

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Date: March 2023

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Member(s) of staff Responsible: PSHE Lead

Relationship and Sex Education and the school ethos

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is an important element of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum at Springhead School. We believe that learning about their own sexual development, together with an awareness of their relationships with others, can greatly enhance pupils' ability to lead their lives competently and with fulfilment.

We also expect other learning outcomes to be enhanced by the increased self-esteem and confidence which a good relationship and sex education programme can bring about.

Throughout everything we do at Springhead School, we make a commitment to developing learning and relationships through encouraging autonomy and the taking of responsibility.

The values of our Relationship and Sex education programme

- We believe that each of us should feel valued and of worth to others. Our students, with a variety of learning needs and from a range of backgrounds, need to experience positive self - esteem. They can then be encouraged to develop the skills to form loving and caring relationships during their lives. Our aim is to give our pupils the skills to conduct such relationships with dignity and assertiveness and to avoid being exploited.
- Young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that relationship and sex education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs.

Our aims for Relationships and Sex education

- To provide a climate in which sensitive discussions and learning opportunities can take place
- to clarify / reinforce the knowledge students have already acquired
- to provide knowledge and information to develop learning further
- to deliver a curriculum that is both age and developmentally appropriate
- to raise self - esteem and confidence, especially in relationships with others
- to help students to understand their sexual development and identity
- to develop skills (language, decision making, choice, assertiveness) which are necessary in a range of situations
- to promote acceptable and appropriate behaviour in public and private situations
- to enable pupils to practice strategies which reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse
- to support access to information and facilities
- to prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene

Our objectives for Relationships and Sex education

Initially:

- to learn an appropriate vocabulary for body parts
- to develop the concept of a variety of family units
- to develop the concept of what it means to have a particular peer friend
- to co-operate and work with health care agencies such as the doctor / school nurse etc.
- to understand the similarities and differences between different genders
- to develop sensible attitudes towards body functions
- to build an awareness of self and others

Subsequently:

- to develop the ability to give and receive affection in an appropriate manner and at an appropriate time
- to develop the ability to express and control emotions
- to show respect for other people
- to develop an understanding of respect for their own body.
- to communicate 'no' and develop confidence when talking about own body and making choices about their own body
- to understand the importance of consent
- to be enabled to make informed choices about their own body and relationships.
- to develop an understanding of different types of relationships e.g. friendship, marriage, civil partnership
- to develop an awareness of presentation of sex by the media
- to develop an awareness of possible risks when communicating and working online and an understanding of what can be done to reduce the risks
- to develop acceptable standards of personal / sexual hygiene
- to acquire an increased awareness of community health care, including the family planning service
- to be informed about sexuality and the law
- to be aware of different attitudes towards cultural and religious aspects of sexuality
- to develop understanding of their own sexuality
- to develop confidence and assertiveness to be - or not to be - sexually active or celibate
- where appropriate to be informed about the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases
- where appropriate to be informed about forms of contraception and risks related to unprotected sex

Equal Opportunities

All students should have access to a wide range of resources, materials and teaching methods.

Statutory Requirements

From September 2020:

Relationships Education is compulsory for all pupils of primary school age.

Relationships and Sex education is compulsory for all pupils of secondary school age.

Organisation within school

In Key stages one to five RSE is taught as part of the PSHE curriculum. In the Early Years aspects of Relationship Education are taught within the Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) strand and permeate many areas of the curriculum. In addition, across all key stages, it is likely that lots of the topics covered will also be explored in a cross-curricular manner across teaching in other subject areas.

RSE is planned according to individual and group needs and development. It is based on the PSHE association's 'Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND' and includes areas such as

- Self-care, Support and Safety- public and private
- Managing Feelings- Romantic feelings and sexual attraction, Expectations of relationships
- Changing and Growing- Different types of relationships, intimate relationships, consent and contraception

Staff will decide the most effective methods to use in the classroom. We know that learning about personal matters is increased if students work in a supportive group where they feel safe, and if active methods are used which encourage practice of relevant skills. We are aware that teaching RSE to students with learning difficulties means that classroom work may need to be made more explicit than in other schools. We support the use of correct words and vocabulary for body parts and functions and the use of visual material which is clear and unmistakable.

The detailed programme will be drawn up by the PSHE lead and teachers responsible for each class. The content of the programme will be shared with parents.

We expect that our General, Advanced, Senior and Higher-Level Teaching assistants, who have extensive experience of our pupils, will be involved in planning, taking part in and evaluating classroom work, although the overall responsibility rests with the teaching staff.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, and Questioning (LGBTQ) content is taught alongside all information about heterosexual relationships and is fully integrated, as well as celebrated at Pride based events. This demonstrates our commitment to the Equality Act of 2010 and our desire to reflect our community and the wider world.

Specific Issues Statements

Contraceptive advice to students Students will be taught, in the context of sexual intimacy and safer sex, that intercourse always involves using a condom. Questions about forms of contraception will be answered accurately and honestly within the student's ability to understand. If students need further personal advice about contraceptive use, counselling and support will be sought from appropriate agencies and personnel. Our principle is that the individual concerned should make decisions about contraceptive use, as far as this is possible.

Confidentiality All sex education will be taught in a calm and supportive manner. Teachers and other staff cannot offer or guarantee pupils unconditional confidentiality. All staff should follow CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING POLICY guidelines.

Sexual Identity and Orientation We will address issues of sexual identity and orientation with individuals and groups. We will make positive and equal reference to a variety of sexual relationships. Any issues relating to bullying will be referred directly to the headteacher. See Anti bullying policy

Gender Identity We will address issues of gender identity and orientation with individuals and groups. We will make positive and equal reference to how gender is identified and expressed. Any issues relating to bullying will be referred directly to the headteacher. See Anti bullying policy

Use of outside visitors

Elements of RSE may be provided by a range of people including health professionals, social workers, sessional workers and youth workers. Some people in the wider community have much to offer at all levels of planning and delivering RSE, bringing a new perspective and offering specialised knowledge, experience and resources. All of these people need to be aware of the school RSE policy. Planning to meet individual's needs is best done as part of a multi professional team. Visitors should complement the planned provision.

Health professionals who are involved in delivering programmes related to RSE are expected to work within our school policy. However, when they are in their professional role, such as school nurse in consultation with an individual pupil, they should follow their own professional codes of conduct (this is the case irrespective of who is paying them).

Guidelines for all staff working with students in the context of personal care and development

- treat every pupil as an individual, with dignity and respect
- relate language and behaviour to the chronological age of the student
- reinforce the 'private' concept in all situations.
- discourage pupils beyond Early Years from age - inappropriate behaviour - e.g. sitting on laps
- in all situations, informal and formal, we are all expected to follow the language and approaches identified within this policy

A partnership with families

Families will be informed about any planned RSE learning via topic webs that are sent home at the start of each term. Teachers will inform parents of any specific learning via letters, phone calls home or in the home-school diary. We will do our best to find out any religious or cultural views families may have which may affect the sex education they wish to be given to their children. We would consider very carefully any request which compromised our equal opportunities policy.

Families are welcome to speak to class teachers or the PSHE lead about matters relating to the RSE curriculum. Staff are willing to discuss with families any matters which they are concerned about.

Parents right to withdraw their child

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from 'sex education', although not from the elements which are taught within the Science curriculum. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from 'relationships' or 'health' education.

If a parent wishes to withdraw a child, they are asked to discuss it with the PSHE lead and headteacher. They will be made clear about what content the student will be withdrawn from and what the student will do when withdrawn. We would like to make it clear that if students who are withdrawn from sex education lessons ask questions at other times, these questions will be answered honestly and appropriately by staff.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will need to assess how effective are the aims, content and method in promoting pupils' learning. Feedback from staff, parents and students will help judge this. The PSHE co-ordinator will be responsible for developing ways of collecting this information, monitoring teaching with support from the management team, reporting to the headteacher and presenting it to the governors within the school development plan.