



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

RELATIONSHIP & SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Contents

Page Number

1. Introduction & Purpose
Definition
Legislation
2. Equality
3. Policy Statement
4. Implementation
Curriculum Content
5. Role of Parent & Carers
6. Child Protection & Safeguarding
Training
Monitoring & Compliance

Our Relationship & Sex Education policy has been written and approved by a team with a range of experience, and will be reviewed every 2 years.

Previous Review Date: August 2021

Next Review Date: August 2023

1 INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Learning Opportunities RSE policy outlines the legal framework around relationships and sex education for secondary school students and explains how the curriculum content will be determined and quality assured.

This policy helps ensure that the whole school community (students, parents/carers, and staff) have a shared understanding of this important area of the curriculum. It is accessible to all stakeholders on the school website or by request.

This is a working document which provides guidance and information on all aspects of RSE and aims to provide a secure framework within which staff can work.

1.1. Relationships and sex education is giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed. Health Education is teaching students about physical health and mental wellbeing (and that they are interlinked) to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. It should enable them to recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others and, when issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

1.2. Relationships and sex education (hereafter to include health education) is a key part of helping children and young people to stay safe and be well-prepared for life in modern Britain. This policy outlines the legal framework around relationship education for secondary school students, how the curriculum is planned and quality checked and confirmation that from September 2020 pupils cannot be withdrawn from these lessons by their parents.

2 DEFINITION

2.1 Relationships and Sex education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Some aspects are taught in science, and others are taught as part of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE).

2.2 A comprehensive programme of RSE provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex, and sexual health. It also gives students essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline.

3 LEGISLATION

3.1. The legal framework and guidance came into effect from September 2019 and is an amendment to the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Section 34 states:

- Relationships education to be provided to pupils of compulsory school age receiving primary education at schools in England

- Relationships and sex education to be provided (instead of sex education) to pupils receiving secondary education at schools in England.

3.2. The regulations state:

- Schools must make statements of policy in relation to the education to be provided, and to make the statements available to parents or other persons;
- The circumstances in which a student (or a student below a specified age) is to be excused from receiving relationships and sex education or specified elements of that education.

When relationships education or relationships and sex education is given, the pupils learn about:

- Safety in forming and maintaining relationships;
- The characteristics of healthy relationships, and,
- How relationships may affect physical and mental health and well-being.

3.3. The education is appropriate having regard to the age and the religious background of the students.

3.4. Schools must also have regard to the statutory guidance 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE).

- Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all students. This is particularly important when planning teaching for students with special needs and disabilities. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility.
- Schools will retain freedom to determine an age-appropriate, developmental curriculum which meets the needs of students.
- Students should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught. As staff are not qualified to give legal advice, students will be directed to appropriate sources of advice.

4 EQUALITY

4.1 The Equality Act 2010 covers the way the curriculum is delivered. Learning Opportunities ensures that issues are taught in a way that does not subject students to discrimination. Schools have a duty under the Equality Act to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) and any other groups, however they choose to identify. Inclusive RSE will foster good relationships between students, tackle all types of prejudice, including homophobia, and promote understanding and respect. Learning Opportunities considers the needs of different groups within the school, such as boys and girls, varying home backgrounds, sexuality, SEND, LAC, Faith, ethnicity and culture. The programme is differentiated at point of delivery by trained staff, so that it is appropriate to students' age, ability, gender and maturity.

4.2 We aim to ensure all students are treated fairly, with no discrimination or bullying on grounds of gender, race, religion, colour, language, culture, social circumstances, appearance, sexuality, ability or disability.

5 POLICY STATEMENT

5.1 Our aim is to present a caring and developmental RSE programme which helps and supports students through their physical, emotional and moral development. We believe that a successful programme will help students to learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence through adolescence into adulthood.

5.2 We recognise that some of our students will grow into adulthood but remain dependent on others, needing support to enjoy interaction and make their needs known. With appropriate experiences and skilled teaching, we believe that we can reduce the risks of exploitation and improve all our students' chances of establishing positive relationships now and later in their adult lives.

5.3 Learning Opportunities aims to help students understand:

- Characteristics of a healthy family (commitment, stability, care, security etc) and how to recognise/respond if a family relationship is making them feel unhappy/unsafe
- Respecting differences in others' families;
- That marriage (civil or religious) is a formal/legal commitment intended for life;
- The importance of friendships and its characteristics (caring, respect, trust, loyalty, kindness etc); and how to recognise/respond if a friendship is making them feel unhappy/unsafe
- Respect and respecting difference (including self-respect, bullying, cyberbullying, stereotyping, permission-seeking/giving);
- Online risks (people, relationships, data) and how to stay safe online/report concerns;
- Being safe through boundaries, privacy, a person's body belonging to them, responding appropriately to adults, how to recognise/report feeling unsafe and abuse;
- The importance of their physical, emotional and moral development;
- How to develop skills to enable them to make healthy responsible choices about their health and wellbeing (including mental health);
- How to move more confidently and responsibly into adolescence and adulthood;
- Basic first aid;
- The facts/risks with smoking, alcohol and drugs;
- Different types of committed relationships and why marriage must be freely entered into;
- Characteristics of successful parenting;
- How to determine whether sources of information are trustworthy;
- Managing conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships;
- How stereotypes can cause damage (e.g. normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice);
- Tolerance of others' beliefs;
- Violent behaviour, coercive control, sexual harassment and why these are always unacceptable;
- Risks with sharing online material, the impact of viewing harmful content, how data is collected/shared/used online;
- The concepts and laws of a range of safeguarding risks (i.e. sexual consent, exploitation, grooming, domestic abuse, honour-based abuse, FGM);
- Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health and the increased risks

- with alcohol and drugs.

5.4 This policy is fully considered in conjunction with Keeping in Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and it is a key aspect of safeguarding through raising students' awareness and providing an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues.

6 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 We recognise that much of the literature published is not easily accessible to students with SEND, therefore we ensure that our teaching and learning resources are all tailored to meet the needs of all of our students. We recognise the importance of providing appropriate vocabulary and language, in addition to knowledge and the skills appropriate to their level of maturity and developmental needs.

6.2 The proposed content of the programme of relationship and sex education from Year 7 to Year 11 will be overseen by the headteacher, who will ensure it is age / needs appropriate, meets all statutory guidance and is taught well.

6.3 Relationships and sex education is coordinated by the SLT / PSHE staff and delivered through:

- Themes and topics within PSHE;
 - Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision;
 - Pastoral, tutor time, check-ins and assemblies;
 - Use of external agencies/organisations to enhance existing delivery
- Learning Opportunities will ensure appropriate checks are completed on any visitors to ensure their credentials and delivery of information is in line with the planned programme.

6.4 Staff will ensure clear ground rules are set when teaching sensitive topics. Examples include: safeguarding, confidentiality, respect, listening and non-judgemental.

6.5 We have high expectations of the quality of students' work within relationships education. We will build on the knowledge that students have previously acquired and obtain regular feedback to assess and capture progress.

6.6 As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DfE issued guidance to schools. It states:

'Schools that are not ready to teach the new subjects, or are unable to adequately meet the requirements because of the challenging circumstances, should aim to start preparations to deliver the new curriculum as soon as possible and start teaching the new content by at least the start of the summer term 2021.'

7 CURRICULUM CONTENT

7.1 The content of our curriculum is set out within our medium term planning, and is based on the PSHE Association curriculum guidance. Teachers identify relevant learning objectives and activities for their students, taking account of the students' age, developmental level and level of understanding.

7.2 Teachers ensure that their objectives and resources reflect the range of cultures represented in the school and the range of family units in which students live.

8 ROLE OF PARENTS / CARERS

8.1 We recognise that parents / carers are usually the key people in teaching their children about sex and relationships and in supporting PSHE/RSE education. We also recognise that some parents / carers find it difficult to discuss sensitive matters with their children and that these difficulties may be exacerbated where the child has special educational needs. Parents / carers may face particular issues where their children behave inappropriately within the wider community.

8.2 Class teachers are the first point of contact in keeping parents / carers informed of individual programmes and discussing parents' / carers' preferences and concerns.

8.3 Work on topics linked to family life will also recognise that our students come from a variety of backgrounds and reflect family patterns in what is taught and recorded (for example, a display about 'our families' will be inclusive in nature). Staff are respectful of different faiths and cultural perspectives and expect students to show the same respect to one another's views.

8.4 We aim to build a positive and supporting relationship with our parents / carers through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective, we:

- Inform parents / carers about the school's RSE policy and practice;
- Answer any questions that parents / carers may have about the RSE of their child;
- Take seriously any issue that parents / carers raise with teachers about this policy or the arrangements for RSE in the school
- Encourage parents / carers to be involved in reviewing the school policy and making modifications to it as necessary;
- Ensure learning is culturally appropriate and inclusive of all students. For example, addressing any particular issues in single sex groups;
- Inform parents / carers about the best practice known with regard to RSE so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home.

8.5 We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, students will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing responsibilities.

8.6 Parents / carers should be aware that since September 2020, they no longer have the right to withdraw their child from any part of our relationships education or health education programmes. However, they have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory relationships and sex education. We will discuss any request with parents/carers (and the child if appropriate) to understand the rationale, provide clarity on the purpose, the benefits of inclusion and the detrimental effects of withdrawal. This will be recorded. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' / carers' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the student turns 16. After that point, if the student wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide sex education during one of those terms.

9 CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING

9.1 Central to the RSE programme is the growth of self-esteem and taking responsibility for oneself and one's actions. In teaching about safety and safe touch, we acknowledge that there is inevitably an

increased possibility of disclosure of abuse. Should such disclosures arise, staff will adhere to Learning Opportunities Safeguarding Policy in order that appropriate actions are taken to ensure the safeguarding of individual students.

9.2 Students with special educational needs are known to be more vulnerable to child abuse and exploitation and may be less clear about what is acceptable public behaviour. We provide explicit teaching in these areas and provide guidance for staff on ways to protect themselves and their students.

9.3 Learning Opportunities will ensure the school meets its statutory Safeguarding / Child Protection duties through: staff training and awareness, daily support in school to students, parents/carers and staff, and liaison with external agencies.

9.4 Staff will follow the school's policy with regard to confidentiality. Students will be made aware of the boundaries of confidentiality should they choose to make a disclosure to a member of staff. A member of staff cannot promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

10 TRAINING

10.1 Staff will receive training that equips them with the knowledge and understanding to deliver the programme of relationships and sex education lessons effectively. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health#train-teachers-on-relationships-sex-and-health-education>

10.2 Staff wellbeing will be considered at all times. Staff will discuss with the SLT if they have any personal experience or views that need to be considered to ensure delivery is appropriate and effective for all.

10.3 The PSHE Association also provides a wealth of resources to support staff training: www.pshe-association.org.uk

11 MONITORING & COMPLIANCE

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will work with staff to review compliance of this policy and provide an evaluation to the Proprietor about implementation, including the quality of staff training and engagement with parents/carers.