

## **Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy 2021**

### **What Is Relationship and Sex Education?**

Relationships and sex education (RSE) is an important part of PSHE education. Relationship education is compulsory for all primary school pupils, and relationships and sex education (RSE) is compulsory for all secondary school pupils.

When any school provides RSE they must have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance, this is a statutory duty.

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care, for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

DFEE 'Relationship and Sex Guidance' (2000)

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).

A comprehensive programme of RSE provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex, and sexual health as well as an understanding of sexual violence and harassment. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline.

### **Why Is Relationship and Sex Education Needed in Schools?**

Taken from the DFE's 2019 Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

This is why we have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools, as well as making Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools. The key decisions on these subjects have been informed by a thorough engagement process, including a public call for evidence that received over 23,000 responses from parents, young people, schools and experts and a public consultation where over 40,000 people contacted the Department for Education.

The depth and breadth of views is clear, and there are understandable and legitimate areas of contention. Our guiding principles have been that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents while always with the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law.

We are clear that parents and carers are the prime educators for children on many of these matters. Schools complement and reinforce this role and have told us that they see building on what pupils learn at home as an important part of delivering a good education.

The aim of RSE is to give 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 pupils 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.

Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

Knowledge about safer sex and sexual health remains important to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This should be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment. Many teachers use approaches such as distancing techniques, setting ground rules with the class to help manage sensitive discussion and using question boxes to allow pupils to raise issues anonymously.

RSE should provide clear progression from what is taught in primary school in Relationships Education. Teachers should build on the foundation of Relationships Education and, as pupils grow up, at the appropriate time extend teaching to include intimate relationships. Alongside being taught about intimate relationships, pupils should also be taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult. This teaching should enable pupils to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful.

Pupils should understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect. Through gaining the knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, they can be empowered to identify when relationships are unhealthy. They should be taught that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing.

## **Principles and Values**

St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College believes that RSE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people.
- Encourage every student to contribute to make our community and aims to support each individual as they grow and learn.
- Be set within this wider school context and supports family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness.

- Encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure. The important values are love, respect and care for each other.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- Recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents and students, consulting them about the content of programmes.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals and relevant school partners.

Relationship and Sex Education in St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College has three main elements:

### **Attitudes and Values**

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices;
- learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships and marriage;
- learning about the nurture of children;
- learning the value of respect, love and care;
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour.

### **Personal and Social Skills**

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice;
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- managing conflict;
- empower students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter)

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice and support services;
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay;
- the avoidance of unintentional pregnancy.

### **Aims**

The aim of RSE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSE programme aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships.
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for relationship and sex issues.
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity.
- understand the reasons for having protected sex.
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships.
- know and have an understanding of the dangers and the law regarding sexting.
- to have a full appreciation and understanding of the risks associated with sexual exploitation and sexual harassment.
- To fully understand the term consent.

### **Organisation and Content of Relationship and Sex Education**

St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College specifically delivers Relationship and Sex Education through its PSHE Programme, RE and Science lessons at KS3 and KS4.

Much of the Relationship and Sex Education at St Bede's takes place within PSHE lessons. Tutors generally deliver the PSHE Curriculum with support from professionals where appropriate. Form tutors work closely with their tutees and we believe that they are the best people to work with the students on many of the topics. Specific RSE topics are delivered by trained specialists who are made aware of each student's individual circumstances when appropriate. RSE lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although some of the physical aspects are also included. The Science National Curriculum is delivered by staff in the science department. These lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten. The RE department supports the emotional aspect of RSE and focuses on the Catholic teaching and beliefs concerning Relationship and Sex Education.

Aspects of the Relationship and Sex Education are taught to each year group and are planned and delivered in a manner that will consider the age appropriateness of the content.

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons group agreements are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the group agreement established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that

answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

Support is offered with the year team or from the PSHE co-ordinator who will help with planning or delivery lessons if required.

Assessment is an ongoing process and involves teacher, pupil and peer assessment of knowledge and understanding, interpersonal skills, and attitudes.

### **Sexual violence and harassment**

All staff, pupils and parents should be aware of the importance of:

- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable and will never be tolerated
- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “a joke” or “boys being boys”
- Challenging behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as inappropriate contact, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them
- Understanding that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the school, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language
- Encouraging the reporting of any abusive behaviour to someone trusted. Students are encouraged to report to a parent, carer, or a member of school staff. If abusive behaviour is online, then follow the appropriate reporting systems on the platform in question and speak to a trusted person.

### **Inclusion**

#### Ethnic and Cultural Groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items in mixed groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns.

#### Students with Special Needs

We will ensure that all young people receive relationship and sex education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary.

#### Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of gender orientation, answer appropriate question and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that relationship and sex education is relevant to them.

### **Right of Withdrawal of Students from Relationship and Sex Education**

Some parents prefer to take the responsibility for aspects of this element of education.

- Parents will not be able to withdraw their child from relationships education in secondary school
- Parents (secondary school level) will be able to withdraw their child from sex education (other than the sex education which sits in the National Curriculum as part of science in maintained schools).

However, a child will also have a right to opt into sex education from their 15th birthday (specifically three academic terms before they turn 16)

If parents were to decide to withdraw their child from any part of the curriculum, alternative arrangements would be put in place in such cases. Parents are encouraged to discuss their decisions with staff at the earliest opportunity. Parents are welcome to review any RSE resources the school uses.

### **Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues**

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Teachers are not legally bound to inform parents or Headteacher of any disclosure unless the Headteacher has specifically requested them to do so.

In a case where a teacher learns from a student under the age of 16 years old that they are having or contemplating sexual activity:

- the young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice from appropriate agencies.
- child protection issues will be considered, and referred if necessary to the teacher responsible for Child Protection under the school's procedures.
- Any young person deemed as vulnerable or at risk will have the details of the case passed to the safeguard team who will follow safeguard protocols.

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the school's confidentiality policy.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of Relationship and Sex Education**

It is the responsibility of the PSHE Co-ordinator to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PSHE, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The PSHE programme will be treated as a subject department in this exercise, under which all departments undertake regular self-evaluation and monitoring and evaluation exercises led by the School's Leadership and Management Team.

The Governors Curriculum Staffing and Resources Committee is responsible for overseeing, reviewing and organising the revision of the Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Ofsted is required to evaluate and report on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. This includes evaluating and commenting on the school's relationship and sex education policy, and on support and staff development, training and delivery.

**Headteacher signature**.....

**Governor signature**.....

**Date** .....