

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Table of Contents

1	Rationale and ethos	2
2	Roles and responsibilities.....	2
3	Legislation (statutory regulations and guidance)	3
4	Curriculum.....	4
5	Equality	8
6	Safeguarding	8
7	Teaching Methods, Resources, Training and Monitoring	9
8	Personnel and Training	10
9	Parental engagement in RSE and right to withdrawal.....	10
10	Review and Development	10

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“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
John 13:34-35 (NIV)

1 Rationale and ethos

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is defined by the PSHE Association as ‘learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health’. This content is delivered in an age-appropriate way in our school with regard to the age and stage of pupils.

The intention of Relationships and Sex Education in Birkdale School is to equip children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and take responsibility for their physical, sexual and emotional health and wellbeing.

We recognise the central importance of relationships in supporting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing, academic achievement and future success.

Our programme also aims to support pupils in their personal development with regard to attributes such as kindness, integrity, generosity and honesty. These approaches support our wider work of building resilience in our pupils. This will include developing self-esteem, the skills to manage relationships and most importantly keep themselves safe in all their relationships.

Research has shown that young people who feel good about themselves, and are knowledgeable and confident about relationships and sex, are more likely to be discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviours and to have fulfilling relationships.

As a school we recognise the impact of social media, the media and the digital world on our children and young people. We aim to deliver an RSE programme that recognises and addresses this to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves and their personal information safe.

2 Roles and responsibilities

The **governing board** is responsible for:

- Ensuring the RSE and health education curriculum is well-led, effectively managed and well-planned.
- Evaluating the quality of provision through regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Ensuring RSE and health education is resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations.
- Maintaining and developing the religious ethos of the school.

The **Head** is responsible for, and delegates through the **Deputy Head (Pastoral)**:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring all staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects.
- Ensuring parents are fully informed of this policy.
- Reviewing all requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory elements of the RSE and health education curriculum.
- Discussing withdrawal requests with parents, and the child if appropriate, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, including the benefits of receiving the education.

- Ensuring withdrawn pupils receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- Encouraging parents to be involved in consultations regarding the school's RSE and health education curriculum.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Reporting to the governing board on the effectiveness of this policy and the curriculum.

The **PSHE co-ordinator (Prep)/PSHE Subject Lead (Senior)** is responsible for:

- Overseeing the delivery of RSE and health education.
- Working closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the RSE and health education curriculum compliments, and does not duplicate, the content covered in national curriculum subjects.
- Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate and of high-quality.
- Reviewing changes to the RSE and health education curriculum and advising on their implementation.
- Monitoring the learning and teaching of RSE and health education, providing support to staff where necessary.
- Ensuring the continuity and progression between each year group.
- Helping to develop colleagues' expertise in the subject.
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the curriculum.
- Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to RSE and health education.
- Organising, providing and monitoring CPD opportunities in the subject.
- Ensuring the correct standards are met for recording and assessing pupil performance.

PSHE tutors are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with, and promoting, this policy
- Delivering RSE and health education in a sensitive way and that is of a high-quality and appropriate for each year group.
- Ensuring they do not express personal views or beliefs when delivering the curriculum.
- Planning lessons effectively, ensuring a range of appropriate teaching methods and resources are used to cover the content.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE and health education.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the teaching of RSE or health education to the PSHE co-ordinator or Deputy Head.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents have requested to withdraw them from the non-statutory components of RSE, by providing them with alternative education opportunities.

The **SENCO** is responsible for:

- Advising teaching staff how best to identify and support pupils' individual needs

3 Legislation (statutory regulations and guidance)

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act (1996)

- Statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education (2021)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)

4 Curriculum

By the end of their time at the Senior School pupils should know the following (in addition to the material covered at the Prep School):

Families

Pupils should know

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- 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.
- Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.

Pupils will also know 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)
- how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Pupils should know

- 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.
- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- 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).

- 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.
- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.
- That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- 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.

Online and media

Pupils should know

- Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
- 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.
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
- The impact of viewing harmful content.
- 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.
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

Being safe

Pupils should know

- 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.
- 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).

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Pupils should know

- 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.

- 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.
- The facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.
- That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
- That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
- The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.
- The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.
- 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).
- 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.
- About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
- How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

PSHE will be taught in a designated weekly period of no less than 30 minutes. To support our teaching, some aspects of the course will be taught by outside agencies, such as Challenge UK. The RSE program will be fully resourced, making use of textbooks, online learning packages and a wide range of activities tailored to our community and unique ethos.

RSE Scheme of Work Outline

NB Relationship and Sex Education is not taught in the Autumn Term at the Senior School. Please see the PSHE programme of study for further information.

	Spring Term	Summer Term
Year S1	Diversity, prejudice and bullying including cyber bullying Managing on- and off-line friendships	Self-esteem, romance and friendships Exploring family life
Year S2	Tackling racism and religious discrimination , promoting human rights Online safety and digital literacy	Introduction to sexuality and consent Introduction to contraception including condom and the pill
Year S3	Managing conflict at home and the dangers of running away from home Tackling homophobia, transphobia and sexism	Relationships and sex education including healthy relationships and consent The risks of STIs, sexting and pornography
Year S4	Tackling relationship myths and expectations Managing romantic relationship challenges including break ups	Understanding different families and learning parenting skills Managing change, grief and bereavement
Year S5	Personal values and assertive communication in relationships Tackling domestic abuse and forced marriage	British values , human rights and community cohesion Challenging extremism and radicalisation

Prep Syllabus Information

RSE is taught as part of the PSHE and Science syllabus at the prep school.

Year Group	Christmas Term	Easter Term	Summer Term
P1	Safety Online	Being Part of a Community	Stereotypes
	Celebrating Achievements and Being Resilient	Exercise	What I Like

P2	Nutrition and Dental Health	Emergency Situations	Money Matters
	Human Rights	Respect	Falling Out and Making Up
P3	Body Image	Fake News	Growing up
	Bereavement and Loss	Life in Plastic	Changes in Friendships
P4	Drugs and Alcohol Education	Mental and Emotional Health	E-Safety and Social Media
	Marriage and Civil Partnerships	Global Sustainable Development Goals	Anti-social Behaviour and the Role of Police and the Law
	Crucial Crew		

5 Equality

This school delivers RSE with regards to the Equality Act 2010 and observance of the protected characteristics of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership and sexual orientation. We recognise that children have varying needs regarding RSE depending on their circumstances and background. The school believes that all people should have access to RSE that is relevant to their particular needs. To achieve this, the school's approach to RSE will take account of:

- Some pupils who may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) that result in particular RSE needs at times which we will support. We will ensure that RSE is accessible to all pupils through high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised
- We shall be proactive in combating sexism, misogyny, sexualised behaviour and sexist bullying. We will foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication between pupils.
- Different ethnic cultural and religious groups may have different attitudes and beliefs with regard to RSE. The school will consult pupils and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for and understanding of the views of different ethnic, cultural and religious groups in line with safeguarding and school's statutory duty to keep pupils safe and deliver certain elements of the statutory RSE curriculum.
- Some of our pupils will go on to define themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Trans or Queer (LGBTQ+). Some pupils may have LGBTQ+ parents/carers, brothers or sisters, other family members and/or friends. All our pupils will meet and work with LGBTQ+ people both now and in the future. Our approach to RSE will reflect this and teaching will be sensitive and age appropriate both in content and approach. This content will be integrated into the programme rather than as a stand-alone lesson or unit. We actively tackle homophobic bullying.
- We recognise that our pupils may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. We will take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances and deliver the curriculum sensitively and inclusively.

6 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. Where appropriate teachers will consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and in their absence a deputy. Visitors/external agencies which support the delivery of RSE will be required to be fully compliant with

the guidance outlined in KCSIE, any visitors invited to support the PSHE curriculum are to be approved by the PSHE coordinator and the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

7 Teaching Methods, Resources, Training and Monitoring

All the following elements of teaching methods, resources, training and monitoring are essential elements in providing quality RSE.

A Safe Learning Environment

In order for PSHE or RSE to be conducted safely the following will be in place:

- Group agreements or ground rules are negotiated, explained, displayed and referred to wherever appropriate. (When receiving external visitors, they will have sight of and understanding of the ground rules/group agreement.)
- No one in the classroom will be expected to answer a personal question.
- Distancing techniques such as the use of scenarios, will be used to help to keep pupils safe. There will be no need for anyone to discuss their own personal issues.
- Confidentiality will be clearly explained; pupils will understand how disclosures will be handled.
- Pupils will be expected to engage and listen during lessons; however, it is accepted that sometimes it is inappropriate for them to be expected to take part in the discussion.
- In most cases, the correct names for body parts will be used.
- The meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.
- Care will be taken not to use materials or approaches that may trigger trauma or distress. Pupils at risk will be identified and arrangements made for them to access the learning in a comfortable way.
- Signposting to sources of support when dealing with sensitive issues

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching and learning best practice will be applied. Active learning methods that support participation and encourage reflection will be used including group work, talking, negotiation and using thinking skills.

At the Prep School all pupils are given a PSHE workbook that records activities. All pupils are assessed according to the school grading criteria at the end of each term; reflecting the pupils subject knowledge and effort in verbal and written exercises.

Asking and Answering Questions

We recognise that where young people's questions go unanswered they may turn to inappropriate sources of information, Therefore, teachers will attempt to answer pupils' questions and concerns in a sensitive, age and development appropriate manner.

Individual teachers will use their skill and discretion in these situations, and if necessary, refer to the PSHE coordinator for advice and support.

Teachers will apply the following principles:

1. Clear guidance will be established about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting-group agreement/ground rules will help to achieve this.

2. If a pupil's question is inappropriate to address the whole class, the teacher will acknowledge the question and attend to it later on an individual basis.
3. Personal questions should be referred to the ground rules/group agreement.
4. Teachers will set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that pupils discuss issues in a way which encourages thoughtful participation.
5. If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk in any way, including sexual abuse or exploitation, the usual safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Resources

Teaching resources will be selected on the basis of their appropriateness to pupils and their impact.

8 Personnel and Training

There is a PSHE coordinator (Prep)/PSHE Subject Lead (Senior) who is regularly trained and updated in this fast-moving subject area. They are responsible for RSE.

RSE is delivered by a dedicated team of PSHE tutors. The school is committed to ensuring that everyone involved with teaching or supporting the teaching of RSE receives appropriate and ongoing professional development in order to maintain a whole school consistency and high standards for the children/young people in our care.

All new teaching staff will receive a copy of the RSE policy.

9 Parental engagement in RSE and right to withdrawal

We recognise the prime role of parents/carers in the development of their child's understanding about relationships and sex. We work in active partnership with parents/carers in the development and review of RSE.

The school ensures that parents/carers are: made aware of the school's approach and rationale for RSE through the policy; involved in the review of the RSE policy; made aware of the school's PSHE curriculum; and encourage them to support their child in learning at home through shared learning activities, if appropriate.

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from the sex education parts of RSE taught as part of the PSHE curriculum. This should be done in writing and will be followed by a meeting with a senior member of staff, typically the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or Head of Section, to ensure that the educational benefits and potential detrimental effects of withdrawal are fully considered. If parents/carers decide to withdraw their child, we shall work with them and their child to provide alternative provision. In the event of a request to withdraw we will document this process and ensure a record is kept.

Once a pupil is three terms away from their sixteenth birthday they have a right to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn. Where this is the case we will make arrangements to provide them with sex education during one of those terms.

10 Review and Development

10.1 Procedure

This document, together with the effectiveness of the inclusive practices at Birkdale School, is reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team and as events or legislation change requires.

10.2 Links with other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Rewards & Sanctions Policy
- PSHE Programme of Study and Schemes of Work
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy