



Diocese of Salisbury
Academy Trust

'Beyond expectations for all of God's children'

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE/RSE) Policy

Policy Date: September 2024

Review Date: September 2028

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE/RSE) Policy

Rationale

As Church of England schools, all teaching of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) will be in the context of our Christian values. We will approach this aspect of our responsibility in a spirit of openness, co-operation and compassion. We are a Trust that truly and genuinely cares about children and their families. Every child is valued and loved – it is our aim that all children feel and know this. We also recognise, as detailed below, the vital role of parents as children’s first educators and will seek to support them as much as possible.

This policy has been developed in line with our Equality Duty (published separately) and the Public Sector Equality Duty. We will ensure that at all times we will seek to promote equal opportunities and good relations, avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Appropriate action will be taken in cases of harassment and discrimination. We give special attention and regard to the [Valuing All God’s Children](#) guidance which is produced by the Church of England Education Office. This policy also aligns with our approach to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC).

Trust officers, school leaders, staff, parents, academy governors and trustees have worked together to agree this policy for Relationships, Sex and Health Education, in line with requirements of the National Curriculum and Department for Education guidance.

In publishing revised guidance for implementation from September 2020, the Secretary of State said:

“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.”

Furthermore, the stated desire of the Secretary of State, which we share, says:

“In primary schools, we want the subjects to put in place the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online. This will sit alongside the essential understanding of how to be healthy.”

Further draft guidance from the DfE was published in the Spring 2024 but this has not become statutory. As further guidance becomes clear, this policy will be revisited as needed. This policy is in line with the current guidance recommended for UK schools from the DfE since 2019 (such as the Sep 2020 further guidance here: [Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)).

What is Relationships, Sex and Health Education?

RSHE involves learning about moral, physical and emotional development. It aims to teach children about the importance of stable, loving, family relationships, respect and care, and about changes and choices they will face in the future.

Aims and Objectives

We believe that Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) should be delivered as an integral part of the curriculum across the school and not in isolation, taken out of context or over-emphasised. Our programme is delivered with continuity throughout the school and is for all our children, including those with physical, emotional or learning difficulties.

Our programme recognises that there are many different kinds of families and relationships, and helps children to gain information and know where they can access support, not promoting any particular approach to relationships over another. We recognise the particular needs of pupils who are adopted or fostered. We also acknowledge and support those who may be considered young carers, appreciating that roles and responsibilities within families vary from one family to the next.

RSHE should be treated as a positive experience for young people to understand their identity, in terms of gaining a stronger understanding of themselves, a sense of belonging, their citizenship etc., recognising the importance of consent at all times to protect themselves and others. We believe that children should be made aware of the changes that are taking place in their bodies as they grow.

RSHE should teach children:

- To develop their own moral values and individual conscience
- The importance of stable and loving relationships within a family
- The value of care and respect for themselves and others
- To make informed decisions without prejudice, based on an understanding of difference
- To manage their own emotions and to deal with conflict, recognising that conflict does happen but can be managed and resolved using appropriate strategies
- To be prepared for puberty and adulthood
- To help gain access to information and support
- To develop skills for a healthier, safer lifestyle
- To develop and use communication and assertiveness skills, to cope with the influences of their peers and the media, as well as being able to discern between what is right and wrong

These values and skills are explored throughout the whole school programme of Personal, Social and Health Education which focuses strongly on emotional literacy. We also seek to provide relevant and appropriate guidance, particularly when safeguarding updates are provided, to help children keep themselves safe and informed, in order to protect themselves from harm and from engaging in inappropriate behaviour, including when online and on electronic devices.

As a Trust we agree to the Church of England Education Office's Charter for faith sensitive and inclusive Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE) as shown below.

In DSAT schools we seek to provide Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE), which will enable all pupils to flourish.

We commit:

1. **To work in partnership with parents and carers.** This will involve dialogue with parents and carers through all stages of policy development as well as discussing the resources used to teach their children and how they can contribute at home. It must, however, be recognised that the law specifies that what is taught and how it is taught is ultimately a decision for the school.
2. **That RSHE will be delivered professionally and as an identifiable part of Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE).** It will be led, resourced and reported to parents in the same way as any other subject. There will be a planned programme delivered in a carefully sequenced way. Staff will receive regular training in RSHE and PSHE. Any expert visitors or trainers invited into the school to enhance and supplement the programme will be expected to respect the school's published policy for RSHE.

3. **That RSHE will be delivered in a way that affords dignity and shows respect to all who make up our diverse community.** It will not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act and will be sensitive to the faith and beliefs of those in the wider school community. RSHE will seek to explain fairly the tenets and varying interpretations of religious communities on matters of sex and relationships and teach these viewpoints with respect. It will value the importance of faithfulness as the underpinning and backdrop for relationships. It will encourage pupils to develop the skills needed to disagree without being disagreeable, to appreciate the lived experience of other people and to live well together.
4. **That RSHE will seek to build resilience in our pupils to help them form healthy relationships, to keep themselves safe and resist the harmful influence of pornography in all its forms.** It will give pupils opportunities to reflect on values and influences including their peers, the media, the internet, faith and culture that may have shaped their attitudes to gender, relationships and sex. It will promote the development of the wisdom and skills our pupils need to make their own informed decisions.
5. **That RSHE will promote healthy resilient relationships set in the context of character and virtue development.** It will reflect the vision and associated values of the school, promote reverence for the gift of human sexuality and encourage relationships that are hopeful and aspirational. Based on the school's values it will seek to develop character within a moral framework based on virtues such as honesty, integrity, self-control, courage, humility, kindness, forgiveness, generosity and a sense of justice but does not seek to teach only one moral position.
6. **That RSHE will be based on honest and medically accurate information from reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights.** It will distinguish between different types of knowledge and opinions so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health as appropriate to their age and maturity.
7. **To take a particular care to meet the individual needs of all pupils including those with special needs and disabilities.** It will ensure that lessons and any resources used will be accessible and sensitive to the learning needs of the individual child. We acknowledge the potential vulnerability of pupils who have special needs and disabilities (SEND) and recognise the possibilities and rights of SEND pupils to high quality relationships, sex and health education.
8. **To seek pupils' views about RSHE so that the teaching can be made relevant to their lives.** It will discuss real life issues relating to the age and stage of pupils, including friendships, families, faith, consent, relationship abuse, exploitation and safe relationships online. This will be carefully targeted and age appropriate based on a teacher judgment about pupil readiness for this information in consultation with parents and carers.

Content of RSHE

The majority of relationships, sex and health education is delivered through PSHE lessons, through collective worship and wider aspects of the national curriculum. This applies across the whole school, including the Foundation Stage.

We follow the national curriculum for science which incorporates the following – there is no right of withdrawal from the Science curriculum.

Early Years Foundation Stage - Understanding the World (Nursery and Reception):

- Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members
- They know that other children do not always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this
- They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions

Key Stage 1 Science - children will learn about the human body and that animals and humans grow, change and reproduce. The Key Stage 1 Science National Curriculum indicates that pupils should be taught to:

- identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense
- explore and compare the differences between things that are living, dead, and things that have never been alive
- identify that most living things live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants, and how they depend on each other
- notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults
- find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)
- describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food, and hygiene

Key Stage 2 Science – children will learn more about the body, what humans need for growth and development and extend their understanding of reproduction. The Key Stage 2 Science National Curriculum indicates that pupils should be taught to:

- identify that animals, including humans, need the right types and amount of nutrition, and that they cannot make their own food; they get nutrition from what they eat
- identify that humans and some other animals have skeletons and muscles for support, protection and movement
- describe the simple functions of the basic parts of the digestive system in humans
- identify the different types of teeth in humans and their simple functions
- construct and interpret a variety of food chains, identifying producers, predators and prey
- describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals
- describe the changes as humans develop to old age
- identify and name the main parts of the human circulatory system, and describe the functions of the heart, blood vessels and blood
- recognise the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle on the way their bodies function
- describe the ways in which nutrients and water are transported within animals, including humans
- recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents

Relationships Education

In line with Department for Education guidelines, by the end of primary school our children will have knowledge and understanding of the following.

Families and people who care for me

Pupils should know

- that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability.

- the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
- that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.
- that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up.
- that marriage or civil partnership represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.
- how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.

Caring friendships

Pupils should know

- how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
- the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.
- that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.
- that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right.
- how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.

Respectful relationships

Pupils should know

- the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- the conventions of courtesy and manners.
- the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority.
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help.
- what a stereotype is, and how they are generally unfair, unhelpful or even destructive.
- the importance of consent, permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

Online relationships

Pupils should know

- that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not.
- that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous.
- the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them.
- how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met.
- how information and data is shared and used online.

Being safe

Pupils should know

- what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context).
- about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
- that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.
- how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know.
- how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult.
- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.
- how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

I suggest adding Health Education here – as it is statutory, and if it goes below sex education, it can get confused. This is where all the statutory content on puberty is listed. It's from page 96 of the guidance and has significant overlaps with the Relationships content, and has the content on drugs etc too.

[Relationships Education RSE and Health Education.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/Relationships_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

Sex Education

We deliver a sex education programme that is in keeping with our values and objectives identified above, as well as completely satisfying government requirements. Our programmes are designed to help children stay safe and to live in accordance with their own values. We aim to give parents confidence in the programme that children receive and in supporting them at home.

Sex education in primary schools is not statutory, but is recommended by the DfE as part of the RSHE curriculum. We have decided to include this in a way that we feel is age and stage appropriate. As it is non-statutory, parents/carers have a right to withdraw their children from these following a discussion with the school about the content and approach.

Our RSHE programme, including teaching about puberty and sex education, is tailored appropriately according to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It is always delivered in a way that is sensitive and supportive, catering for a range of different backgrounds, knowledge and needs. It ensures that pupils are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is

conceived and born. We see this as important preparation for their transition to secondary school and for life beyond school.

In upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6), children will be introduced to the following, which are not formally considered as sex education and therefore there is no parental right to withdraw:

- Changes in the body at puberty;
- When changes are likely to occur, issues that may cause them anxiety and how to deal with them;

NB The above are not formally considered as sex education and, as such, there is no parental right to withdraw.

Elements of specific sex education will also be introduced:

- How a baby is born and conceived;
- Addressing aspects of identity, sexuality and relationships including LGBT, is always at an age-appropriate level and in the wider context of effective teaching of RSHE. At the primary age range, our teaching simply recognises that not all families are the same, and that sometimes babies are conceived in other ways such as IVF, as well as the importance and equal validity of adoption.

Organisation of RSHE

The formulation of this policy is seen as a Trust-wide responsibility, in close consultation with our academies, their staff and parents. There will always be local consultation and tailoring of the policy where required and following discussion with the Trust. Each academy has a designated person to lead the co-ordination of RSHE as an integral part of the curriculum offer. It is delivered by class teachers, school leaders and other support staff, in line with expertise. RSHE will be delivered by all teachers as part of the PSHE programme, with appropriate teachers delivering the sex education element of the programme. The school may also invite other professionals to be part of the delivery of some topics, although generally delivery of this is best in the hands of those the children know well.

The resources used for the delivery of RSHE will be shared with the Academy Standards and Ethos Committee (ASEC), for their approval, within the context of this policy – they should be aware of all RSE content.

A full outline of the academy's teaching programme is provided as an appendix to this document.

The Role of Parents

The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. To promote this objective, we:

- Inform parents about the school's RSHE policy and teaching programme;
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RSHE education of their child;
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy, about the arrangements for sex education in the school and any specific issues that may affect a child in this regard;
- Use the thoughts of parents to help review this policy over time;
- Inform parents about the best practice known with regard to RSHE, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home.

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

Parents of Key Stage 2 children will be invited to hear about the curriculum delivery in more detail and to view any resources so that they can be better informed and support their children appropriately at home. However, parents are welcome to arrange an appointment with the school to see any of the teaching materials being used in their child's class as part of RSHE, and to find out how these are being used to support high quality teaching and learning. Individual schools can add specific details of processes, online or printed information, or parent access to materials that they may be using.

Right to be Excused from Sex Education

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education, nor from the Science Curriculum.

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request, the Headteacher will discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. We will document this process to ensure a record is kept. Schools should list where in which year groups the very small number of lessons that are classed as sex education take place by year group and term. e.g. "Year 5, Having a Baby".

The Headteacher will discuss with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that non-participation might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of not being included in the lesson, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although the detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead).

If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is our responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during this time.

Answering Difficult Questions and Sensitive Issues

Staff members are aware that views around RSHE are varied. However, whilst personal views are respected, all RSHE issues are discussed and explored without personal opinion or bias. Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also to respect that others have the right to a different opinion.

Both formal and informal RSHE, arising from pupils' questions, are dealt with according to the age and maturity of the pupils concerned. Questions do not have to be answered directly and can be addressed individually later. Pupils may be referred back to their parents at times, where questions go beyond the focus of the lesson, and where this is deemed the right thing to do. The school believes that individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in this area and refer to senior colleagues if they are concerned, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead where this might be appropriate.

We believe that RSHE should meet the needs of all pupils, answer appropriate questions and offer support. All pupils should be responded to equally and respect, with due regard to protected characteristics and family backgrounds.

Responses will need to be dealt with sensitively with respect to sexual orientation and appropriate support may be identified and offered. Homophobic bullying is dealt with strongly, yet sensitively. The school liaises with parents/carers on this issue to reassure them of the content and context. Above all, we encourage open dialogue and conversation with parents, carers and pupils, seeking to address individual needs as they arise.

During the teaching of puberty and sex education, the class teachers give children the opportunity to ask 'difficult questions' anonymously using a question box. Children can put the question in the box and, if considered appropriate, the teacher can answer it for the whole class. Where questions fall outside of the taught curriculum, they will identify appropriate ways to respond and consult with senior colleagues and external professionals where required.

Supporting resources

The curriculum plan in Appendix 1 will be supported by recognised and effective video, multimedia and printed resources. These materials will be widely recognised, balanced in their approach and not promote any particular lifestyle choice over another. They will be designed to educate and inform. They will be in line with the vision and values of the Trust. Resources will recognise a range of different experiences, views, lifestyles and cultural backgrounds that people bring to this subject. Where particular issues and concerns arise, we are committed to working with parents to support and resolve these wherever possible.

Links with other policies

This policy will be considered in light of other curriculum policies in each academy, as well as our wider policies in relation to Behaviour, Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Child Protection, Equalities.

Staff training

Staff training is identified through the school professional development framework. Training is offered or requested as required. Teachers and support staff are encouraged to seek the support of senior colleagues where they feel additional training is required. Schools can also access wider expertise within the Trust and contact the Trust's Academy Improvement Team and CEO as required. Support from external professionals, RSHE experts and healthcare staff may be accessed if necessary.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Sex and Relationships Education is evaluated and monitored by class teachers in liaison with the PSHE leader. Children are asked to provide feedback in order to take into account their views.

Appendix 1

Detailed Curriculum Plan for the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education at St Michael's CE Primary School.