



Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Approved by Governors: Summer 2024
Next review: 3 yearly

RSE Principles

RSE is not just about learning about growing up, changes and reproduction. It is lifelong learning and not a promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity. It is also about enabling children to make and maintain safe, respected, stable and healthy relationships with others and to feel good about themselves and the choices they make. This involves helping children to gain knowledge, develop skills and form positive beliefs and attitudes. It is about their here and now and about their future.

The DfE has stated as part of its curriculum guidance that: "All schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic educations (PSHE), drawing on good practice" and "RSE education should be firmly rooted in the framework for PSHE".

"The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education... They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) continues to be compulsory in independent schools."
DfE Guidance 2019

The focus in primary school should be on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.

This starts with pupils being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. From the beginning of primary school, building on early education, pupils should be taught how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy. Establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact – these are the forerunners of teaching about consent, which takes place at secondary.

The principles of positive relationships also apply online especially as, by the end of primary school, many children will already be using the internet. When teaching relationships content, teachers should address online safety and appropriate behaviour in a way that is relevant to pupils' lives.

RSE is essential because:

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ RSE plays a vital part in meeting schools' safeguarding obligations. Ofsted is clear that schools must have a preventative programme that enables pupils to learn about safety and risks in relationships.
- ✓ 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. Older pupils frequently say that sex and relationships education was 'too little, too late and too biological'. Ofsted reinforced this in their 2013 Not Yet Good Enough report.
- ✓ 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 RSE 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.

Curriculum Intentions

There are six main elements to our RSE programme:

- Gaining knowledge and understanding
- Developing positive attitudes and values
- Keeping children safe
- Ensuring all children feel included
- Extending personal and social skills
- Upholding the school's duty to uphold the Public Sector Equality Duty

At Commonswood Primary and Nursery School, we have a commitment to ensure that our programme is relevant to all pupils and is taught in a way that is age and stage appropriate. Our objectives are:

- To enable our pupils to make responsible, informed and healthy decisions about their lives, both now and in the future.
- To teach our pupils to respect themselves and others so they can move confidently from childhood through to adolescence and into adulthood.
- To provide a supportive learning environment in which pupils can develop their feelings of self-worth and confidence, especially in relationship to others.

Values & Attitudes

Because of the personal and social nature of the topics covered in RSE, values and attitudes are a central part of learning and moral development. There are clear values that underpin RSE including:

- development of confidence in talking and listening about feelings and relationships
- acceptance of diversity
- gender equality,
- that violence and coercion in relationships are unacceptable
- online risks that they may encounter outside school

RSE in the context of the National Curriculum legal requirements:

Schools have a statutory duty to teach the following as part of the Science National Curriculum:

Key Stage 1

Notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults.

Key Stage 2

Describe the differences in the life cycles of a mammal, an amphibian, an insect and a bird.

Describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals.

Describe the changes as humans develop to old age.

Recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child/children from these above aspects of the Science curriculum.

Compulsory aspects of RSE

All state-funded schools must have 'due regard' to the Secretary of State's guidance on SRE (DfEE, 2000). This states that:

- 'All children, including those who develop earlier than average, need to know about puberty before they experience the onset of physical changes' (1.13)
- Children should learn 'how a baby is conceived and born' before they leave primary school (1.16)

The Learning and Skills Act (2000) and the model funding agreements for academies and free schools require that state-funded schools ensure that within sex education children 'learn the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children', and 'are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate'. The guidance includes some specific information about meeting the needs of young people, whatever their sexuality, including boys and girls and those with special educational needs.

RSE Curriculum

RSE is part of a commitment to a whole school ethos where all members of the whole school community are valued and respected. We use the Jigsaw scheme of work which carefully links pupils' learning using themes throughout the year. All resources used in the classroom are recommended by Herts for Learning. The recommended vocabulary used for parts of the body is taken from these resources. In addition to the Science National Curriculum, RSE forms part of the PSHE National Curriculum. Puberty and Relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives therefore Puberty and Relationship education is embedded in both the PSHE and Science curriculum.

The main objective is to support and help children through their physical and emotional development. At Commonswood, links are made between curriculum areas and RSE may be taught in conjunction with other subjects as identified below:

EYFS

Children learn about the concept of male and female and about young animals. In ongoing PSHE work, they develop skills to form friendships and think about relationships with others.

Key Stage 1

Through work in science, children learn about the life cycles of some animals, understand the idea of growing from young to old and learn that all living things reproduce. They learn about the importance of personal hygiene to maintain good health. In RE, children reflect on family relationships, different family groups and friendship. They learn about rituals and traditions associated with birth, marriage and death and talk about the emotions involved. They begin to co-operate with others in work and play and begin to recognise the range of human emotions and ways to deal with them. They also learn about personal safety including online safety.

Key Stage 2

In science, children build on their knowledge of life cycles and learn about the basic biology of human reproduction. In RE, they continue to develop an understanding of relationships within a family, between friends and the community and that there are different patterns of friendship. They will develop skills needed to form relationships and to respect other people's emotions and feelings. They will consider how to make simple choices and exercise some basic techniques for resisting pressures.

Dealing with sensitive issues

Sometimes a child will ask an explicit or difficult question in the classroom. Questions do not have to be answered directly and can be addressed individually later or guidance will be given referencing future learning eg you will be learning more about that at secondary school. At Commonswood School, we believe that individual teachers must use their skills and discretion in these situations and refer to the subject leader, Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher if concerned. Question boxes may be used as a distancing technique.

Inclusion

To ensure that pupils of all abilities make worthwhile progress in lessons, teachers use a range of teaching styles in each lesson in order to match the range of learning styles represented in a typical class. All pupils cover the same core objectives. Teachers provide suitable ways for pupils of different abilities to access the lessons by increasing the degree of support, by using relevant resources, or by the use of other adults. The needs of the children are met through reasonable adjustments.

Equal Opportunities

The governors and staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all pupils, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background. All pupils have the right to access the full curriculum and learn in a safe environment which meets their needs.

Partnership with parents & carers

The school is committed to working with parents & carers. Under the Education Act pupils can be withdrawn by their parents from any part of sex education that is

outside the compulsory elements of the National Curriculum. If parents wish to withdraw their child/ren an appointment must be made with the Headteacher to discuss this in advance.

Parents will receive prior notification of the RSE Programme to enable them to discuss issues with staff or their own children. The RSE curriculum is available on the school's website.

The subject leader will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the policy, co-ordinating the programme of work and monitoring its success with staff and children. The senior leadership team including Governors monitor the implementation of the policy within the monitoring cycle.

- The RSE Programme will cover aspects of personal hygiene, puberty, menstruation, conception, pregnancy and birth.
- The children will be taught in both single and mixed gender groups as appropriate.
- Every child – including those with protected characteristics (see Equality Scheme) is entitled to receive RSE. Needs of all children are met through reasonable adjustments.
- Teachers will endeavour to answer questions as honestly as possible but questions they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom or ones which are not age appropriate and beyond the Key Stage 2 objectives, will not be answered or explored and referred to parents if necessary.

Child Protection and confidentiality

Teachers are clear about their legal and professional roles regarding confidentiality. Children are told that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and also that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and supported appropriately. If a teacher is concerned about possible sexual abuse or the sexual activities of a child, the schools' child protection procedures will be followed.

This is in line with the Child Protection policy.

LINK DOCUMENTS/POLICIES

Aims and Values

Assessment and Feedback policy

Behaviour and Anti-bullying

Child Protection policy

Curriculum overviews for parents found on the school's website

Equality Scheme

SEND policy and Code of Practice

PSHE curriculum

Science curriculum

Keeping Children Safe in Education

DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) & Health Education statutory guidance for Governing Bodies, headteachers, senior leadership teams and teachers

PSHE Association Programme of Study

NAHT -The link between pupil wellbeing and attainment

Public Health England

Appendix 1 Scheme of work