



Over St. John's CE Primary School
'Let your light shine before others.' Matthew 5:16
Relationships and Health Education Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out our school's approach to statutory Relationships Education and non-statutory Sex Education. It was produced by the PSHE Subject Lead.

We have based our school's Relationships and Sex Education Policy on the statutory guidance document 'Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' (DfE, 2019) and guidance from the Goodness and Mercy RSHE for Church of England Schools. The Department for Education guidance states that from September 2021, all primary schools must teach Relationships and Health Education. The teaching of Sex Education in primary schools remains non statutory, except for the elements of sex education contained in the science national curriculum including the main external body parts, the human life cycle (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. Other related topics that fall within the statutory requirements for Health Education, such as puberty and menstrual wellbeing, will be included within PSHE education lessons at Over St John's CE Primary School.

Within the statutory guidance document for RSE and Health Education, the DfE also encourages schools to deliver age-appropriate sex education if they feel their pupils need this information: *'It will be for primary schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. Many primary schools already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so, although it is not a requirement....'* The details relating to this are explored later in the policy. It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department for Education continues to recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls 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. These elements will be covered in Upper Key Stage 2 at Over St John's CE Primary School and will be delivered by either the school nurse or the class teacher.

Within this policy, as in line with the DfE guidance:

Relationships Education is defined as teaching about the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with reference to friendships, family relationships and relationships with other children and with adults.

Sex Education is defined as teaching children how human reproduction occurs, including how a baby is conceived. This draws on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science. For the purposes of this policy, we specifically identify any non-statutory Sex Education that falls outside of science and those related elements (the physical changes associated with puberty) within statutory Health Education.

Rationale and Ethos

At Over St John's CE Primary School, RSE is underpinned by the ethos and values of our school as reflected in our whole school vision statement.



Our vision is to create a safe and respectful environment in which all members of the school community learn and grow in confidence, knowledge and skills.

Through our RSE programme we aim to provide children with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active and responsible citizens. In providing children with an understanding of healthy and respectful relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider effective RSE to be a fundamental part of our approach to supporting pupils to grow into confident, caring, responsible and respectful young citizens. RSE is lifelong learning about personal, physical, moral and emotional development. It is set in the context of clear values about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care, for family life. It should teach children and young people to develop and form positive values, attitudes, personal and social skills and increase their knowledge and understanding of how to make informed decisions and life choices. Our school's approach to Relationship, Sex and Health Education seeks to be faith-sensitive and inclusive for the Christian members of our school community. We recognise that not all pupils and families will share the distinctive Christian understandings of marriage, but it is important that they respect them and are enabled to make their own informed choices. Our teaching will be inclusive, non-judgemental and include religious, non-religious, cultural, legal and moral viewpoints, underpinned by two key Biblical passages:

"So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them."

(Genesis 1:27)

"I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness"

(John 10:10)

Our school recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that lessons are tailored to consider equality and diversity for pupils with protected characteristics.

Roles and Responsibilities

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) forms part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum in our school. The RSE programme is led by the PSHE Subject Lead with the support of the Senior Leadership Team. PSHE lessons are taught by class teachers, supported by expert visitors as appropriate and necessary and guided by Christian teachings. Teaching staff receive training in the delivery of the RSE curriculum through dedicated staff meetings, led by the PSHE Subject Lead with the support of external experts as required. As a school, we are aware that the primary responsibility for providing children's RSE lies with parents and carers. We recognise the need to work with parents and carers to ensure a shared understanding of RSE and to deliver an effective programme that meets the needs of our pupils.

The RSE Curriculum

Effective Relationships and Sex Education can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by pupils if they are to establish and maintain safe, positive, respectful and healthy relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health

and well-being. At Over St John's CE Primary School, we use the 1Decision Scheme of Work for PSHE, which is accredited by the PSHE Association, as we feel it fulfils the needs of our pupils as well as meeting our obligations to provide statutory Relationships and Health Education, this is supplemented with the use of the Goodness and Mercy materials. The content of this policy, as well as our PSHE curriculum, has been developed in relation to the needs of our pupils and in consultation with school staff, governors and senior leaders. As is required by the statutory guidance, parents were consulted on the relevant content within the policy. We believe that this process ensures that the curriculum we provide for our pupils is reflective of the requirements placed upon us and also of the needs of our school community, the Christian community and the wider community that our children live in.

Statutory Aspects

Relationships Education

As part of our PSHE/Relationships Education programme of study, children will be taught what a relationship is: the different types of relationships they might have e.g. with family members, friends, and other adults; the importance of healthy, respectful and secure relationships to wellbeing; what constitutes a healthy relationship, in person and online; how to set and observe appropriate boundaries in relationships; how to recognise when a situation is unsafe; strategies for dealing with situations that they find uncomfortable or that are unsafe and sources of help and advice. Our Relationships teaching is set within a context that is consistent with the school's Christian ethos and values and is based on inclusive Christian principles and values emphasising respect, compassion, loving care and forgiveness. It is taught in the light of the belief in the absolute worth of all people and the unconditional infinite love of God whilst being sensitive to circumstances of all children. We are mindful of the expression of family life and relationships in all groups and cultures, yet upholding that Christians highly regard the importance of marriage and loving relationships. Our focus is on building healthy attitudes and positive, respectful relationships in an environment where difference is celebrated and everyone is included and valued for who they are.

A summary of the key objectives of the statutory Relationships Education curriculum is set out below. A more detailed year group by year group version can be read in Appendix A.

Families and People who Care for Me

Children 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 represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong, which is particularly important in Christianity;
- 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 stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive;
- the importance of 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.

As part of statutory Health Education, children are taught in an age-appropriate way about puberty and the associated physical and emotional changes from Year 5 onwards. As part of the science curriculum, children learn in Year 5 about how reproduction occurs in some plants and animals.

Non-Statutory Sex Education

The DfE guidance 2019 recommends that all primary schools have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of pupils, and this should include how a baby is conceived and born. Although sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, we believe children should understand the facts about human reproduction before they leave primary school. We therefore provide some non-statutory sex education, covering how human reproduction and conception occurs.

In each year group, lessons will recap on the content of previous years as a reminder and to allow for children to 'catch up' if they were not present for the previous year's lessons. We recognise that children in younger year groups may ask questions that cannot be answered without reference to content from older year groups. Should this occur, we will respond by telling them that they will learn about that when they are older. Please see the relevant section within this policy for further information on how teachers manage difficult questions in RSE. We believe that teaching this additional content to pupils will ensure that they are better prepared for transition to secondary school and also support their personal and social development as they grow into young adults. As is legally prescribed, parents have a right to withdraw their children from these additional non - statutory sex education lessons – please see the relevant section within this policy in regard to this process. These sessions will be year group specific.

The Church of England guidelines state that RSE should be based on children learning that Christians believe the importance of marriage, family and committed relationships as key building blocks for society. Through our RSE teaching we will help our children to become more aware that Christians believe the importance of having respect for their own and other people's God given bodies and this should be valued and respected as a response to the gift of faith.

Delivery

All elements of our Relationships and Sex Education programme will be delivered in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner as part of our regular weekly timetabled PSHE education programme. RSE is delivered predominantly by class teachers in mixed gender groups, other than when it is deemed more appropriate for topics to be covered in single sex groups: this will be decided by the class teacher after discussion with the subject lead. Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE in school. All visitors will be familiar with and understand the school's RSE policy and be expected to work within it. An overview of our PSHE programme is included within the appendices of this policy for reference. Appendix A

Teaching and Learning Strategies

We aim to provide an environment and atmosphere for RSE where pupils feel respectful, safe, relaxed, unintimidated and focused and where children have confidence and trust in the knowledge, ability and skills of staff in school. This ensures that both pupils and staff feel fully confident in engaging in age-appropriate discussions around potentially sensitive topics and themes. To provide clarity and create a safe learning environment, at the beginning of each session the following ground rules will be agreed by the class.

- We will listen to others and respect what people say.
- We will not ask personal questions or put people 'on the spot.'
- We will not make assumptions about other people, their experiences or feelings.
- We have the right to 'pass' if we are not ready to comment.
- We will keep the conversation in the room (unless our teacher is concerned for our safety or wellbeing, when they may need to tell someone else to help us).
- We know we can ask for further information, help or advice during or after the lesson.

Other teaching and learning strategies utilised in RSE (and across the PSHE curriculum) to establish a safe learning environment include the following techniques:

- Using 'distancing' techniques such as role play, case studies, videos etc. to depersonalise sensitive issues.

To 'distance' the learning means to put the learning in the third person and to ensure that pupils are not encouraged to talk about their own or others' private experiences and personal examples. When learning is distanced, pupils are more able to engage with and discuss issues (especially those that may be more sensitive and controversial). When pupils feel put-on-the-spot and are asked to reflect on and share their own experiences, they may feel strong emotions that hinder the ability to learn from or derive meaning and insight from the example. It is therefore safer and more effective to help pupils to think about someone other than themselves, someone 'like them' – for example, a simple profile of a child about their age, who goes to a school like theirs. Pupils will then gain more from discussing questions like 'what might they think, feel, do?' and giving advice to characters in the role of a friend, sibling, classmate, agony aunt or uncle. (1decision)

- Anonymous question boxes (Ask-it-Basket). These can help children to have the confidence to ask sensitive questions and they provide an opportunity for teachers to pre-empt questions that might not be age appropriate or that might raise safeguarding or child protection concerns.

Key points for pupils about using an anonymous questions box:

- Anyone can use it to post a question, at any time and as many times as they want;
- Questions can be anonymous or they can put their name on their question so the teacher can follow it up with them individually;
- Only the teacher will see the questions, unless there are significant issues regarding a pupil's safety or wellbeing that need to be shared with others;
- Questions raised will be dealt with in the following lesson (or sooner if relevant to a pupil's safety and wellbeing). Depending on the nature of the question, some responses may be answered as part of a small group session or one-to-one and will be treated anonymously so no-one knows who asked the original question.

It will be emphasised to children that any voluntary sharing of information should be anonymous (for example "someone I know..." rather than "I" or naming names). Should personal questions be asked of either children or staff, children will be reminded that the ground rules for RSE prohibit personal questions. All staff teaching RSE will be supported and advised by the PSHE Subject Lead and Senior Leadership Team on these matters as required.

Managing Difficult Questions

During both formal and informal PSHE/RSE sessions, pupils are encouraged to ask questions. Any questions from pupils are answered according to the age and maturity of the pupil concerned and if the teacher delivering the session deems it appropriate to answer.

Teachers will:

- Use specific ground rules for this work which will clarify boundaries for children/young people, and mitigate disclosures in class;
- Clarify that personal questions should not be asked;
- Clarify that pupils should not give out personal information in class but speak to someone they trust after the lesson, e.g. class teacher. In some lessons, an anonymous question box may be used to allow children to ask questions about potentially sensitive or embarrassing topics. Teaching staff will endeavour to answer questions as openly as possible but if faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, or that is not age-appropriate (or within the school's RSE policy), provision may be made to address the individual child/young person's requirements. The school believes that individual teachers must use their professional skill and discretion in this area and refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are concerned about any question from a safeguarding perspective.

If a teacher does not know the answer to a question or if a question is felt to be inappropriate, this should be acknowledged and if considered necessary, this may be followed up outside of the classroom environment with individual pupils. Children may also be signposted back to parents/carers who have ultimate responsibility in talking to their children about sensitive matters. We will also encourage parents to talk with school if they have any questions or queries and if they would like advice on how to better support their child and continue learning outside of the classroom.

A range of strategies for dealing with inappropriate questions might be:

- Remind the pupil and the group of your ground rules and ask them what they think might be the right thing to do in response to the question;
- Ask the question back to the pupil or pupils to ascertain their current understanding or misconceptions;
- 'Park' the question. A useful technique that gives time to consider how best to respond. Explaining that the teacher will answer it later, once the teacher has researched an appropriate response. Rehearse an answer with a colleague before presenting it back to the individual, group or whole class. If the response is not appropriate for the whole class and better as a discussion with the pupil on a one-to-one basis, it is also best to have another member of staff present. This 'park the question' technique is vital for questions that are inappropriate or which may raise potential child protection issues, where you should also involve your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. Liaise with your PSHE lead, your school's pastoral head or a member of your Senior Leadership Team (SLT) before responding. Staff will remember their legal safeguarding duty to share information if they suspect a pupil is at risk.
- Explain that the question goes beyond the learning outcomes of the lesson today and explain pupils will learn more about this as they get older.
- There may also be occasions when it is best to refer pupils to parents/carers to discuss a question. It is good practice to talk to the pupil(s) concerned before involving a parent or carer - to explain that it is in their best interests to talk to their parent(s) or a trusted adult. If a child refuses or rejects talking to their parent or carer, depending on the question, this will be taken seriously and discussed with the head/designated safeguarding lead and acted upon in accordance with the school's confidentiality policy.

In each RSE education lesson, make a question box/bag or 'Ask-it Basket' available in which pupils can place anonymous questions or concerns. This enables pupils to ask questions with anonymity and without embarrassment. Staff will introduce the box/bag or 'Ask-it Basket', explaining its purpose, either whilst creating the ground rules or at the beginning of each lesson and ensure it is accessible both during and after every lesson. It will be made clear that pupils can place questions in the box at any time and that they will be addressed at a later date e.g. in a follow-up lesson, although it is also helpful to set aside some time as part of the lesson (or after a lesson) for pupils to do this. All pupils will be encouraged to use it by asking everyone to write a response, even if they don't have a question, so that no-one feels embarrassed about asking a question in this way. This means that everyone is writing at the same time.

Recording and Assessment

Pupils will have the opportunity to reflect on their learning within lessons and at the end of each unit using the 1decision self-assessment sheets for each unit. In addition to the pupils' self-assessment, teachers will assess through informal methods, such as observations and class or group discussions. Observations may have a particular focus e.g. children's listening skills, empathy etc. Quizzes may be used before and after a unit of work to aid assessment. Elements of RSE that occur in the science curriculum will be assessed through recorded work in science lessons to establish age related expectations of knowledge and understanding.

Resources

At Over St John's CE Primary School, we use the 1decision Scheme of Work for PSHE, which is accredited by the PSHE Association. 1decision is a comprehensive scheme of planning and resources, which is periodically updated to ensure it remains relevant and engaging to children and meets all statutory requirements of PSHE. Class teachers review the planning and resources for each lesson to ensure they are fully relevant and

accessible to the needs of children in their classes and tailor them if necessary. Additional resources may be used if considered appropriate. The use of resources outside the 1decision scheme will be in consultation with the PSHE Subject lead and resources will be selected to ensure they are consistent with the school's ethos and values, support our aims and objectives and meet the needs of our pupils.

The resources we use in delivering non-statutory sex education include the 1Decision materials and Goodness and Mercy series of sessions in Years 5 and 6. These resources are designed to provide an age-appropriate perspective and contextualises the facts about human conception and reproduction within a committed, loving adult relationship. These materials are available for parents/carers to view on request to the PSHE Subject Lead or class teacher.

Safeguarding

In providing children with an understanding of healthy relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider RSE to be an important part of our school's approach to safeguarding. Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. Teachers will take these matters seriously and speak to the child away from the class as a matter of priority. Teachers will draw their concerns to the attention of the Head Teacher who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the school or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (Emma Bettley and Sophie Riley). (See also Safeguarding Policy).

We occasionally engage the expertise of other appropriate external partners to work with us to provide advice and support to children with regard to RSE and Health Education. Such visits should be arranged through the PSHE Subject Lead and with the approval of senior leaders. These sessions are in addition to and intended to complement, our existing RSE provision. Where external partners are involved, teachers will have discussed and shared the planning and content of the sessions with visitors in advance. A class teacher will always be present and responsible for classroom management. Visitors supporting the delivery of RSE will follow the agreed ground rules and the protocols set out above regarding any safeguarding or child protection concerns.

Inclusivity and Special Educational Needs

Our pupils have different needs based on their emotional and physical development, life experiences and learning differences, but we aim to ensure that all pupils are properly included in RSE in line with the Equality Act 2010. Teachers will plan and deliver work with a variety of adaptations, in order to meet the needs of individual pupils with SEN. We focus on activities that increase a pupil's assertiveness, communication and relationship skills, their self-esteem and understanding.

Equality and Diversity

Planning and resources are reviewed to ensure they comply with equalities legislation and the school's equal opportunities policy. All RSE is taught without bias and in line with responsibilities such as those contained within the Equality Act (2010). The personal beliefs and attitudes of staff delivering RSE will not influence the teaching of the subject in school. In our school we seek to recognise and embrace the difference and diversity. We aim to respect, value and celebrate religious, ethnic and cultural diversity as part of modern Britain. We will explore different cultural beliefs and values and encourage activities that challenge stereotypes and discrimination and present children with accurate information based on the law. We will use a range of teaching materials and resources and No Outsiders resources to encourage a sense of inclusiveness. We do not use RSE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation.

The Role of Parents/Parental Right of Withdrawal

We recognise that parents and carers are the primary providers of RSE for their children. Our RSE curriculum is designed to support and complement this. We aim to build a positive and supportive relationship with parents and carers through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this we will:

- Inform parents about the school's RSE policy and practice;
- Provide opportunities to view videos and resources used in the RSE programme;

- Answer any questions that parents may have about RSE for their child;
- Take seriously any issues or concerns that parents raise.

We believe that all of the content within our school's PSHE curriculum, including RSE, is of the utmost importance and relevance to all pupils. However, parents have the legal right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all non-statutory sex education other than that which is part of the National Curriculum for Science. Please note that there is no parental right of withdrawal from Relationships Education or Health Education content within the school curriculum or from any statutory sex education that forms part of the National Curriculum for Science. These are statutory requirements which the DfE mandates schools to teach; please see the statutory document if further information is required.

We will inform parents of the right to withdraw by letter in the first part of Summer Term in advance of non-statutory sex education lessons being taught. Parents and carers who wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child from non-statutory sex education should talk with the class teacher, the PSHE Subject Lead or the Head Teacher who will explore any concerns and discuss resources being used. If parents still wish to withdraw their child from non-statutory sex education lessons, this request will be recorded and suitable alternative arrangements made for pupils during relevant lessons. The issue of withdrawal will be handled as sensitively as possible. Parents should also understand that the decision to remove their child from these lessons means that they themselves will assume responsibility for talking to their children about any related sex education themes covered outside of National Curriculum Science.

Monitoring and Review

Our aim is to provide RSE that is respectful, relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our pupils, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason, we regularly review the RSE curriculum to evaluate its effectiveness and will inform parents of any revisions to the school policy or curriculum as required. Teachers will continually reflect on the effectiveness of our PSHE provision, and the PSHE Subject Lead will gather information through the annual monitoring cycle collating staff views through regular Staff Voice feedback. Pupil Voice exercises will also be used to inform reviews and updates to planning, resources and activities.

Location and Dissemination

Copies of this policy are held centrally on the school system. Further copies are available in the staff policy folder on staff share, on the school website and paper copies from the school office on request from parents.

Staff Support and Training

Over St John's CE Primary School believes in the importance of appropriate staff training to enable staff to deliver effective RSE. The PSHE Subject Lead will access courses or INSET opportunities to assist staff involved in the delivery of RSE in accordance with the School Development Plan.

Signed : *H N Williamson*

PSHE/RSE Subject Lead

Signed: *S McClellan*

Vice Chair of Governors

Signed: *E Snowden*

Head Teacher

Date: **May 2025**

Review Date: **May 2027**