



Stonebow Primary School

Relationships (and Sex) Education Policy

Date published – September 2020

Date approved by governors: **January 2021**

Review Date – September 2023
(in line with DFE guidance)

Written in consultation with Leighvi Bailey & Fiona Panni
(Wellbeing Leadership Team members)

Relationship Education is compulsory in Primary Schools as of September 2020;
Sex Education, within the National Science Curriculum, was made compulsory in all state
funded Primary Schools as part of the 1996 Education Act.

Definition of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

RSE may be defined as learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It equips children and young people with the information, skills and values for building positive, enjoyable, respectable and non-exploitative relationships, staying safe both on- and off-line, and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being. Post COVID-19, there is an even stronger emphasis on children's mental health and wellbeing and understanding their emotions.

RSE is an integral element of a broader developmental personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, in which related topics such as emotional health and well-being, drugs, healthy eating and physical activity, citizenship and safety are covered. There are also strong links to PE lessons within school.

RSE promotes the core values of respect, love and care and it provides the opportunity for children and young people to reflect on their own attitudes and beliefs and those of their peers and others.

The main focus in primary school is on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.

The three main elements are:

- attitudes and values - learning the importance of values and moral considerations; the value of family life, marriage and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children; the value of respect, love and care; exploring moral dilemmas; developing critical thinking as part of decision-making;
- personal and social skills - learning to manage emotions and relationships; 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; learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse;
- knowledge and understanding - learning and understanding physical development; understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships.

The Importance of RSE

High quality RSE helps to create safe school communities in which pupils can grow, learn, and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life, and is essential because:

- Children and young people want to be prepared for the physical and emotional changes they undergo at puberty, and young people want to learn about relationships.
- RSE plays a vital part of meeting schools' safeguarding obligations.
- Schools maintain a statutory obligation under the Children Act (2004) to promote their pupils' wellbeing, and, under the Education Act (1996), to prepare children and young people for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Children can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives.

The subjects covered in RSE can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support if ever it was required.

Aims of RSE at Stonebow School

The aim of RSE is to provide children with age appropriate information, explore attitudes and values and develop skills in order to empower them to make positive decisions about their health related behaviour. This should take place with consideration for the qualities of relationships within families.

The objectives of RSE are:

- To provide the knowledge and information to which all pupils are entitled.
- To clarify and reinforce existing knowledge.
- To raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, especially in their relationships with others.
- To help pupils understand their sexual feelings and behaviour, so they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives.
- To help pupils develop skills (language, decision-making, choice, assertiveness) and make the most of their abilities.
- To provide the confidence to be participating members of society and to value themselves and others.
- To help gain access to information and support.
- To develop skills for a healthier safer lifestyle.
- To develop and use communication skills and assertiveness skills to cope with the influences of their peers and the media.
- To respect and care for their bodies.
- To be prepared for puberty and adulthood.

Legal aspects of RSE

The sex education contained in National Curriculum Science is compulsory in maintained schools. However, academies are not under the same statutory obligations as maintained schools. As such, academies are not obliged to teach RSE, although OFSTED does inspect for all social, moral and cultural provision in schools, and this would include RSE.

Section 2.1 of the National Curriculum framework (DFE, 2013) states that every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and which prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. This gives schools a very clear remit to provide RSE and PSHE.

The DFE statutory guidance for RSE September 2020 sets out that by the end of Primary School, children will have focused on and should understand the following areas:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

The national curriculum for science also includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. It will be for primary schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. Many primary schools (including Stonebow) already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so, although it is not a requirement. This is partly to ensure that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively.

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Model Funding Agreements for academies and free schools require that state-funded schools ensure that within sex education children 'learn the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children', and 'are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate'.

RSE links to other statutory duties that schools must fulfil:

- Safeguarding – RSE helps children to understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships and equips them with the skills to get help if they need it. State-funded schools have responsibilities for safeguarding and a legal duty to promote pupils' well-being (Education and Inspections Act 2006 Section 38).
- Equalities – The Equality Act 2010 covers the way the curriculum is delivered, as schools must ensure that issues are taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination, so schools have a duty to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children.

The Teaching Programme for RSE

RSE needs to start early in primary school so that children learn about their bodies, can recognise if other people make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe and can report abuse and get help. Lots of children start puberty before they leave primary school so it is important that all pupils know what to expect before it happens.

It is good to have some RSE in every year of primary school as it helps pupils to learn progressively as they mature and revisit the subject on a regular basis, to reinforce learning and provide opportunities to ask further questions.

RSE within National Curriculum Science

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from this element of RSE within Primary Schools. However, under current legislation, schools should enable parents to exercise their right to withdraw their children (until the age of 10) from any school RSE taught outside National Curriculum Science (Section 405, Education Act 1996). If a parent wishes to do this, they must have a discussion with the Head Teacher to clarify the nature of the request. All schools must have an up-to-date policy on RSE, and parents have the legal right to see this and to be given a copy of it (Education Act 1996). Parents should also be aware that schools are legally required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

Key Stage 1 Science (Year 1/2)

- Pupils should be taught to identify, name, draw and label the basic external parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense. (N.B. Correct terminology should be used by all adults – this can have implications for safeguarding, where children may use slang terminology to identify body parts).
- Pupils should be taught to notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults; find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans for survival (water, food and air); describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food and hygiene (especially post COVID-19).

Key Stage 2 (Year 5/6)

- Pupils should be taught to describe the differences in the life cycles of a mammal, an amphibian, an insect and a bird; describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals; describe the changes of human bodies as they develop and grow from birth to old age, including puberty.

RSE within the Wider Curriculum

Stonebow Primary School follows the Cambridgeshire scheme of work for PSHE. The following topics are covered on a two year cycle. By the end of primary school children will have covered the following topics:

- Beginning and Belonging
- Me and My Emotions
- Working Together
- Diversity and Communities
- Managing Risk
- Safety Contexts
- Sex and Relationships Education
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Rights, Rules and Responsibilities
- Family and Friends
- Anti-bullying
- Financial Capability
- Drug education – exploring what happens when medicines enter our body
- Personal Safety
- Managing Change

Teaching strategies for RSE

Ground rules:

A set of ground rules will help teachers to create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unexpected questions or comments from pupils e.g.

- No-one (teacher or child) will have to answer a personal question;
- No-one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
- Only the correct terminology for body parts will be used;
- Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.
- Respect for each other and what other people have to say.

Distancing techniques:

The use of an anonymous question box is used as a distancing technique (ask every child to write something on a note, even if they do not want to ask a question, so that no-one is embarrassed to put a note in the box).

Dealing with difficult questions:

Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting:

- If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules; if the pupil needs further support, the teacher can refer her or him to the appropriate person, such as a school counsellor, school nurse or helpline.
- If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is important to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher research it later.
- If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil or is inappropriate for the whole class, the teacher can explain that they cannot answer the question and it can then be referred to the child's parents. If a question raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it, but pass it on to the designated child protection person in school.

Reflection:

Reflection is crucial for learning as it encourages pupils to consolidate what they have learned and to form new understanding, skills and attitudes. Teachers should help pupils reflect on their learning by asking questions like these:

- What was it like doing this discussion today?
- What did you learn from this discussion?
- What else do you think you need to think or learn about?

RSE at Stonebow:

- A range of teaching approaches are used, including the use of video, discussion, looking at case studies, drama and role play.
- RSE is usually delivered in mixed gender groups. Previously, subjects such as menstruation were taught to single gender groups, new advice encourages teaching to all pupils to encourage understanding and empathy.
- Resources used to teach RSE include books, leaflets and DVDs (a list of resources for RSE can be found in the RSE folder).
- RSE is delivered through Science, RE, PSHE, PE, English, Forest School, Computing and Assemblies.
- RSE is taught by classroom teachers, learning support assistants and, if appropriate, visitors such as the school nurse.

The Organisation of Relationship and Sex Education

The Wellbeing team has the responsibility for coordinating Relationship and Sex Education.

Specific issues:

Parental consultation

- The school includes information on RSE on the website and the policy is available on request from the office.
- The school informs parents when certain, potentially sensitive, aspects of the RSE programme which are not part of Science, are taught, and provides opportunities for parents to view the resources being used (copies of letters sent out to parents are to be found in the RSE folder).
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from those aspects of RSE not included within the Science curriculum. However, this rarely happens, as by working in partnership with parents, they recognise the importance of this aspect of their child's education.
- If parents require support to help them talk to their children about puberty, relationships and sex, they can be put in touch with the school nurse.

Child protection/confidentiality

- Teachers need to be aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, may lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. The staff member will inform the Head teacher/Designated Child Protection Officer in line with the LEA procedures for child protection.
- A member of staff cannot promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

Girls and menstruation

In school, there is an individual toilet with disposal facilities available for pupil use, which is not used by other children, and there is a supply of sanitary products available which girls may request if needed. All female staff in Key Stage 2 are aware of these facilities.

Use of visitors

When appropriate, visitors such as the school nurse may be involved to enhance the delivery of RSE, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Children with special needs

Teaching, resources and lessons will be planned to ensure that differentiation is appropriate to address the needs of all children in order for them to have full access to the content of RSE. Personalising learning will enable accessibility for all and ensure that all children are suitably challenged.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked with the following policies:

- PSHE and Citizenship
- Equal Opportunities
- Child Protection
- Confidentiality
- Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Monitoring is the responsibility of the Head Teacher, the governor's curriculum sub-committee and the teacher with responsibility for RSE.
- The school will assess the effectiveness of the aims, content and methods in promoting students' learning by lesson observation, sampling teachers' planning, questionnaires to teachers and children and feedback from parents.
- The effectiveness of the RSE programme will be evaluated by assessing children's learning and implementing change if required.
- Copies of this policy are available to parents, on the website or from the office.
- RSE issues will be included in the induction programme for all new members of staff.
- This policy will be reviewed every 3 years (unless legislation is updated before this date is reached).
- In addition, RSE is monitored and evaluated by the Governing Body as part of the school's development plan. As a result of this process, changes may be made to the RSE policy as appropriate.