

# HINCHINGBROOKE SCHOOL

*Inspiring Excellence Fulfilling Potential Developing Character*



Policy Statement  
on

## RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

Revised	Annually
Approved by Governing Body	March 2021

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# 1 Context

## 1.1 Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in our school

In our school, RSE enables young people to learn about emotional, social and physical aspects of their lives, about themselves and their relationships. It enables young people to develop essential life skills for building and maintaining positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships. It equips them with information and skills they need to understand themselves, their peers and people they meet in the wider community. It explores risks, choices, rights, responsibilities and attitudes. It will help students to develop skills to keep themselves and others safer, physically and emotionally, both on and off line. RSE enables young people to explore their own attitudes and those of others respectfully.

## 1.2 Context of Wider PSHCE

We deliver RSE as part of our wider provision of Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE), which also includes statutory Health Education. Other areas of our work, such as teaching about fundamental British Values, are also relevant to our teaching in RSE.

The aims of RSE are further supported by interventions, extracurricular and enrichment activities we provide. For example, our pastoral support provision and the extra-curricular provision we offer. We understand that our school environment must complement our RSE curriculum provision for it to positively affect students' behaviour and attitudes. We endeavour to ensure that all adults in schools act as positive role models for our students. All will take steps to ensure that our responses to homophobia, transphobia, sexism, sexual harassment and associated behaviour issues are addressed consistently, in line with our Behaviour Policy and Anti-bullying Policy. We carry out activities to improve or reflect on our school environment in relation to the experience of students, using student surveys and pupil voice activities.

## 1.3 Aims of RSE

Through the delivery of RSE we intend to further our school's aims of providing a curriculum which is relevant to the needs of pupils, both now and in the future. It will enable pupils to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes which enhance their personal development and wellbeing. This will have a direct, positive effect on their progress and achievement in school.

All adults in school will work towards achieving these aims for RSE. We seek to enable our students to:

- develop interpersonal and communication skills to support them when relationships are good or when they are difficult
- respect themselves and others, their views, backgrounds, cultures and experiences
- promote equality and respect in their own peer groups, both on and offline, reducing prejudice and challenging stereotypes and harassment
- develop skills for healthy relationships based on mutual respect, trust and positive communication
- understand the role of sex in intimate relationships and strategies for considering readiness for sex
- be prepared for puberty, understand the emotional, physical and social effects of adolescent development and support others
- develop the attitudes and skills needed to understand their sexuality, sustain healthy intimate relationships, should they choose them, and maintain their sexual health

- explore the positive implications of new technologies for relationships and understand safety and privacy
- develop critical, media literacy skills, enabling them to reflect on relationships and sex portrayed in the media, including in pornography
- recognise and avoid exploitative, coercive and controlling relationships, including intimate relationships
- explore and confidently discuss issues and develop skills associated with consent in different relationships
- explore their own values and attitudes towards gender identity and sexism, sexuality and homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviours
- understand about safer sex, including contraception and the prevention of STIs, for people of all sexualities
- have the skills and knowledge to access advice and support from local and national services, on and offline.

## 2. Implementing Our Policy

### 2.1 Inclusion

In relation to those with special educational needs or disability, we ensure our RSE programme provides for those with additional needs. We recognise that those with SEND are often more vulnerable to sexual harassment and abuse and that we need to ensure that children are supported to develop appropriate strategies and attitudes to keep themselves safer. We understand that students with SEND have as much right to receive the whole RSE curriculum as other students. We consider:

- their level of vulnerability to coercion and pressure
- their previous experience of negative behaviours in peer or child-adult relationships
- their need to learn and demonstrate appropriate behaviours and understand private/public boundaries
- their need to develop self-esteem and positive body image
- the need to involve all staff, including ancillary staff and parents/carers, in policy development, planning and training
- the management of personal care
- clarity about sources of support for pupils.

### 2.2 Equality

The [Equality Act 2010](#) has special resonance in RSE. Through this area of learning we seek to develop key interpersonal skills such as respect and empathy, which enable students to understand the rights and responsibilities we all have towards one another. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Also relevant here is our duty to teach Fundamental British Values, which include individual liberty, mutual respect and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs.

We will ensure that our provision of RSE is not only equally accessible and inclusive for all students with protected characteristics, or who have family members with protected characteristics, but also that it reduces discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and encourages good relations between different groups.

In order to ensure that RSE meets the needs of all:

- We will reflect a range of lifestyles and family structures, in PSHCE lessons and beyond, so that all pupils see themselves and their families reflected back in the lesson content.
- We will teach about RSE themes in a way which is relevant to all, using examples of a variety of sexualities, gender identities, lifestyles and faith backgrounds.
- We will ensure that the law in relation to, for example, marriage, online behaviours, sexuality, gender and violence are explained in age-appropriate ways.
- Where there are different cultural or religious views about families, relationships or behaviours, we will share these to ensure children see their family views represented.
- We will carefully consider the needs of non-binary students (i.e. those who do not identify as being either male or female), to ensure their needs are being met by the curriculum provision and our methods of delivery.
- We will not seek to gain consensus, but will respectfully listen, accept and celebrate difference.
- To ensure that students of all genders can access the information they need, to reduce taboos and to develop positive communication skills between genders, we will teach in mixed gender groups wherever possible.
- All adults in school will encourage respect and discourage abusive and exploitative relationships of any sort.
- We will not ask students to represent the views of a particular religious or cultural group to their peers, unless they choose to do so.

We support children in developing their knowledge about and attitudes towards diversity throughout units of work on *'Healthy Relationships'*, *'Human Rights'*, *'Family Life'* and other areas of our PSHCE and SMSC curriculum.

## 2.3 Safeguarding

We understand the importance of high quality RSE as we fulfil our statutory safeguarding duties. RSE enables students to understand about mutual, consensual and reciprocated relationships in all their forms. Whether students are learning about friendships, families, relationships in school or the wider community, they will be developing essential skills which underpin their ability to recognise abusive relationships. Teaching about *'Healthy Relationships'* and *'Anti-bullying'* supports us in fulfilling our statutory duty (as described in KCSIE) to prevent *'peer-on-peer'* abuse.

In the case of RSE, we recognise that effective teaching may alert students to what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour (including inappropriate sexual behaviour) and that there is an increased possibility that a disclosure relating to abuse may be made. Teaching RSE supports us in fulfilling our duty to prevent Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). *All staff are aware of the Safeguarding Policy and procedures and will report disclosures or concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.*

## 2.4 Consulting and developing our Policy

Before consultation activities, parents/carers, students and other stakeholders were given information about RSE and associated duties in accessible formats. They were asked for their views about appropriate ages for particular topics, to share relevant views and beliefs and to consider the suitability of the school's aims for RSE.

Parents/carers and students have been consulted directly through surveys and student voice activities.

Further consultation with parents/carers and students will be carried out when the policy is reviewed, which happens at least every 3 years.

## 3. Involving the Whole School Community

### 3.1 Working with Staff

Teaching RSE can be very rewarding, but we understand that, to feel confident, staff need opportunities to develop their own knowledge, skills and attitudes. We recognise that every adult has different personal beliefs and attitudes, but that all teachers must understand and comply with their statutory duties connected with safeguarding, teaching statutory content, equality and inclusion.

Teachers responsible for delivering RSE have a duty to deliver statutory areas of the curriculum and will be supported to develop their skills in delivering content. We will discuss relevant issues and staff concerns and, where appropriate, arrange training to enable staff members to feel confident in delivering the various aspects of RSE. We will also encourage the sharing of good practice. We may also use team teaching/shadowing to develop confidence.

Those with leadership responsibility for the development of RSE will be offered opportunities to consult with advisors and attend external training courses.

### 3.2 Engaging with Students

In planning our curriculum we have drawn on relevant guidance for what is age appropriate and responded to student's needs identified as in our school. Throughout, students will consider the skills they need to develop to sustain healthy relationships, including intimate relationships, both on and off line. They will consider the physical aspects of intimate relationships, their emotions and how to manage them, and social aspects, such as positive and negative influences from friends. We will use a variety of teaching methods relevant to the needs of our students in RSE.

### 3.3 Working with Governors

This policy has been developed with governor involvement, so that the governors are able to fulfil their statutory duties relating to RSE policy. It is the responsibility of the governors to ensure, through consultation, that the RSE Policy reflects the needs and views of our community.

In order to facilitate this process, the RSE Policy and delivery of RSE in the curriculum will appear annually on the governors' meeting schedule for discussion and update. The policy will be available on the school's website. A link governor for SMSC is identified.

It is the role of governors to ensure that:

- students make progress in RSE in line with the expected educational outcomes
- the subject is well led, effectively managed and well planned
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation

- teaching is delivered in a way which is accessible to all
- clear information is given to parents/carers
- the subject is resourced and taught in a way which enables the school to fulfil statutory requirements.

### 3.4 Communicating with Parents/carers

Parents/carers are the first educators of their children about relationships, emotions, empathy, respect and growing up. We recognise that many young people like to receive information about relationships from their parents/carers in addition to their learning in school. We seek to work in partnership with parents/carers when planning and delivering RSE. We will encourage this partnership by:

- Sharing details of our curriculum on our website
- Informing parents/carers by newsletter or leaflet of forthcoming RSE topics
- Informing parents/carers about PSHCE/RSE programmes as their child joins the school through the school brochure/prospectus/website
- Providing supportive information about parents' role in RSE
- Signposting parents/carers to sources of support to help them address the needs of their child or build their own confidence in talking about relationships with their children.

### 3.5 Working with External Agencies and the Wider Community

We believe that all aspects of RSE are most effectively taught by those who know our students well and are aware of their needs. We encourage visitors to our school, who may enhance, but never replace, our planned provision. We recognise that inviting visitors from local services may increase the accessibility of services for students. We will work closely with visitors to ensure that the needs of our students are met. Visits will be agreed with the PSHCE Coordinator in advance. Any visitors will follow our safeguarding procedures.

## 4. Curriculum Organisation

Our RSE Curriculum (see appendix) is wholly consistent with the DfE statutory requirements for RSE and Health Education (2020), National Curriculum (2014), other DfE and OfSTED guidance. It also reflects best practice described by the Sex Education Forum and PSHE Association. We consider RSE to be a continuous process of learning, which begins before students enter our school and continues into adulthood. We have planned a curriculum appropriate to each age group with a spiral of progression.

RSE is learning about:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and Media
- Being Safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health

Our curriculum for PSHCE does not separate delivery of RSE from Health Education and wider PSHCE. We deliver content which, taking the lead from student's lived experiences and their needs, considers related themes including development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in an integrated

way. The topics where RSE is a significant driver are identified in the fourth half term of most year group curriculum.

- Self-esteem: types of relationships and changes.
- Safer Sex: Contraception negotiation and consent
- Safer sex: pregnancy and abortion
- Safety and Risk including STIs

RSE will be taught through:

- PSHCE through designated lessons with teaching by specialist teachers.
- PSHCE events in The Sixth Form.
- Other curriculum areas, especially Science, English, RPE and Computing
- Enrichment activities: especially our assembly and tutor time programme, pastoral provision, support for 'vulnerable' young people, social skills groups, involvement in school trips and adventurous activities, activities carried to support wellbeing in school, student LGBT+ groups.

The RSE curriculum will primarily be delivered by PSHE specialist teachers. Those delivering RSE will have responsibility for assessing students' needs and selecting appropriate activities and methodologies to meet these needs, supported by the PSHE Coordinator.

The PSHE Coordinator is responsible for reviewing and evaluating RSE. The PSHE Leader will report findings to the Senior Leadership Team and governors when required.

## 4.1 Teaching Methodologies

Our aim is that teachers use a range of teaching methodologies where skills such as communication, compromise and negotiation are practised in classroom situations and where attitudes such as respect and empathy are modelled and discussed. We encourage teachers to ensure that group work, debate, taking other people's viewpoints and working together are practised in all RSE lessons and across the wider curriculum. Our RSE lessons are not simple opportunities to give information, but to explore views and perspectives and develop possible solutions through discussion and interaction.

We understand that at times students will benefit from varying methods of delivering the RSE curriculum. For example, we may use single-gender groups or small group teaching where this will help us to meet the needs of particular students more effectively, we will use team teaching where this enables us to best use teacher expertise. We will ensure there are positive educational reasons for each method of delivery.

Single Gender groups: -We may use single-gender groups or small group teaching where this will help us to meet the needs of those with cultural, religious or other backgrounds which make it difficult for them to comfortably access the statutory curriculum in a mixed gender group. If we use single-gender groups we will encourage students to be part of which ever group most closely aligns



with their own gender identity. We will discuss the needs of those who view themselves as non-binary (i.e. those who do not identify as being either male or female) with each student, to ensure their needs are being met.

Group Agreements: RSE is taught in a safe, non-judgemental environment where adults and students are confident that they will be respected. Specific ground rules will be established at the beginning of any RSE work, in addition to those already used in the classroom. They will cover the following areas:

- Appropriate use of language
- The avoidance of sharing personal information and asking personal questions
- Confidentiality
- Strategies for checking or accessing information, and identifying appropriate people with whom they may wish to share personal information/from whom they may wish to seek advice

Distancing Techniques: In order to protect student's privacy, we will employ teaching and learning strategies which enable them to discuss issues without disclosing personal experience. For example, we will use fiction, poetry, case studies, role-play, film, theatre in education to enable children to share ideas and opinions and to practise their decision-making skills in a safe learning environment.

## 4.2 Curriculum Materials and Resources

We will draw on a range of PSHE Association approved frameworks and resources for RSE, with close reference to the *Cambridgeshire Secondary Personal Development Framework*. We will avoid a 'resource-led' approach, instead focussing on the needs of the children and our planned learning objectives. We will carefully select resources which meet these objectives. We will evaluate teaching resources thoroughly before using them. We will select resources which:

- are consistent with our curriculum for RSE
- relate to the aims and objectives of this policy
- are inclusive of LGBT+ students and provide a balanced view of sexual relationships
- are suitable to the age, maturity, needs, linguistic proficiency and ability of the students
- appeal to adults and students
- are up to date in factual content and outlook
- are produced by a reputable organisation
- do not show bias e.g. towards a commercial product or religious/political view
- avoid racial, gender and sexual stereotyping
- encourage active and participative learning, developing skills and attitudes, not just giving information
- conform to the statutory requirements for RSE.

## 4.3 Safe and Effective Practice

Our school Safeguarding Policy sets out our policy on confidentiality. This is shared with staff, students and parents/carers. This policy is communicated to parents/carers in the School brochure/website.

- Staff are unable to offer absolute confidentiality.
- We will reassure students that staff will act in their best interests and that this may involve sharing information if the student is at risk of harm.
- Students will be told if information is to be shared and will be offered appropriate support.
- There are circumstances when confidentiality may not be upheld e.g. when Female Genital Mutilation or Child Sexual Exploitation is suspected, where an adult and child are in a sexual relationship. See our Safeguarding Policy for further details.

Answering Questions: We acknowledge that sensitive and complex issues will arise in RSE, as students will naturally ask questions. When spontaneous discussion arises, it will be guided in a way which reflects the stated school aims and curriculum content for RSE. As a first principle, we will answer questions relating to the planned curriculum for that age group, or below, to the whole class. We will answer questions relating to areas beyond the planned curriculum for that age group, in a sensitive and age-appropriate way, only to the student/s who have asked the question. If a member of staff is uncertain about the answer to a question, or indeed whether they wish to answer it, they will seek guidance from the PSHE Coordinator.

When answering questions, we shall ensure that sharing personal information by adults, students or their families is discouraged. Where the question indicates the need for pastoral support, the conversation will be deferred to a time outside the teaching session and other colleagues may be involved. Where a question or comment from a pupil in the classroom indicates the possibility of abuse, coercion or sexual exploitation, teachers will pass this information to the DSL in line with school Safeguarding Policy.

Sexually Active Students: If a young person, especially one under 16, indicates to an adult that they are sexually active or contemplating sexual activity, we will act in the following ways:

- All young people will be urged in the first instance to talk to parents/carers or, in some cases, other trusted adults, and they will be offered guidance and support in doing this.
- We are not required to inform the young person's parent/carer about sexual activity, but will usually pass the information to the DSL, in case there are unknown, underlying risks to the young person.
- We will inform young people of where they can obtain confidential support and information e.g. from local sexual health services, in-school health services. We will make it clear that they do not need their parent/carer's agreement to attend these services.
- Students seeking support will be given clear information about where contraception and sexual health advice may be accessed. Students whose parents have withdrawn them from sex education will also be given this information if they seek it.
- Careful judgements will be made by the DSL as to whether the sexual activity is a safeguarding or child protection concern.

If the pupil is 12 years old or younger, sexual activity will always be referred to the DSL.

If the staff member has any concerns that an older student's sexual relationship may be ill-informed, non-consensual, coercive or exploitative they will log a concern according to our Safeguarding Policy and refer to the DSL.

#### 4.4 Assessment and Recording.

RSE will be assessed in a variety of ways, including the use of self-assessment and informal teacher assessment. Lessons at the beginning of topics will include formative assessment activities. From time to time the PSHCE leader will ask staff to reflect on the effectiveness of learning in particular units of work.

Students will use the PSHCE pages in their School Planner to record their evaluation for each of the units of work they study.

## 5. Sex Education

### 5.1 Our Definition of Sex Education

Following guidance from the DfE, we have considered the elements of our RSE curriculum from which parents may request to withdraw their child. These elements will be defined as ‘sex education’.

We recognise that most students will not differentiate between Science, RSE, ‘sex education’ or Health Education provision. This distinction is only necessary to enable parents to enact their right to withdraw their child from what our school defines as ‘sex education’.

We have consulted during this process with parents/carers, students, governors and community members.

As a starting point we have compared the statutory Science Curriculum with the statutory RSE curriculum and identified which topics appear in both. Any aspects of statutory RSE, appearing in the ‘Intimate and Sexual Relationships’ section, which are not included in Science were considered in this process.

We have also included aspects of human sexual experience and response, sexual feelings and choices and influences relating to sexual activity which we feel are important to meet the needs of our students in addition to the statutory requirements for RSE.

As a result, these are the areas of learning from the DfE Guidance which, in our school, are defined as ‘sex education’:

- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing **sexual pressure**, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
- that they have a choice to **delay** sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
- that there are **choices** in relation to **pregnancy** (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).
- how to get **further advice**, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

### 5.2 Delivery of the areas defined as ‘Sex Education’

‘Sex Education’ will be delivered as part of RSE/PSHCE. The content we have collectively defined as ‘sex education’ will not be taught as a separate subject, but it will be blocked into one theme to facilitate the right of parents to request withdrawal.

### 5.3 Right to be excused from Sex Education

Parent /carers have the right to request their child be excused from some or all the areas we have collectively defined as ‘sex education’ delivered as part of statutory RSE. It is the duty of the school to inform parents/carers of this right. Before granting any such request the Vice Principal will

discuss the request with parents/carers (and if appropriate with the student) to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The educational, social and emotional benefits for the student of being part of the lessons will also be discussed. We will record the discussion and the outcomes. If a pupil is excused from 'sex education', we will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

This decision will stand until three terms before the student turns 16. At this point, the student may request to receive 'sex education'. They will be entitled to receive the 'sex education' from which they were previously excused. The school will ensure that they receive this in at least one of the three terms before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. We will work closely with the student to ensure that their needs are fully met.

## 6. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Monitoring, review and evaluation of the policy is the responsibility of the PSHCE Coordinator. The governing body will ask for information relating to the effectiveness of the policy when it is monitored every year. Information will be gathered from the Senior Leadership, the PSHCE Coordinator, PSHCE teachers, pupils and parents/carers to inform judgements about effectiveness.

The planned format for the evaluation and monitoring is the following:

Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and student progress	Knowledge and progress review activities planned within PSHCE lesson resources. Termly learning walks and drops-ins in line with school policy.
Pupil attitudes towards PSHCE and health	Whole school survey – annually or as needed. Subject specific survey - annually National Health Related Behaviour Survey (SHEU) – biannually (delayed due to COVID)
Parent/carer communication and consultation	An annual survey and opportunity to share information with parents.

Findings and actions taken as a result of these monitoring and evaluation activities will be shared with the relevant groups: pupils, parents/carers, senior leadership and the governing body.

The policy will be comprehensively reviewed with engagement from members of the school community every three years, or sooner if an issue occurs which warrants it.

## 7 Documents and Sources of Guidance.

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers 2020.  
RSE and Health Education
- Sex Education Forum – Supplementary Guidance 2014.  
Sex and Relationships Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- Equality Act 2010

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Cathy Murphy, PSHE Lead Advisor, Cambridgeshire PSHE Service
- PSHE Association [www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk)