



Relationships and Sex Education Policy (RSE)

Member of leadership team with lead responsibility for oversight and update of policy	GTN (QUI)
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Introduction

At The Polesworth School it is our belief that effective relationships and sex education (RSE) is crucial in supporting young people through their physical, emotional and moral development, enabling them to make informed life choices confidently and helping them to respect both themselves and others as they move through life. We also believe that parents are the key people in educating their children about sex and relationships and as such, see our role as working in partnership with parents and students to fulfil that responsibility.

What is Relationships and Sex Education?

The government's aim for RSE is: *“to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.*

This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.” (DfE Statutory Guidance 2019 - Updated 2021)

Based upon DfE guidance and statutory requirements, The Polesworth School seeks to ensure that RSE:

- enables our students to better understand the nature of committed, stable relationships and friendships and how relationships might contribute to happiness and bringing up of children
- enables our students to understand both marriage and other long-term relationships
- prepares students for the changes that occur to their bodies, minds and emotions as a consequence of growth from childhood to adulthood.

In addition, The Polesworth School believes that RSE should:

- be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life
- be an entitlement for all young people

- be set within a wider school context and should support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. N.B. 'Family' is a broad concept and includes a variety of types of family structure, which accepts different approaches other than merely the nuclear family.
- encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure. The important values are love, respect and care for each other.
- generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment
- recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

Relationships and Sex Education at The Polesworth School has three main elements, all of which are important for a balanced RSE programme:

Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral choices
- learning the value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships
- learning about the nurture of children
- learning the value of respect, love and care
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- challenging myths, misconceptions, stereotypes, prejudice, and false assumptions.

Personal and Social Skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- developing self-respect and empathy for others
- learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- managing conflict
- empowering students with the skills to be able to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and Understanding

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception, and support services
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

Aims

At The Polesworth School, our aim is to provide balanced, factual information about human reproduction while also considering the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSE programme aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and non-sexual relationships
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice and promote equality and diversity
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity
- understand the reasons for having protected sex
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships.

The RSE programme

The content of the school's programme is based on the National Curriculum Science Order and the statutory DfE guidance for PSHE/Relationships and Sex Education. In line with this

guidance, the school recognises that RSE must be taught at both Key Stages and indeed, RSE appears in each Year's PSHE programme and is described in the school's prospectus. Parents wishing to see the RSE programme and the materials used and/or the PSHE scheme of learning may do so by contacting their child's Head of Year. Parents will also be informed when 'Sex Education' is going to be delivered in school to their child via 'My Child' with an invitation to support the work being done in school by discussing issues at home. Under DFE Statutory guidance 'Relationships and Sex Education' (2019) "parents have the right for their child to be excused from sex education within RSE only".

The delivery of RSE

The effective delivery of RSE in schools is recognised as a key factor in reducing teenage pregnancies and improving sexual health (DfE 2006) and it is our intention that RSE is always delivered professionally and with sensitivity.

All teachers are responsible for teaching about and modelling good relationships within school. Much of the general work in school is based on good relationships and in this regard, RSE is supported by the school's Behaviour Policy. It is the responsibility of the Science department's staff to deliver the National Curriculum Science Order according to the Schemes of Learning. Where specific sex education occurs, which is outside or beyond the National Curriculum Science Order, RSE is delivered as part of the school's PSHE programme, via off timetable RSE sessions to focus specifically on age appropriate, sex education and through the PSHE and Citizenship programme during tutor time.

Methods of teaching and resourcing

In the delivery of RSE, teachers will use a variety of teaching methods and resources. The following are recognised methods for the effective delivery of RSE:

- Discussion
- Scenarios
- Research and presentation.

Teachers will also use adaptive teaching strategies where necessary to meet the developmental needs of individual students. Parents are welcome to discuss with the school our approach to RSE and the methods of teaching and learning to be used.

The school uses a wide variety of resources, including videos which are produced for schools by educational publishers and organisations such as the NSPCC.

Monitoring and evaluating RSE

RSE will be monitored by the Assistant Head: Personal Development who holds responsibility for ensuring the effective delivery of PSHE. This includes:

- Ensuring that the school's RSE programme meets statutory requirements
- Monitoring effective delivery of the programme
- Monitoring the use of teaching materials
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the school's programme.

Dealing with sensitive issues

Teachers need to ensure that they are aware of issues that may arise out of teaching and learning about RSE. The following are protocols for discussion-based lessons with students:

- no one (teacher or student) will have to answer a personal question
- no one will be forced to take part in a discussion
- only the correct names for body parts will be used
- meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way
- teachers may use their discretion in responding to questions and may say that the appropriate person to answer that question is the parent.

Where a member of staff is concerned that a child protection issue is arising, it is his/her responsibility to follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in this matter.

Visitors contributing to RSE

The school may invite experts on issues relating to RSE to deliver RSE content as well as using health and other professionals associated with the school. All health and other professionals/visitors will be asked to meet the following requirements:

- qualified to make an appropriate contribution at the invitation of the school
- agreement with the aims of the school in delivering its policy on RSE
- agreement with supervision by a member of staff, who will be present at all times
- agreement to follow the school's Child Protection procedures if a disclosure occurs within the classroom setting
- to know and understand where their contribution fits into the school's programme for RSE and PSHE.

Services to Young People provided by the school

The school facilitates various services for its young people which are provided by health and other professionals such as Compass and the Mental Health in Schools Team. Students may be referred to these services if the school's pastoral team feel this would support the young person.

The school also runs a LGBTQ+ Equality forum which supports students and provides greater understanding of LGBTQ+ issues.

It is clear from Government guidelines that when not in a classroom context, key professionals are covered by their own professional codes of conduct:

Health professionals

Outside the teaching situation, health professionals such as school nurses can:

- give one-to-one advice or information to a student on a health-related matter including contraception; and
- exercise their own professional judgement as to whether a young person has the maturity to consent to medical treatment including contraceptive treatment.

The criteria for making such a decision are based on the 'Fraser guidelines' and can be found in guidance issued jointly by the Health Education Authority, the British Medical Association, Brook Advisory Centres and others. Any competent young person, regardless of age, can independently seek medical advice and give valid consent to treatment. (Circular 0116/2000).

Confidentiality

In cases where a teacher learns from a student under the age of 16 that they are having, or contemplating having, sexual intercourse the teacher should:

- encourage the student to talk to their parent or carer
- encourage the student to *contact the school nurse or counsellor to access contraceptive and/or other services in the locality of the school*

When the teacher who receives the information believes there is a child protection issue to be addressed, they should refer the case to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). They should also make clear to the student that they cannot guarantee confidentiality. The teacher should ensure that the student understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality. The school nurse will be bound by the UKCC code of conduct. The school expects that health professionals employed by the school will maintain their professional status and registration.

Parental right to withdrawal from RSE

“Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE” (RSE Statutory Guidance 2019) They do so in writing to the Headteacher. When the Headteacher receives such a letter, the parents will be invited to a meeting, at which the school’s policy and rationale will be explained with the intention of allaying the concerns of the parents. If that is not possible the student will be withdrawn from this RSE session with suitable work and supervision provided.

The right to withdraw is made clear in the school’s prospectus and a copy of this policy will be made available to all parents who request it at the cost of photocopying or it will be e-mailed to them.

APPENDIX

What the Law Says

Consent to medical treatment and The Fraser Guidelines

Adults, defined as people over the age of 18, are usually regarded as competent to decide their own treatment. The Family Law Reform Act 1969 also gives the right to consent to treatment to anyone aged 16 to 18.

Young people under the age of 16 can consent to medical treatment if they have sufficient maturity and judgement to enable them fully to understand what is proposed. This was clarified in England and Wales by the House of Lords in the 1985 Gillick case.

Although it is an offence to have sex with someone under the age of 16 it is lawful for doctors to provide contraceptive advice and treatment without parental consent providing certain criteria are met. These criteria are known as the Fraser Guidelines.

The Fraser Guidelines

In 1985, Lord Fraser said in judgment of the Gillick case, that a professional can give contraceptive advice or treatment to a person under 16 without parental consent providing the professional is satisfied that:

- the young person will understand the professional's advice
- the young person cannot be persuaded to tell his or her parents or allow the doctor to tell them they are seeking contraceptive advice.
- the young person is likely to begin, or to continue having, sexual intercourse with or without contraceptive treatment
- the young person's physical or mental health, or both, are likely to suffer unless she or he receives contraceptive advice or treatment
- the young person's best interests require them to receive contraceptive advice or treatment with or without parental consent.