

SEX, RELATIONSHIPS & HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

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Sex, Relationships & Health Education Policy

This policy supports the aims outlined in Sussex Learning Trust's Sex and Relationship Statement.

1. Sex and relationships education is an important element in the programme of personal and social education which is received by all learners. Although some explicit factual knowledge is provided on sexual matters, sex education addresses much wider issues about the importance of stable, loving relationships. Our curriculum aims to develop values and attitudes and their approach and behaviour toward others.

2. Our academies welcome families or other interested persons to discuss both the materials and approach used in teaching this area of the curriculum. We recognise that some partners or carers discuss sexual matters with their children from an early age and in a very open manner while others do not. Parents or carers may, if they wish, withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education provided, unless it forms part of our formal academic curriculum. If any parent or carer wishes to withdraw their child from sex education, contact is to be made with either the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Defining Sex, Relationships & Health Education (SRE & HE)

'It is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about promoting sexual activity.' (DfE)

1. Context

From September 2020, all state-funded primary schools are required by the government to teach Relationships and Health Education. Primary Schools can decide whether they also teach 'Sex Education' in addition to that already being addressed as part of the National Curriculum for Science, which we have chosen to do.

Also, from September 2020, all state-funded secondary schools are required to deliver Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. These subjects sit within a wider framework of Personal, Social, Health Education, which has been described by the Chief Medical Officer as 'a bridge between health and education.'

High quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. They can also enable schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and students at school and in society. Although these are important educational subjects in their own right, research evidence suggests that learning about relationships and health promotes wellbeing and can also improve academic attainment. These subjects represent a huge opportunity to help children and young people develop knowledge and attributes to support their own, and others', wellbeing and attainment and help them to become successful, and happy adults, who make a meaningful contribution to society.

2. Statutory Requirements and parental engagement

As a maintained primary and secondary all-through school, we must provide 'Relationships Education' to all primary pupils, and 'Relationships and Sex Education' to all Secondary pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996. Further guidance surrounding the teaching of RSE from the DfE will be reviewed within a term of it being released, and lessons amended accordingly.

This policy, and the school PSHE curriculum, have been developed with WSCC Education 4 Safeguarding (E4S) planning tool, and is reviewed annually through consultation with staff, governors, pupils and parents. The policy will be up for review next in July 2025

This policy is shared with parents annually, with further clarity to the parental right to withdraw process, as outlined in section 5. The school is always open to parental engagement with regards to the content and themes taught within RSE and PSHE, with particular consultation on this sought during Summer Term.

Termly content for PSHE lessons are shared through the schools reporting cycle, especially in Secondary. Parents are also made aware, via email or YouTube videos, of specific workshops that have an element of sex education being covered in good time. The PSHE specific roadmap and long-term plans can be seen on the school's website. Resources for particular lessons can be viewed by requesting to see them through the school office.

3. Defining

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. This will often involve a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values, but it is not the promotion of sexual activity.

The term 'relationships' incorporates the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and adults. These areas of learning are taught within the context that family relationships can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, foster parents/carers, whilst reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

In primary, learning revolves around putting key building blocks in place for healthy, respectful relationships, focussing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online; including an essential understanding of how to be healthy.

In secondary, learning builds on this and develops pupils' understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs and alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex, and how to have positive and healthy sexual relationships in adulthood.

4. The teaching of RSE & HE

The teaching of Sex and Relationships will be undertaken within Science, RE and PSHE. Each phase of the all-through school will undertake age-appropriate themed teaching based upon the aims and framework within this overarching policy. The planning of this teaching is also spiral in its approach; building on previous learning from year to year. Teaching of RSE will be undertaken within a mixed sex setting, both in the primary and secondary phase. In Primary, PSHE is primarily taught by their class teacher, and in Secondary, is taught by subject specific staff.

Monitoring and Evaluation of teaching

Monitoring and Evaluation will be undertaken by those responsible for the specific department the content is delivered within. Consideration of DfE statutory guidance from Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (HE) is ongoing, and the schools curriculum aligns with E4S West Sussex (Education for Safeguarding).

SEND

Lessons are inclusive in their nature; PSHE education plays an important role for learners with SEND, rehearsing and embedding the practical skills and understanding needed to lead independent and fulfilling lives, and enjoy safe and healthy relationships. Pupils may be affected by issues discussed in lessons; internal support or time with a trusted adult might be requested for. Those pupils who may struggle to regulate their emotions will be directed towards safe spaces and given short time out.

Safeguarding and Disclosures

Ground rules are set at the beginning of each academic year, and are displayed at the front of PSHE teaching spaces; often referred to in lessons when required to do so. These consider the safeguarding of young people. Pupils can discuss examples but must not use names or descriptions that identify anyone, including themselves. Disclosures or concerns that are raised in lessons are dealt with in line with the school's child protection policy. Any disclosures that might happen during a lesson will be dealt with immediately by someone who knows them well.

British Values and Protected Characteristics

Several RSE lessons touch on core British Values of rule of law, individual liberty, democracy and mutual respect for and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; alongside referring to Protected Characteristics as outlined within the Equality Act of 2010. Planning, teaching and delivery of RSE will always consider the safeguarding of children at its core.

External groups supporting RSE delivery

In addition to the timetabled PSHE lessons, the school uses a local charity to support teaching around RSE topics, called Options Chichester. Workshops in Year 6 focus on relationships, puberty, menstrual wellbeing and reproduction; each an hour in length during Autumn Term. Workshops in Year 9 focus on consent, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, the dangers of pornography, and sextortion; each lasting an hour in length. These take place during Autumn and Summer Term. The workshop in Year 10 focuses on the pregnancy timeline, lasting two hours during Courage Term. Parents are made aware of these sessions in good time and are invited to find out more about the contents of them. Reports are shared with the school after sessions are concluded.

Managing pupil questions

We encourage our pupils to be curious and ask questions; in RSE this may occasionally mean the questions may be deemed as inappropriate or not age-appropriate to the individual or class. Our intention is to answer pupils' questions factually and without judgement, with safeguarding always being our priority. These questions will be handled as discreetly as possible but will not go unanswered. With technology being so easily accessible, if we choose to avoid the question, we run the risk of the child(ren) turning to the internet to gain the answer they ask, potentially exposing them to harmful content.

5. Parental Right to withdraw child from Sex Education

From September 2020, there is no longer a parental right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education (at primary nor secondary stage) as the contents of these- such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

Parents do have the right to withdraw their child from the components of sex education, which are taught predominantly in Summer Term across the school (other than those aspects which form part of the science curriculum), up to and until three terms before the age of 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will arrange to provide sex education teaching during one of those terms.

Parents who wish to exercise this right should contact the Head of Primary or Head of Secondary, who will either directly discuss the matter with you, or delegate to the relevant member of staff leading on PSHE in that phase to do so. The school will document the process and ensure that the pupil receives appropriate,

purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. It should be noted that the school believes that children should not be removed from this education as it enables them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing as they grow up.

6. The aim of Sex, Relationships & Health Education at CFS

All elements of Sex, Relationships and Health Education are incorporated into subject based Curriculum Roadmaps and Long-Term Programmes of study (most noticeably through PSHE and Science based curriculums). These can be viewed on the school's website or alternatively through requesting them.

The school aligns with the DfE's clarity that schools must make sure all content being used is factual and age-appropriate. The PSHE curriculum is thematic in both primary and secondary phases. It is designed as a progressive curriculum where each year group learns at an age-appropriate level. The curriculum considers statutory and PSHE Association guidance, alongside the use of West Sussex's Education 4 Safeguarding planning tool to tailor the correct curriculum for our pupils.

The overarching aims include; (note: these themes are taught at an age-appropriate stage; the specifics for primary and secondary are outlined in more detail below)

- To provide knowledge of human reproductive processes
- To develop skills for a healthier and safer lifestyle
- To enable a better understanding to the nature of human relationships and the types of discrimination and prejudice that exist
- To prepare pupils for the changes which occur to their bodies, minds, and emotions as a consequence of growth from childhood to adulthood.
- Make informed, reasoned and responsible decisions about personal values they will adopt both while they are at school and in adulthood.
- Emphasise the skills, attitudes and insights that young people need in order to form loving and caring relationships
- Foster self-esteem, self-awareness and the skills of assertiveness that will enable them to resist and avoid unwelcome peer or social pressures.
- To explicitly cover consent and its implications across different situations
- To empower pupils to make informed choices about sex and contraception, whilst understanding the risks associated with unprotected sex
- To appreciate the pregnancy timeline from conception through to birth; and to sensitively explore associated themes such as miscarriage and abortion
- To inform with regards to law, and where appropriate, signpost to specific support should it be needed

Specifically, within Primary:

Sex, Relationships and Health Education is incorporated into the schemes of work for science and PSHE. Within science lessons children learn about reproduction. Within PSHE lessons the focus is on the importance of friendships, relationships, and family life. The three-key primary PSHE themes are: Relationships, Health and Wellbeing, and Living in the Wider World. Out of these, British Values, Personal Safety, Global Citizens, Health, Mental Health and RSE is explored. The resources revolve around the thematic curriculum offered by Twinkle, which is written around the PSHE Association's framework for PSHE. CPD is sought for those delivering the PSHE curriculum. This resource changed from the Corum Life Education's scheme called SCARF in the Summer term of 2025.

Specific focus on sex and health education takes place during years 5 and 6, as outlined below;

Year 5 - describe the changes as humans develop to old age (puberty)

Pupils should draw a timeline to indicate stages in the growth and development of humans. They should learn about the changes experienced in puberty.

Pupils could work scientifically by researching the gestation periods of other animals and comparing them with humans; by finding out and recording the length and mass of a baby as it grows.

Year 6 - recognise the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle on the way their body's function

Pupils should learn how to keep their bodies healthy and how their bodies might be damaged – including how some drugs and other substances can be harmful to the human body.

Pupils might work scientifically by exploring the work of scientists and scientific research about the relationship between diet, exercise, drugs, lifestyle and health.

Options Chichester will support the school by leading workshops on relationships, puberty, menstrual wellbeing and reproduction at some point during the academic year.

Specifically, within Secondary:

Sex, Relationships and Health Education is incorporated into the schemes of work for science and PSHE in the main. Within science lessons pupils learn about reproduction. Within the PSHE lessons the focus depends upon the specific year group as outlined below. The six-key secondary PSHE themes are: Life Beyond School, Diversity & Equality, Staying Safe Online & Offline, Health & Wellbeing, Rights Responsibilities & British Values, Relationships & Sex Education. The resources revolve around the thematic curriculum offered by Cre8tive PSHE Resources. Where possible, external trainers are brought into school to support RSE teaching (local charitable organisation working with several local schools) and CPD is sought for those delivering the curriculum. Whereby RSE curriculum objectives have not been covered in previous years due to unforeseen circumstances, current PSHE curriculum is amended to catch up on missing content.

On the whole, specific focus on sex education takes place during Courage Term, as outlined below;

Science

Year 7 - Reproduction – a three-week programme which covers body changes in puberty, the male and female reproduction system, fertilisation, gestation, contraception and the menstrual cycle.

PSHE

Year 7 – Relationships & Sex Education – Friendships, Respect & Relationships

Pupils will consider themes around: What makes a good friend, friendships and managing them successfully; Respect, relationships, consent and boundaries; Being positive, pressure and influence.

Year 8 – Relationships & Sex Education – Identity, Relationships & Sex Education

Pupils will consider themes around: Relationships, love, sex and contraception; Sexual orientation; Healthy relationships and dealing with conflict. Gender identity could be explored during lessons but not taught from a factual perspective (awaiting further guidance from DfE in 2023 on the direct teaching of such).

Year 9 – Relationships & Sex Education – Sex, the Law and Consent; Contraception & STI's

Pupils will consider themes around: Relationships, partners and why have sex; Sexual consent and delaying sexual activity; Sexually transmitted infections; Contraception and condoms; Sexual harassment and stalking; Pornography; Sextortion. Options Chichester will run workshops during the year that will support the teaching of these topics.

Year 10 – Relationships & Sex Education – Warnings, Relationships & Sex Education

Pupils will consider themes around: Sexting and the sharing of nudes; Pornography; Domestic abuse, violence and FGM, Relationships, sexual abuse & rape; Sexualisation of the media. Options Chichester will run a workshop during the year that will explore 'the pregnancy timeline'.

Year 11 – Relationships & Sex Education – Healthy Relationships & Sexual Health

Pupils will consider themes around: Peer on peer bullying, Fertility and what impacts it; Alcohol and bad sexual choices; Importance of sexual health; Revisiting contraception, STI's and Respectful relationships.