



## **Witchford Village College**

### **Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Approved by Local Governing Body</b> | June 2024                                |
| <b>Review cycle</b>                     | Annually - to be reviewed September 2025 |

## Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- This policy fulfils our school ethos of realising the potential of each student by ensuring that they develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to keep themselves healthy and safe, and prepared for life and work. Well-delivered PSHE programmes have an impact on both academic and non-academic outcomes for students, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.
- Our school curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, schools' statutory duties outlined in the Education Act 2002 and the Academies Act 2010, and is essential to Ofsted judgements in relation to personal development, behaviour, welfare and safeguarding. From September 2020, health education, relationships education and sex & relationships education is also required as per the statutory guidance from the Department for Education.

Member of staff responsible for overseeing the delivery of RSE as part of PSHE Curriculum – Lisa Barker: [lbarker@wvc.tela.org.uk](mailto:lbarker@wvc.tela.org.uk)

## Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

## Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy, we must provide RSE to all students under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we're required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state, as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

We at Witchford Village College teach RSE as set out in this policy.

- > Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

- > Relationships and Sex Education (Secondary)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-secondary>

## Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
4. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly students want from their RSE
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

It is essential that we ensure that our students are prepared for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Relationships and Sex Education is vital to make students aware of how to live happily and safely as they grow up.

In response to the Ofsted report on Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Sexual Harassment in schools (2021), the ELA Trust practically designed and implemented the 5Rs:

- **RSHE** – relationship education in PSHE.
- **Research** and Training for staff
- **Report** any concerns immediately
- **Recording** of all confidential concerns
- **Responding** quickly and **reviewing** systems

All five of the elements above are integrated into a variety of areas of college policy. The focus here will be on the RSHE element.

This education must be inclusive, age-appropriate, well researched and ensure that it meets the requirements of the law.

The programme will be delivered through a PSHE, extended assemblies, drop-down sessions and external speakers. Training is provided for all staff via The Terrance Higgins Trust and half-termly CPD led by the PSHE lead of the school.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- The Assistant Head for PSHE is responsible for the overview, quality assurance and delivery of this programme. Any queries about this policy, or the right to withdraw, please contact them directly.
- **The governing board**  
The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.
- **The headteacher**  
The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE.
- **Staff**

### **Staff are responsible for:**

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
  - Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
  - Monitoring progress
  - Responding to the needs of individual students
  - Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE
  - Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.
  - Reporting concerns and safeguarding disclosures
- **Students**

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity in line with the ethos, vision and values of the school.

## **Curriculum**

Our RSE curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1. This is evaluated and refined as an ongoing process and we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, students and staff, and taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that students are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

This Policy is launched via Edulink message; the Newsletter and made available on the school website.

## **Delivery of RSE**

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers, amongst other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children or young carers).

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

### Methodology

The programme will be taught through a range of teaching methods, including discussion, scenarios and approved videos. We deliver PSHE and RSE with core values in mind and all lessons are tiered to ensure that the right people are teaching the right content at the right time. Some lessons are interactive and others are delivered in extended assemblies. We also have external speakers to support key messages.

### Timetabling

The school teaches its RSE provision during personal development in tutor time, assemblies, extended assemblies and Drop Down Days. All the material delivered is built on the idea of an age-appropriate curriculum, typically looking at the nature of the material and the Safeguarding context of our school.

### Assessment

The programme is designed to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes students need to keep themselves healthy and safe, and prepared for life. Monitoring and measuring this is therefore undertaken through non-assessed approaches. Students will not receive a grade or written feedback on their progress. Monitoring of progress is via student surveys and forums.

## Creating a Safe & Supportive Learning Environment

RSE education works within students' real life experiences and it is therefore essential to establish a safe learning environment. We create this safe and supportive learning environment by discussing clear 'ground rules' at the beginning of each session (or series of sessions). We also adhere to the school's safeguarding & child protection policy if students indicate that they may be vulnerable and/or at risk.

When delivering PSHE and RSE we take into account the needs of all students, particularly those with special educational needs and those with potential triggers. Which is why the PSHE coordinators work closely with the SENDCo and DSL to tailor support as required. This may consist of 1:1s, small groups, interventions or just general help and support during planned activities.

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of students will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all students' experiences
- During lessons, makes students feel:
  - Safe and supported
  - Able to engage with the key messages
- We will also:
- Make sure that students learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:
  - A whole-class setting
  - Small groups or targeted sessions
  - 1-to-1 discussions
  - Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

We **will** consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support students in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our students
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to students' experiences and won't provoke distress

We will make sure that an agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

The school remains responsible for what is said to students. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We **will**:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
  - Are age-appropriate
  - Are in line with students' developmental stage
  - Comply with:
    - This policy
    - The Teachers' Standards
    - The Equality Act 2010
    - The Human Rights Act 1998
    - The Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on:
  - What they're going to say
  - Their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use
- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers
- We **won't**, under any circumstances:
  - Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
  - Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

## **Entitlement & Equality of Opportunity**

Classroom practice and teaching approaches promote the needs and interests of all students, irrespective of gender, sexuality, faith, culture, ability, maturity or personal circumstance. Our curriculum has been designed specifically to take into account students' ability, age, readiness and cultural backgrounds at each stage of learning to ensure accessibility to all students.

Our programme is used as a way to address diversity issues both within school and in the wider community and to ensure equality. By promoting diversity & inclusion, we expect all students to actively consider the needs of others.

We recognise the right for all students to have access to RSE learning which meets their needs. We will ensure that students with SEND receive equal access to RSE following the same curriculum to their peers. Careful consideration is given and differentiation needs identified by those delivering sessions with support from our SEND department. In some cases, the content or delivery of the lesson may be adapted to suit the needs of the learners to scaffold learning as required. Where learning support assistants are available, they will be tasked to work with students identified as most in need.

We will not exclude access to RSE for any student by removing them from RSE lessons, as these aspects of personal and social development are as important to all student as their academic achievement. Students absent will be signposted to additional support and the curriculum is designed to be sequential in order to support learners and embed core knowledge.

## **Parents' right to withdraw**

Full RSE education provision should be accessible to every pupil, although parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from some aspects of the programme. Our school adheres to the Department for Education Statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education mandatory curriculum which came into effect in September 2020.

As per the statutory guidance, parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from Sex Education delivered as part of the PSHE programme. There is however no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education, nor is there a right to withdraw from topics taught within the Science National Curriculum. This includes the mechanics of sexual intercourse, which are covered in the Science National Curriculum and therefore form a compulsory part of a child's education.

A thorough review of RSE content taught has been undertaken with a focus group of teaching staff (2020). In order to meet the new government guidelines regarding Health Education and Relationships Education, some topics will unavoidably include elements of Sex Education in order to contextualise the topic (e.g. sexual health and consent). However, parents can request that their child is withdrawn from sessions discussing sex and pleasure which are taught in late KS4, via the consultation process described below.



## Making a request to withdraw a child from Sex Education

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education (against their parents' carers' wishes) rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

Upon receipt of this form, parents (and, where appropriate, the child) will be invited in to discuss their request with either a member of the senior leadership team to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum; the benefits of receiving this important education; and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child (including any social and emotional effects of being excluded, 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). The school will document this process to ensure a record is kept.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative school work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education and signposting is provided for students, parents and carers to support them.

In the event of withdrawal, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. This process is the same for students with SEND. However there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher and SENCO take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

Also in the event of withdrawal, the PSHE Co-ordinator(s) will provide parents with materials in order to deliver the teaching to their child at home. During any period of withdrawal, the school has a duty to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful PSHE education.

## **Training and difficult conversations**

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The headteacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

RSE is taught in a safe, non-judgemental environment where adults and children are confident that they will be respected.

We acknowledge that sensitive and potentially difficult issues will arise in PSHE, as students will naturally share information and ask questions. When spontaneous discussion arises, it is guided in a way that reflects the stated school aims and curriculum content for PSHE. As a first principle, we answer questions relating to the taught, planned curriculum for that age group to the whole class. We answer questions relating to areas beyond the taught, planned curriculum for that age group, in

a sensitive and age appropriate way, only to the students who have asked the question. If a member of staff is uncertain about the answer to a question, or indeed whether they should answer it, they will seek guidance from Heads of Houses, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the PSHE lead. Questions may be referred to parents/carers if it is not appropriate to answer them in school.

Where a question or comment from a pupil in the classroom indicates the possibility of abuse or risk of harm, teachers will pass this information to the designated person for safeguarding and child protection, in line with school policy and procedures. During the delivery of more challenging PSHE, students receive a link to anonymised surveys to ask questions and the answers are addressed in future sessions.

Due to the nature of PSHE education, students' learning may result in them seeking advice or support on a specific personal issue. Teachers cannot offer complete confidentiality; it is important for everyone's safety that teachers and students are clear about what can and cannot be kept confidential. This is explicitly taught to students and revisited through the curriculum and with reminders in assemblies.

## Ground Rules

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### **Monitoring arrangements**

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the senior leadership team through PSHE and Personal Development Learning Walks and monitoring Forms, Head of House appraisals, student surveys, student forums and staff, student and parental feedback.

This policy will be reviewed by the SLT PSHE Lead annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board and headteacher.

### **Other school policies**

The PSHE policy complements our existing school policies which can be found on the school website:

- PSHE Policy
- Equality Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Appendix 1: Relationship and sex education curriculum map

**Add link to PSHE Guide online**

Appendix 2: By the end of secondary school students should know

| TOPIC    | STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW   |
|----------|--|
| Families | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships</li><li>• How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children</li><li>• What marriage is, including their legal status, e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony</li><li>• Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into</li><li>• The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships</li><li>• The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting</li><li>• How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed</li></ul> |

| TOPIC   | STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW   |
|---|--|
| Respectful relationships, including friendships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</li> <li>• How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)</li> <li>• 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 people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help</li> <li>• That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control</li> <li>• What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable</li> <li>• The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal</li> </ul> |

| TOPIC            | STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW   |
|------------------|--|
| Online and media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online</li> <li>• About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online</li> <li>• Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them</li> <li>• What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online</li> <li>• The impact of viewing harmful content</li> <li>• That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners</li> <li>• That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail</li> <li>• How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online</li> </ul> |
| Being safe       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)</li> </ul>   |

| TOPIC  | STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW   |
|--|--|
| Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship</li> <li>• That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing</li> <li>• The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women</li> <li>• That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others</li> <li>• That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex</li> <li>• The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available</li> <li>• The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment</li> <li>• How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour</li> <li>• How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment</li> </ul> |

Appendix 3: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

| TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS   |  |       |  |
|--|--|-------|--|
| Name of child  |  | Class |  |
| Name of parent   |  | Date  |  |
| Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education |  |       |  |
|  |  |       |  |
| Any other information you would like the school to consider                      |  |       |  |
|  |  |       |  |
| Parent signature   |  |       |  |

| TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL               |  |
|---|--|
| Agreed actions from discussion with parents |  |
|   |  |