

# Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Approved by RET Board

Approved on January 2024

RET contact Headteacher

Revision due Every 2 years



RUSSELL EDUCATION TRUST

## 1. Context

- a. The Governing Body is committed to the provision of Relationships and Sex and Education (RSE) based on the encouragement of social, emotional and moral considerations and with due regard for the value of family life. Documents that inform the school's RSE policy include:

- Education Act (1996).
- Learning and Skills Act (2000).
- Education and Inspections Act (2006).
- Equality Act (2010).
- Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory safeguarding guidance (2020).
- Children and Social Work Act (2017).
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Draft statutory guidance (February 2019).
- Cass Review (Feb 2022).
- Tavistock Report (March 2022).

This policy should be considered alongside other policies: Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

- Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Curriculum Policy.
- Mental Health Policy.
- SMSC Policy.
- Special Educational Needs Policy.

## 2. Meaning

- a. RSE is about physical, moral and emotional development. It emphasises the importance of stable and loving relationships and respect for self and others. It is also about the consideration of sexual activity and sexual health against a background of respect for family life. It provides knowledge and skills which are intended to help students manage a healthy lifestyle including the reduction of harm to self and others. RSE helps students to learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

## 3. Approach

- a. The school has a commitment to ensuring that the programme is relevant to and inclusive of all students and is taught in a way that is age and stage appropriate. Delivery of RSE will be differentiated where necessary to address the needs of students, for example students with learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities (SEND).
- b. The aim of RSE is to provide factual information about sex and human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, social and moral dimensions of sexual relationships and health. Students are encouraged to respect one another's views and different approaches to sexual orientation. The RSE programme supports family commitment, respect for marriage and different types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.

## 4. Equality

- a. This school delivers RSE in the context of the Equality Act 2010 and observance of the protected characteristics of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation. In addition to these legally protected characteristics the trust also aims to encourage respect for all and eliminate discrimination against and promote equality of opportunity for all regardless of socio-economic status.
- b. We recognise that students have varying needs regarding RSE depending on their circumstances and background. The school believes that all students should have access to RSE that is relevant to their needs.
- c. Some students may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised is the starting point to

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ensure accessibility of this subject area. We are mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes, as set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching these subjects to those with SEND.

- d. Some topics may be taught in single-sex groups, according to student, staff, governor and parent feedback.
- e. Different ethnic cultural and religious groups may have different attitudes and beliefs regarding RSE. The school will promote respect for and understanding of the views of different ethnic, cultural and religious groups in line with the Trust's Equal Opportunity Policy. Our teaching in RSE (and across the curriculum) encourages the individuality of each student in the context of the Equality Act. We actively discourage stereotyping of behaviour, appearance, preferences, talents, roles or aptitudes by sex. We ensure students understand the harmful effects of stereotypical assumptions about what men and women can and should do. In our teaching we confirm that there is not necessarily a link between behaviour or preferences and sexual orientation.
- f. Some students will define themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) or may be gender-questioning. Some students may have LGB, gender-questioning or transgender parents/carers, brothers or sisters, other family members and/or friends. All of our students will meet and work with LGB, gender-questioning and transgender people both now and in the future. Our approach to RSE will reflect this and teaching will be sensitive and age appropriate both in content and approach. This content will be integrated into the RSE curriculum rather than as a stand-alone lesson or unit. This is reflected in our Anti-Bullying policy.
- g. We recognise that a small number of students at some point in adolescence, question their sex or suffer from gender dysphoria, which may make some RSE (and other) lessons challenging for them. We support these students on a one-to-one basis in partnership with their parents. Following the advice of the Cass Review we do not encourage students to label themselves or self-diagnose as "transgender" in their school years.
- h. We recognise that our students may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. We will take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of students based on their home circumstances and deliver the curriculum sensitively and inclusively.

## 5. Provision

- a. The RSE curriculum sits primarily within the PSHCE programme of study and includes coverage by Science, PSHE, Computing, PE, RP and English teachers. The trust sets an overall framework for PSHCE and RSE within it and supports schools to work with governors to ensure the curriculum and its delivery fit within that framework and its principles.
- b. Representatives of relevant external agencies may also be involved in delivering the programme. Where this is the case, careful consideration will be given to ensuring that their input is consistent with RET policy.
- c. Across all Key Stages, students will be supported in developing:
  - communication skills, including how to manage changing relationships and emotions.
  - assertiveness, confidence and self-esteem and the ability to manage conflict.
  - positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour.
  - skills to recognise and assess potential risks, on and offline including sharing content, the impact of viewing harmful content, and understanding that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence.
  - recognition of abusive and exploitative relationships.
  - understanding consent ('No' means no), and the law.
  - respect for themselves and others, their views, backgrounds, cultures and experiences.
  - that there are different types of committed, stable relationships including same sex relationships.
  - confidence to recognise and challenge discrimination based on protected characteristics or socio-economic status.
  - knowledge and understanding about puberty, menstruation, reproduction and sexuality.
  - understanding and skills needed to maintain sexual health.

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- knowledge of how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.
  - awareness of how RSE links with issues of peer pressure and risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol.
  - a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure.
  - understanding of the value of marriage, civil partnerships, stable relationships and family life as a positive environment for bringing up children.
  - understanding the facts around pregnancy, including miscarriage, the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.
  - awareness 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).
  - understanding the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
  - understanding of the potential impact of the porn industry on young people's self-esteem and their ability to distinguish between fact and fiction.
  - knowledge on how and when to seek help and support
- d. Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and treat others with respect and sensitivity in RSE lessons.
- e. We encourage students and teachers to share and respect one another's views and generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on relationship and sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- f. An overview of the learning in each year group is published on the school website.

## 6. Safeguarding Children

- a. This policy complies with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies adopted by the school.
- b. Staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality to students. We will reassure students that staff will act in their best interests and that this may involve sharing information if there is risk of harm. Students will be told if information is to be shared and will be offered appropriate support.

## 7. Parents

- a. Parents and carers have an important role in RSE through instilling values, providing a framework for relationships and arranging structures for support. We recognise that many students would prefer to receive information about RSE from their parents or carers. We provide supportive information on the RSE topics and access to accurate information, resources and advice via the school website or on request.
- b. This RSE policy is made available to parents. Under the 1996 Education Act, parents have the right to withdraw their children from part or all of non-National Curriculum RSE i.e. the part which falls outside the Science curriculum.
- c. Parents wishing to withdraw their children from PSHE lessons when sex education is being considered are asked to contact the Headteacher in writing. Alternative arrangements for students withdrawn will be made in accordance with the standard practice for students unable to attend other lessons or trips.
- d. In accordance with the government guidance the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw their child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the student wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide him/her with sex education during one of those terms.
- e. A parent's choice to withdraw their child from sex education does not affect the student's right to use confidential health services provided at school or elsewhere, or the school's obligations regarding safeguarding.

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## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation

- a. The RSE programme of study is monitored by the lead teacher of Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE) and appropriate members of senior staff. The nominated RSE governor also has some responsibility for compliance with national requirements. The school carries out an annual self-evaluation of RSE which includes the use of Student Voice to review and tailor the RSE programme to match the needs of students.