



## Relationships & Sexual Health Education Policy

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An academy within:



“Learning together, to be the best we can be”



# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Relationships and Sexual Health Education (RSHE) is lifelong learning about physical, moral and mental development. It is about the understanding of the importance of family life, as well as other stable and loving relationships, based on respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills, and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.
- 1.2. 'Effective relationships and sexual health education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. It should not be delivered in isolation. It should be firmly rooted within the framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) .....' DfE 0116/2000
- 1.3. Relationships and Sexual Health Education is a statutory part of the framework of PSHE across the four key stages. In our school, PSHE is delivered alongside Personal and Social Development and other life skills through weekly Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) lessons.
- 1.4. High quality RSE helps create safe school communities in which pupils can grow, learn and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life. It is essential for the following reasons:
  - Children and young people have a right to good quality education, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
  - Children and young people want to be prepared for the physical and emotional changes they undergo at puberty, and young people want to learn about relationships. Ofsted reinforced this in their 2013 Not Yet Good Enough report.
  - RSE plays a vital part in meeting schools' safeguarding obligations. Ofsted is clear that schools have a preventative programme that enables pupils to learn about safety and risks in relationships.
  - Schools maintain a statutory obligation under the Children Act (2004) to promote their pupils' wellbeing, and under the Education Act (1996) to prepare children and young people for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life. A comprehensive SRE programme can have a positive impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and their ability to achieve, and can play a crucial part in meeting these obligations.
  - The Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 made under sections 34 and 35 of the children's and social work act 2017, make relationship education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in all except independent schools. PSHE continues to be compulsory in independent schools.



- 1.5. Comprehensive relationships and sexual health education, taught as part of the overall framework for PSHE, in a safe environment, fosters self-esteem, self-awareness, a sense of moral responsibility and the confidence and ability to resist abuse (including teenage abusive relationships) exploitation (including on-line exploitation) and unwanted sexual experience (including a sound understanding of consent)
- 1.6. A comprehensive programme of RSE provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex and sexual health. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and off line.
- 1.7. Aligning with Ofsted's recent 'Review of Sexual abuse in Schools and Colleges (June 2021), The Willows RSHE provides a programme of study that makes it clear that sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence (including sexualised language) is unacceptable, and children are made aware of the sanctions that are in place.
- 1.8. The school recognises that relationships and sexual health education is for all pupils in the school, taking into account all of their needs e.g. gender, religion, sexual orientation, special educational needs, maturity, ability etc.

## 2. Aims & Objectives Of RSHE

### 2.1. Aims

- 2.1.1. To contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, emotional and physical development of pupils at school and to prepare pupils for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

### 2.2. Objectives

- To develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships.
- To develop the ability to name parts of the body correctly and understand how bodies work.
- To prepare pupils for puberty.
- To develop positive attitudes and explore and clarify values
- To help and support young people through their physical, emotional, social and moral development and help deal with difficult social and moral issues.
- To understand how babies are conceived and born.
- To develop self-esteem and self-confidence.
- To teach about relationships, love and care, and the responsibilities of parenthood.
- To help children develop skills to enable them to understand difference,



respect themselves and others and for the purpose also of removing prejudice.

- To help young people move with confidence from childhood to adolescence into adulthood.
- To help pupils develop the skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy and independent lives and cope with relationships and sexual situations including on-line situations.
- To give young people a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity, resisting pressure and linking these with issues of other risk-taking behaviour.
- To ensure young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships
- To teach the taking on of responsibility and the consequences of one's actions in relation to sexual activity and parenthood.
- To provide young people with information about different types of contraception, safer sex and how they can access local sources of further advice and treatment.
- To make children aware that sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence (including sexualised language) is unacceptable.

### 3. Planning & Delivery

- 3.1. The relationships and sexual health education at this school is firmly embedded in the PfA scheme of work and will help children learn to respect themselves and others, and move with confidence from childhood, through puberty and into adolescence.
- 3.2. The school utilises a scheme of work developed through the PSHE Association for KS2-5. The issues outlined in this policy arise in many different areas of the curriculum, but the main focus of the work is covered in PfA and science.
- 3.3. The school believes that the responsibility for planning and delivering this area of the curriculum lies with the PfA subject lead and teaching staff. RSE is taught by classroom teachers, supported by support staff and visiting speakers e.g. school nurse.
- 3.4. For more details on what is taught in each year please see the school's schemes of work.
- 3.5. It is recognised that some staff may find it uncomfortable, and may lack confidence when delivering sensitive issues. If this is the case, every effort will be made to provide support, either with resource materials, training or in the classroom.
- 3.6. Training for those delivering this area of work is offered via the Rotherham Healthy Schools Team, and staff will be given the opportunity to access it where appropriate.
- 3.7. It is recognised that there may be occasions when it is felt more appropriate to deliver aspects of the work in single gender groups and this is in line with



Government guidance (0116/2000). The same curricular content will be delivered to both boys and girls when this occurs.

- 3.8. The school's schemes of work developed through the PSHE Association use a wide range of resources and these are constantly being reviewed and updated.
- 3.9. Parents are welcome to view the schemes of work and any resources used and to discuss their use with the teaching staff.
- 3.10. Staff use a wide variety of resources including external agencies e.g.
- Theatre in Education performances
  - School Nurse
  - STIs, GU Medicine, Rotherham hospital
- 3.11. A list of resources in school is found on Teachers Shared / PSHE and Assessment / PSHE Resources / PSHE Inventory
- 3.12. A variety of teaching strategies is used in this area of the curriculum. This includes circle time, group work, role play, discussion, pair work, individual work, reflection, film clips, ICT, use of story/picture books, etc.
- 3.13. RSE is monitored through inspection of teachers' short term and medium term planning and classroom observations and it is evaluated through discussion with teachers, support staff, pupils and parents by using evaluation feedback sheets.
- 3.14. This area of the curriculum is constantly under review as a result of feedback from pupils and staff involved in the teaching.
- 3.15. There is recognition within the school that there are different values, arising not only from religion, but also from social circumstances and upbringing. Teachers need to be sensitive to these issues, and take into account a variety of different value bases when planning and delivering this programme of work.

## 4. Values Framework

- 4.1. Relationships and sexual health education is supported by the school's wider curriculum for PFA. In this way the school can ensure that pupils:
- Receive their sex and relationships education in the wider context of relationships; and
  - Are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- 4.2. The school believes that relationship and sexual health education:
- Is an integral part of a lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood



and continuing into adult life.

- Is an entitlement for all children irrespective of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, special needs, culture, faith or religious tradition.
- Should foster self-esteem, self-awareness, a sense of moral responsibility, and the confidence and ability to resist unwanted sexual experience, exploitation and abuse (including on-line).
- Should be mindful of children's earlier experiences.
- Should provide consistent messages.
- Should be continuous and progressive.
- Should support children as they move from childhood through puberty to adolescence and into adulthood.
- Should provide opportunity for discussion and clarification around values and attitudes.
- Should provide accurate, unbiased information.

4.3. Teachers and all those contributing to sex and relationships education must work within this agreed values framework, which is in line with current legislation and Government guidance.

4.4. The underlying values which underpin the whole of this work are based on respect for others, the development of positive relationships, and personal choice. The right of young people to have balanced, factual information and the need to have an opportunity to discuss issues in a safe and supportive environment are the cornerstones to the programme.

4.5. It is hoped that our comprehensive programme of RSHE will promote self-esteem and emotional well-being and will help pupils to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the community.

4.6. It will meet the needs of everyone; boys as well as girls, those with physical, learning or emotional disabilities, those with a religious or faith tradition, whatever their culture and whatever their developing sexuality.

4.7. RSHE is delivered in a safe, supportive environment where pupils feel able to discuss sensitive issues in an honest, open forum. When dealing with questions teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Questions which pupils ask will be answered honestly and openly in line with the school's aim of giving knowledge and information appropriate to the developmental age of the pupil, and in line with DfE Guidance 0116/2000 (See Section 5 – Guidance for teachers.)

## 5. Guidance For Teachers

5.1. (In light of DfE guidance 0116/2000) The school must make sure that the needs of all pupils are met. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that RSHE is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. Teachers can and



should deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support.

- 5.2. The issue of sexual orientation is one that will feature in discussions about sexuality. When it does arise, teachers should deal with the subject honestly and sensitively, giving objective information, allowing balanced discussion, and challenging homophobic comments. They should answer appropriate questions and offer support.
- 5.3. Teachers need to be aware that effective RSHE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection/safeguarding issue specifically including incidents of sexual abuse between Children and Young People.
- 5.4. Staff should follow the school's child protection procedures, should this arise, and liaise with the designated teacher for child protection/safeguarding lead.
- 5.5. It is important to ensure that pupils know that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. However pupils may need information and support, and so teachers should signpost them to agencies where they can obtain it.

### Contraception

- 5.6. Teachers should give young people full information about different types of contraception and their effectiveness, including emergency contraception. Pupils may wish to raise further issues with staff arising from discussions in the classroom. Teachers can also give pupils, individually or as a class, additional information and guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling, and, where necessary, treatment. Teachers cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality.

### Safer sex, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

- 5.7. Since 1995 there have been significant increases in the numbers of diagnoses of genital chlamydial infection, genital warts and gonorrhoea and there is evidence to suggest that young people are becoming complacent about HIV, despite the fact that it remains a significant health risk. For these reasons teaching about safer sex remains one of the Government's key strategies for reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS and STIs.

### Teaching Strategies

- 5.8. A variety of teaching strategies should be used to enhance this area of work. These should include the early setting of ground rules, the use of distancing techniques, pre-arranged ways of dealing with questions and time for reflection. Use of such strategies will create a safe learning environment for staff and pupils alike.



5.9. There are 3 elements of good relationships and sexual health education and these are interdependent. They are:

- Values, attitudes and beliefs;
- Personal and social skills; and
- Acquiring and understanding accurate, unbiased knowledge.

5.10. Knowledge alone will not promote sexual and emotional health and well-being. A proper consideration of values, attitudes and beliefs is closely related to the development of personal and social skills and to acquiring and understanding accurate information.

5.11. Within the context of talking about relationships, pupils will be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and the bringing up of children, but will understand that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside of marriage. They will have the opportunity to talk about feelings, values and attitudes, and will learn how to have respect for themselves and others, and how to understand and appreciate difference.

5.12. It is important that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of relationship and sexual health education within the PfA scheme of work. Teachers and all those contributing to relationship and sexual health education must work within an agreed values framework as described in the school's policy, which is in line with current legislation and government guidance.

5.13. It is acknowledged that relationship and sexual health education deals with some very sensitive issues but the following points are very important:

- Correct terminology should be used when naming body parts, whilst recognising that there are 'pet' or 'family' words that may be used at home.
- Both boys and girls will need to be prepared for puberty before the onset of puberty. The issue of masturbation may arise. Appropriate questions will be answered honestly and openly, but whether this is in front of a class or on an individual basis will be decided dependent on the situation.
- Information and knowledge about HIV/AIDS is vital.
- Young people need to understand what is risky behaviour and what is not, both on and off line.
- Relationships and sexual health education should inform young people about condom use and safer sex in general.
- Young people need skills to enable them to avoid being pressurised into unwanted or unprotected sex (linking to issues of peer pressure and other risk taking behaviour such as drugs and alcohol).
- Young people need factual information about safer sex and skills to enable them to negotiate safer sex.
- Young people need to be aware of the risks of contracting an STI and how to prevent it.

5.14. Young people need to be given the opportunity to explore:





- The dimension of 'power' in relationships to be able to recognise a relationship may be/become an abusive one where there is an imbalance of power.
- Elements of positive and negative behaviours in relationships including in
- teenage relationships
- What it means both to 'get' and 'give' consent

5.15. Although the emphasis should be on prevention of infection, through delaying sexual activity and teaching the reasons for safer sex, pupils also need to know about diagnosis and treatment.

### Abortion

5.16. Young people will be given the opportunity to explore the dilemmas, enabling them to know and understand about abortion, and develop the communication skills to discuss it with parents and health professionals.

## 6. Parental Rights

- 6.1. The school believes that relationships and sexual health education is the right of every pupil and encourages active participation and involvement in the curriculum. However, parents do have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the programme.
- 6.2. It is possible that the teaching of apparently unrelated topics will occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour outside of the 'taught' course. Provided that such discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the subject concerned, it will not necessarily constitute part of 'relationships and sexual health education'. In such a case, particularly where it involves pupils whose parents have asked for them to be withdrawn, teachers will need to balance the need to give proper attention to relative issues.