

RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION POLICY

THIS POLICY INCLUDES THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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1. POLICY AIMS AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE:

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

- Teach pupils how to be safe and healthy
- Teach pupils how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Support the school's ethos of nurturing a caring community

At Pennthorpe, we recognise that as a school we have a responsibility under The Relationships Education, Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 & 35 of the Children & Social Work Act 2017, to provide comprehensive Relationship Education and Health Education for all pupils receiving primary and secondary education. RSE became statutory in all schools from September 2020. The teaching of RSE complies with the Equality Act 2010.

The law requires that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is taught in all secondary schools in England, and that Relationships Education is taught in all primary schools in England. Primary schools are also required to teach the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum.

At Pennthorpe, we teach RSE as set out in this policy and ensure that every registered pupil who is provided with primary education (aged 5 to 11 years) is provided with relationship education and those of secondary age, relationships and sex education (aged 11 to 13 years).

This policy complements the school's Behaviour Management and Sanctions Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Safeguarding Policy as well as the PSHEE and SMSC curriculum.

2. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION:

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. All of these stakeholders have been given access to the policy and have had the opportunity to consult the school about its contents should they wish for example:

- Parents are provided with the contents of sex education lessons prior to consenting to participation;
- Parents are provided with the content of the RSE Curriculum;
- RSE Clinics for parents are hosted annually to allow for discussion and questioning;
- Staff are comfortable with the delivery of sex education, and this is not mandatory for all staff.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to feedback on the policy and the curriculum, in relation to its effectiveness and suitability, through the use of 'Pupil Voice' and assessment at the end of each topic covered.

Views of each stakeholder are listened to and considered; however, these do not surmount to the power of veto over curriculum content and the school reserves the right to determine this.

A copy of the RSE policy is published on the school website and will be available from the School Office on request.

3. DEFINITION:

RSE teaches children and young people how to be safe and healthy. It teaches them how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity or lifestyles.

WHAT IS RSE?

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It prepares children for the changes and challenges of puberty and allows them to consider the responsibilities of adulthood. It also teaches about reproduction and sexual health but does not promote early sexual activity or any one type of relationship.

In Key Stage 1 and 2 (Reception – Year 6) RSE is made of the following areas of focus:

- Families and people who care for me
- Recognising caring friendships and respectful relationships
- Online relationships and being safe

In Key Stage 3 (Years 7 & 8) these themes are developed further, and additional guidance is given on intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health. Pupils will be informed of relevant legal information when topics are being taught, such as consent (including the age of consent), FGM, sexuality, gender identity, exploitation. All of this will be explored in an age-appropriate manner.

WHY SHOULD IT BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOL?

RSE begins at a very early age and, while much of it is learnt from parents, it is also received from friends, books, magazines, television, internet, music, films and so on. Some of this information can be incorrect, confusing or frightening. RSE in school provides a secure framework and environment in which pupils can be given the facts using appropriate materials. It also allows them to develop necessary personal skills and a positive attitude to sexual health and well-being.

Wide ranging research has shown that children want information about changes and situations they will experience before they happen to them. A structured programme in school increases the likelihood of this being achieved. Also, although children want to be able to discuss relationships and sex with their parents, many parents and children prefer the school to take a lead and provide a springboard for the discussion. A partnership between home and school and open dialogue between parent and child are the ideal.

WHAT DOES PENNTHORPE WANT RSE TO DO FOR THE PUPILS?

RSE will:

- provide information which is easy to understand and relevant and appropriate to the age and maturity of the children
- include the development of communication and social skills
- encourage the exploration and clarification of values and the development of positive attitudes

Through RSE, we want to ensure that the children:

- develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings, friendships and relationships
- are able to name parts of their body and describe how their bodies work
- can protect themselves and ask for help and support
- are prepared for puberty
- learn about the nature of marriage/stable relationships and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children
- understand and respect different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships and dealing with strangers
- understand the characteristics of healthy relationships
- understand how relationships may affect mental and physical health

and in the Senior Years:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour
- understand the law regarding the age of consent and the arguments for delaying sexual activity to maturity and within a loving, responsible relationship
- are aware of online safety in regard to forming relationships
- understand the reasons for protected sex and the importance of sexual health
- understand and respect all sexual orientations
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within relationships
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others
- to have sufficient skills and information to be able to protect themselves
- to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support

4. DELIVERY:

RSE is taught by Form Tutors and is rooted in the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum. It is also supported by the whole School's ethos.

The curriculum overviews for Pre-Prep and Prep are attached in Appendix 1. We review and adapt the curriculum when necessary to ensure it meets the needs of our pupils. The curriculum outline for all children regarding relationships and sex education, other than that covered by the Science curriculum, is detailed in Appendix 1.

The Science National Curriculum requires that in the Pre-Prep pupils are taught:

- that animals, including humans, move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce
- to recognise and compare the main external parts of the bodies of humans and other animals
- that humans and other animals can produce offspring and that these offspring grow into adults
- to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others, and to treat others with sensitivity

In Years 3 to 6 the following concepts are revisited as part of the compulsory Science curriculum:

- that the life processes common to humans and other animals include nutrition, growth and reproduction
- about the main stages of the human life cycle
- about the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence
- sexual and asexual reproduction in plants compared with sexual reproduction in animals
- how the growth and reproduction of bacteria and the replication of viruses can affect health.

In Years 7 and 8 the following concepts are revisited:

- that fertilization in humans is the fusion of a male and a female cell
- about the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence
- about the human reproductive system, including the menstrual cycle and fertilisation
- how the foetus develops in the uterus, the role of the placenta and the birth process.
- Reproduction in flowering plants
- The effect of parental lifestyle on the baby's health.

Where any of this information or these topics are introduced through the RSE syllabus earlier than the year designated by the Science syllabus, parents have the right to withdraw their children from the lessons.

Discrete lessons are allocated for those parts of the RSE syllabus that cannot be delivered via Science, PSHEE, Huddles, Circle Time and other subjects. These are taught by the Form Tutor plus supplementary specialist visitors from outside agencies when felt to be appropriate. Across all Key Stages, pupils will be supported with developing the following skills:

- Communication, including how to manage changing relationships and emotions

- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- Assertiveness
- Seeking help and support when required
- Informed decision-making
- Self-respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and maximising a healthy lifestyle
- Managing conflict
- Discussion and group work

The teaching of RSE will uphold Pennthorpe's Core Values of Tolerance, Respect, Honesty, Positivity, Kindness and Perseverance as well as courtesy and self-efficacy.

Parents are able to keep up to date with what their child has learned in PSHEE and RSE through weekly communications sent via the portal and PSHEE and RSE Tea and Talk sessions.

5. INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING:

We want RSE to be sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Content will be accessible for all children, including those with SEND.

Lessons will also help children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

6. SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE AT RISK:

Children will need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware of their pupils' needs and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse, they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY, ADVICE AND SAFEGUARDING:

Good practice allows children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children should be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This should include processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.

All school staff have completed safeguarding training and should be mindful of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures when delivering RSE sessions. Staff understand that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality to pupils and pupils will be made aware of this. Staff will work within the school's agreed procedures for recording and reporting disclosures and the nature of access to this information.

All governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

All lessons, especially those in the RSE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex whilst also developing appropriate personal and social skills.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's policies. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstances they would have to inform others, e.g., parents, Heads of Year, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

8. CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS AND PUPIL VOICE:

Pennthorpe wants to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. We want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children and young people. We also want to ensure that pupils' wishes are considered in the planning and reviewing of our curriculum. Pupils are made aware that there are multiple forums available to ask questions, raise concerns or give feedback. Examples include: questions baskets, conversations in 1:1 sessions with pastoral staff when appropriate, pupil feedback questionnaires and end-of-topic assessments.

CONTROVERSIAL OR SENSITIVE ISSUES

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, or of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. As a school we believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child or young person's questions hint at abuse, are deliberately tendentious or are of a personal nature.

Through our pastoral structure, pupils will have regular opportunities to ask questions in smaller groups, on a one-to-one basis with a teacher or anonymously through question boxes and baskets.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

THE GOVERNING BODY

The governing body has delegated the approval of this policy to the Head.

THE HEAD

The Head is responsible for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE. The Head, in conjunction with SLT, is responsible for the approval of the RSE policy on an annual basis.

HEAD OF PSHEE AND RSE

The Head of PSHEE and RSE is responsible for monitoring the delivery of RSE, they are responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school.

FORM TUTORS AND HEADS OF YEAR

Form Tutors and Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive, non-judgemental and factual way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE
- Allow scope for young people to ask questions

Form Tutors do not have the automatic right to opt out of teaching RSE. Form Tutors who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Head of PSHEE & RSE. Support measures and training will be put in place to enable all relevant staff to feel confident and comfortable with the delivery of RSE.

PUPILS

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

10. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT AND PARENTS RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:

Parents are the key people in:

- teaching their children about relationships and sex
- maintaining the culture and ethos of the family
- helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up
- preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings.

Parents need to know that the personal beliefs and attitudes of the teachers will not influence the teaching of the RSE curriculum. Teachers will work within the guidelines of this policy and the scheme of work.

The school will provide support for parents through sharing with them the school's RSE programme contents.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE.

Before doing so, parents are encouraged to talk to the Form Teacher and/or view the teaching resources in order to inform any decisions regarding withdrawing their child.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Head. The Head will discuss the request with parents and where appropriate, the child, to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature of the purpose of the curriculum. The school will document this process and ensure a record is kept. A purposeful education will be offered to pupils who are withdrawn from RSE. The RSE curriculum will be shared with parents to ensure coverage if pupils are withdrawn.

The RSE policy will be shared with any parents who wish to withdraw their child.

11. TRAINING:

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of our continuing professional development calendar as well as during pastoral and departmental meetings. This ensures they feel confident and comfortable with delivering the RSE curriculum and have numerous forums to ask questions, allay concerns and receive regular support and guidance.

The Head of PSHEE and RSE 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.

12. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS:

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Head of PSHEE & RSE, supported by Heads of Year, through:

- Planning checks
- Learning walks
- Pupil voice
- Ongoing parental feedback

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class Form Tutors as part of our internal assessment systems.