible relationships. It is important that pupils are informed, are comfortable with the changes during puberty, are aware of sexual health and feel safe emotionally.

Sex and relationships education – RSE - is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care, for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

The Government's commitment to RSE is outlined in the 'Schools White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' (Nov 2010). The Paper states that children need high quality sex and relationships education so they can make wise and informed choices.

Aims and objectives:

To support and enhance the personal, social and emotional development of all pupils and help them understand their bodies, how they are growing and changing, and be able to name the parts of the body.

To support pupils to communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues and assist them in being able to articulate their thoughts and emotions in a healthy way.

Develop a clear understanding of the benefits of caring relationships and be aware of pressures and possible dangers; to be able to exercise personal choice and rights.

To ensure that pupils recognise what is appropriate behaviour so they can protect themselves and ask for help and support if they should need it. To allow pupils to see the value of healthy and caring relationships and family models.

For staff delivering the program to provide a safe environment for pupils to openly be able to ask questions and discuss sex and relationships.

Providing a clear programme of Sex and Relationship Education that takes account of and is relevant to, the pupils' knowledge, understanding and particular needs and circumstances.

Provision of RSE

A planned progressive programme of RSE aims to prepare pupils for adult life; supporting the teaching of skills needed to effectively manage the natural physical and emotional changes that they experience as they grow and mature into healthy, confident and independent adults. RSE is also delivered through the Science curriculum by the relevant teaching and support staff.

Sex and relationship education has three main elements:

1. Attitudes and values:

- Learning the importance of values and moral considerations
- Learning the value of family life and stable relationships for the nurture of children
- Learning the value of love, respect and care

2. Personal and social skills:

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- Developing empathy for others and self-respect
- Learning to make choices without prejudice
- Appreciating the consequences of choices made
- Managing conflict
- Recognising and avoiding exploitation and abuse

3. Knowledge and understanding:

- Learning about and understanding physical development at a level appropriate to the pupils' age, cognitive ability and level of maturity
- Understanding human emotions and relationships
- Understanding of specific topics in the high school such as menstruation, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases

Pupils will be able to:

- Develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships
- Be able to name parts of the body, including male and female specific parts
- Understand changes in the body related to puberty such as periods and voice breaking
When these changes are likely to happen and what issues may cause young people anxiety and how they can deal with these
- Understand about personal hygiene and how to keep healthy
- Be able to protect themselves from danger and ask for help and support
- Know how a baby is conceived and born.
- Develop confidence in relating to others and understand about sexual attraction
- Learn about sexual health and protection
- Know about sexually transmitted diseases and contraception
- Understand about sexuality and different relationships
- Understand how to keep themselves safe and free from abuse; including FGM, Child Sexual Exploitation, teenage relationship abuse and e-safety such as sexting
- The role of the media
- About reproduction in humans (as an example of a mammal), including the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycle (without details of hormones), fertilisation, gestation and birth, to include the effect of maternal lifestyle on the foetus through the placenta

RSE needs to be taught in an atmosphere where questions can be asked and answered without embarrassment and trust and confidentiality are ensured. Teachers and keyworkers work closely together.

Teachers/leaders conduct RSE lessons in a sensitive manner, and in confidence. However, if a pupil 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 pupil indicates that

they may have been a victim of abuse; immediately informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead Miss F Melling.

Staff training

Training is provided through inset training opportunities and attendance at relevant courses, including safeguarding updates.

Working with Parents and carers

We at The Acorns School recognise that there may be parental anxiety surrounding the teaching of RSE and to alleviate this, the school aims to:

- Recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. The school aims to work in partnerships with parents and pupils consulting them about the context of programmes.
- Parents can withdraw their children from sex education that is part of RSE (i.e., non-statutory) up until the third term before their 16th birthday. This can be done by submitting a written request to the Headteacher.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer, and the school aims to work in partnership with health professionals like the school nurse, social workers and other, appropriate personnel. Parents will be informed in advance of any outside bodies being used in the delivery of any parts of the curriculum.
- Consult with the parents of new entrants with regards to RSE as part of the admissions procedure.
- Provide a copy of the RSE policy on request.

Monitoring the provision of RSE

The Head teacher will review the policy to ensure it is effective and up to date with regard to advice and legislation that is provided to schools. Regular reviews of the curriculum and content will take place in accordance with pupil need.

Governors will ensure the legal framework is followed, consult with parents on the determination of the school's RSE policy and carry out a review of the policy every two years.

The Headteacher will implement the RSE policy, liaise with parents, and respond to individual problems experienced by pupils, enlisting external agency support if appropriate.

This policy is updated annually.

Next review September 2025.

Miss H Cutts