



The
Birkenhead Park
School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy 2023-2024

Introduction

At The Birkenhead Park School, our school values underpin what we expect from our students on a daily basis. They outline the behaviours, attitudes and routines that every member of our community should strive to follow. Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) within our school allows us to further educate our young people on how to be safe and healthy in all aspects of their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way, whilst embedding our school values.

School Ethos and Values Ambition and Excellence for All

- **Positivity** - we are positive about what we do and what others can do
- **Ambition** - we will work to raise aspirations and develop a strong desire for success
- **Resilience** - we will be determined and not give up when faced with difficulties
- **Thoughtfulness** - we treat everyone with respect and consideration

Our RSE curriculum contributes to our school ethos and to the development of respectful relationships. It also contributes to being a healthy school and delivering effective Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural Education. Teachers deliver our RSE curriculum in a positive learning environment and one where students know that their wellbeing is valued and supported.

Policy Review

This policy for RSE has been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – Senior Leadership Team (SLT) led, with PHSE/RSE staff and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) pulling together all relevant information, including applicable national and local guidance.
2. Staff consultation – all staff were given the opportunity to review the policy and make recommendations.
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were given the opportunity to review the policy and make recommendations.
4. Student consultation – we consulted with students and investigated what they want from their RSE.
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with Governors and ratified.

The policy is reviewed regularly by members of the SLT, PSHE/RSE staff, and school Governors to ensure that the curriculum and its delivery is up to date and meets the needs of students. The Link Governor identified to support with RSE provision is Professor Helen Aspinall.

The aims of relationships and sex education at the Birkenhead Park School

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds. It teaches acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships, helping students to understand the positive effects that good relationship can have on their mental wellbeing, self-respect and self-worth. RSE supports students in developing their character by developing personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice. All secondary school content is categorised into the following key concepts: **families; respectful relationships, including friendships; online and social media; being safe; intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health; and physical health and mental wellbeing.**

These key concepts are taught within the context of family life, taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances. Families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers, amongst other structures, along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them, for example, looked after children or young carers. All content is taught to support students with protected characteristics and fully adheres to statutory guidance with reference to the law.

Statutory Guidance

As a secondary school we must provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017 and the new statutory Relationships and Sex Education requirements 2020. The policy has been developed, and should be read in conjunction with:

- [Statutory guidance on RSE and Health education](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [DfE - Teaching Children Online Safety](#)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years \(statutory guidance\)](#)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools \(advice for schools\)](#)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying\)](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools \(advice for schools\)](#)
- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance \(provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts\)](#)
- [Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools \(guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural \(SMSC\) \)](#)
- [National Citizen Service guidance for schools](#)
- [Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges June 2021](#)

As well as the above guidance, this policy should be read alongside the school's policies for:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy

Curriculum Intent

RSE provides children and young people with the opportunity to receive information whilst exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity. It is lifelong learning about different types of relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE fosters the emotional, social and cultural development of students and develops resilience and character, all of which are fundamental to students being happy, successful members of society.

RSE teaches students about the importance of stable and loving relationships, in all capacities, and how to nurture and develop these connections. It supports students in being able to identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships, when relationships are unhealthy and how these situations can be managed.

RSE is also designed to support the students growing up in an increasingly digital world and the significant challenges this presents, particularly for young people. RSE provides students with the tools they need to make the right decisions to keep themselves safe and happy. They need to be able to balance the benefits of technology with a critical awareness of their own and others' online behaviour, and develop effective strategies for staying safe and making a positive contribution online. Cyberbullying, online grooming, access to inappropriate images, and sexting are just some of the ways in which digital technology can negatively affect children's and young people's lives. These issues are explored in the RSE curriculum and link to our whole-school internet policy.

Taking an age appropriate and phased approach, RSE educates students on safer sex, sexual health, and teenage pregnancy. Knowledge in these areas is vital to ensuring that students are prepared to make safe, informed, and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This is delivered in a factual way, providing a balanced and objective view, and allowing scope for students to discuss misconceptions and misinformation in a safe environment.

Equal opportunities

In acknowledging the 2010 Equality Act, all students and staff have a right to be treated with respect and sensitivity, and to have access to opportunities regardless of their gender, race, religion, sexuality or any disability.

All staff delivering the RSE curriculum have a responsibility to support the development of a sense of justice and tolerance in young people in line with British Values and with the law. Expressions of prejudice, with or without the intention to offend, are a form of abuse that will not be tolerated. All staff will refrain from portraying any views that may be deemed discriminatory, including those of misogyny and attitudes to women, attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community, and attitudes towards sexual abuse. Any incidents of discrimination or abuse should be reported immediately to a member of the SLT.

Curriculum Overview

The RSE programme is securely embedded in the PSHE curriculum and is part of every student's learning. The curriculum demonstrates progression and is supported by Brook and other outside agencies.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9) are taught RSE within the PSHE curriculum, currently delivered during one timetabled lesson each fortnight, covering nineteen lessons across the academic year. Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) are taught RSE through a range of methods including form time, drop-down days, and stand-alone sex education sessions, which are delivered by trained BPS teachers and trained health professionals. RSE is also delivered within topics on health and in conjunction with Brook, Response and other agencies as appropriate. Other aspects of RSE are taught across the curriculum, ensuring that all aspects of the curriculum are fully embedded in a variety of subject areas.

As well as provision for all students in a year group, there are additional targeted approaches when necessary. Students may be carefully selected by Pastoral Leaders, Year Leaders, and the Safeguarding Team to attend bespoke workshops targeted to their needs.

Children with SEND in KS3 attend the timetabled RSE/PSHE lessons and teachers will adapt the curriculum according to their needs so that they can access the lessons successfully. Similar personalised learning is also put in place for students with physical and medical impairment.

In addition to timetabled PSHE lessons and work covered in other subject areas, assemblies and training sessions inform students of further support services available to them. This includes resources such as the Kooth online counselling website, as well as the opportunity to access the well-established 'Health Services in Schools' provision within school.

Delivery of RSE

The PSHE/RSE Curriculum Leader ensures all staff are provided with engaging lesson plans and resources. They organise training for staff and monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the lessons. Curriculum documents for RSE include a five-year overview and rationale, agreed end points, learning calendars, and granular planning.

Lesson Planning

All RSE lessons are fully aligned to the school's curriculum overview and lesson structures focus on our school priorities. Do now tasks, WOW words, homework and our teaching and learning priorities are evident in lessons. Students are provided with a range of opportunities to learn, practice and improve skills, and develop their attitudes and knowledge. Though statutory assessment is not explicit through PSHE/RSE, teaching staff may use formative assessment opportunities through LSQs and discussions, and use responsive teaching to address any misconceptions.

There is a dedicated specialist responsible for ordering and organising the lesson resources for PSHE/RSE. All resources support the values and aims of the RSE programme. They contribute to a broad, balanced curriculum, conform to the legal requirements of RSE, and are appropriate to students' needs. Resources are carefully selected, factoring in students' age and literacy levels, in order to ensure content is appropriate to the student cohorts.

Teaching staff ensure that the learning experiences meet the needs of all students in the group and that teaching assistants are deployed effectively. Learning calendars are provided for each topic and activities are well designed to help students achieve the lesson objectives and outcomes.

Teaching and Learning strategies

Young people need to feel safe and relaxed about discussing issues relating to relationships and sex, and it is important that we create the right environment for this to be achieved. Teachers have to be confident and comfortable with the lesson content. The classroom environment will be maintained to the highest standards and teachers will create a supportive and secure environment when delivering RSE. Teachers will ensure that content is delivered in a sensitive way, model positive attitudes, monitor progress, and respond to the needs of individual students.

Staff are encouraged to use a range of strategies to help young people think through and openly discuss their ideas, thoughts and feelings. These strategies may include:

Ground Rules

These are created and agreed by the teacher and students, and are used to secure a safe learning environment where students know their views will be respected and that they will be listened to. They will feel able to ask questions and know that they will be taken seriously. Students are also informed of where they can seek additional reliable support or information, whether that be online or through external organisations.

Distancing Techniques

Students can project their personal experiences into fictitious and invented case studies and scenarios, allowing them to express their opinions and emotions on a topic without divulging their specific personal information. This allows students to explore a range of possible outcomes in a secure and risk-free environment.

Responding to Questions

Establishing clear boundaries of what is acceptable and unacceptable in a lesson minimises unexpected questions or comments from students, but there will inevitably be occasions when something unexpected occurs. If a student asks a personal question, the teacher will remind them that this is inappropriate.

If a question from a student demonstrates inappropriate levels of knowledge, or raises concerns about any safeguarding issue, it is important that the teacher talks with the student individually later on. If the teacher still has concerns after this discussion, the school's safeguarding procedures must be followed.

Discussion

Small groups or pairs are useful for RSE discussions as students are often more likely to talk in this setting rather than to a whole class. If an activity includes a report back to the whole class, the opinions presented can be de-personalised.

Reflection and Feedback

Students need to be given time to reflect on their progress during RSE lessons and it is crucial that they receive feedback from the teacher so that they know how they are progressing and what they need to do to make further progress.

Single Sex Grouping

This is usually used in small group sessions and in other workshops run by external providers such as Brook.

Additional Information

Confidentiality

It is not possible for any member of staff to offer unconditional confidentiality to any young person. All concerns about safety of students must be considered within safeguarding procedures and any concerns passed on to the school's DSL.

Local Health Services

Local health services and contraception are covered in Years 8 and above, both within the PSHE programme and during the personal health events. Students are informed of how to access local health services for confidential health advice, where they may be signposted to services such as Brook, GUM Clinic at Arrowe Park, and Health Services in Schools.

Outside visitors

Visitors make a significant positive contribution to learning in RSE. When seeking the expertise from outside agencies, BPS will only use those partners with full accreditation to provide such sessions. Input from these organisations will be discussed in the planning stage of a session, with a clear statement of learning objectives that are fully approved by the school. They are informed where their input fits into the curriculum and are informed about the school's confidentiality policy and safeguarding procedures prior to their session.

Staff Development and Training

Appropriate training and development will be made available to all staff teaching RSE.

Curriculum Monitoring and Evaluation

The SLT PSHE/RSE leader is responsible for reviewing and evaluating the RSE programme through work scrutiny, learning walks, and student council meetings. These approaches to monitoring will allow us to assess the overall effectiveness of the RSE curriculum on an ongoing basis. Staff feedback is requested on the effectiveness of the schemes of work, and students are consulted on their views using a number of different activities and resources.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SLT and the Local Governing Body.

Right to withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE until three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn from the provision, the school will make arrangements to support this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form in this policy and addressed to the Headteacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed on the student's educational record. The Pastoral Leader will discuss the request with parents on behalf of the Headteacher and take appropriate action. The signed withdrawal form will be recorded on SIMS and staff will be notified accordingly. Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

Parent form: Withdrawal from Sex Education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/ CARER			
Name of child		Year group/ 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 SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	
Staff signature	