



Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

2023/24

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1. Introduction

The law (Education Act 1996) states that 'All schools must provide an up-to-date policy that describes the content and organisation of the RSE provided outside the National Curriculum.' Our school takes this responsibility to provide relevant, effective, and responsible RSE to all of our students as part of the school's Personal Development Programme (which incorporates PD, PSHE, RSE, SMSC, Character Education and Cultural Capital) very seriously.

The school wants parents/carers and students to feel assured that relationships and sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both the age and development of students, and safe to voice opinions and concerns relating to the relationships and sex education provision.

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 the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching.

Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfES
(now Department for Education / DfE) 2000

The law (Learning and Skills Act, 2000) states that, 'Students should learn about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and the bringing up of children'. In 2000, the DfE Sex and Relationship Education Guidance added 'and stable relationships'. Leaving aside political and faith-based agendas, the key point here is that the guidance recognises the importance of stable relationships.

In June 2019, The Department for Education published statutory guidance for Health Education, Relationships Education and RSE. It should ensure that every child is guaranteed a PSHE education that covers mental health and wellbeing, physical health (including healthy lifestyles and first aid) and learning about safe, healthy relationships, including understanding consent and negotiating life online.

Key aspects of RSE are:

- **Physical development** – How our reproductive systems work.
- **Emotional development** – Our feelings and how they might change as we grow older; we consider how to manage feelings including resilience.
- **Social aspects** – The positive and negative influences from friends including how to work positively with others.
- **Healthy relationships** – The different types of relationships we experience, such as those with parents / carers, siblings, friends and – as we get older – with partners; we consider healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Some aspects of RSE are taught in science, and others are taught as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Personal Development (PD) programmes.

2. Relationships and Sex Education at Edison Pace School

RSE gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful, and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline.

Sex and relationships education (RSE) for the 21st century: Supplementary advice to the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, Sex Education Forum, 2014

High quality RSE helps create a safe school community in which our students can grow, learn, and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life.

It is essential for the following reasons:

- Students have a right to good quality education. (As set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).
- Students want to be prepared for the physical and emotional changes they undergo at puberty, and young people want to learn about relationships. Older students frequently say that RSE was 'too little, too late and too biological.' (Ofsted reinforced this in their 2013 Not Yet Good Enough report).
- RSE plays a vital part in meeting our safeguarding obligations. Ofsted is clear that schools must have a preventative programme that enables Students to learn about safety and risks in relationships.
- Schools maintain a statutory obligation under the Children Act (2004) to promote students' wellbeing and under the Education Act (1996) to prepare students for the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities of adult life.
- A comprehensive RSE programme can have a positive impact on students' health and wellbeing and their ability to achieve and can play a crucial part in meeting these obligations.
- The Department of Health set out its ambition for all students to receive high quality RSE in the Sexual Health Improvement Framework (2013), while the Department for Education's paper, The Importance of Teaching (2010), highlighted that 'Children need high quality sex and relationships education so they can make wise and informed choices'.

RSE plays an important part in fulfilling the statutory duties the schools have to meet and was made a requirement under the Independent School Standards in September 2019.

As an independent specialist school, we must provide RSE to all students as per the Children and Social work act 2017 and part 6, Chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010.

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to to [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

3. School aims

Our overall aims of RSE are to teach and develop the following three main elements:

Attitudes and values:

- To learn the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.

- To learn the value of family life and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- To learn the value of respect, love, and care.
- To explore, consider and understand moral dilemmas.
- To develop critical thinking as part of decision-making.
- To develop resilience and positive attitudes.

Personal and social skills:

- To learn to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- To develop self-respect and empathy for others.
- To learn to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.
- To develop an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- To manage conflict and challenges appropriately.
- To learn how to identify, recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and understanding:

- To learn and understand physical development at appropriate stages.
- To understand human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions, and relationships.
- To be aware of contraception.
- To learn the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay, including the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

In addition to this, we also aim to:

- Raise student's self-esteem and confidence.
- Develop communication and assertiveness skills that can help them stay true to their values if challenged by others, their peers or what they see in the media.
- Teach students to be accepting of the different beliefs, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities, backgrounds, and values of those around them.
- Support students in developing the skills needed to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle, teaching them to care for, and respect, their bodies.
- Provide students with the right tools to enable them to seek information or support, should they need it.
- Teach students about consent and their right to say no, in an age-appropriate manner.
- Teach lessons that are sensitive to a range of views, values, and beliefs.
- Ensure that staff teaching RSE remain neutral in their delivery whilst ensuring that students always have access to the learning, they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

The school's RSE programme will:

- Be a predominant focus within the Personal Development Programme throughout school.
- 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, including those with additional learning and language needs.

- Be set within the wider school context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge, and openness.
- Recognise that family is a broad concept; not just one model such as that of a nuclear family.
- Encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views with cultural awareness and sensitivity.
- Ensure students are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure.
- Recognise that parents/carers are the key people in teaching their children about relationships, sex, growing up.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and students, consulting them about the content of RSE learning.
- Work in partnership with other health professionals and the wider community.

RSE is about the emotional, social, and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity, and personal identity. It involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. It is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

4. Curriculum

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, students and staff and have considered our students' age, needs and feelings. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner, so they are fully informed and do not seek answers online.

5. Delivery

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum and may arise within other lessons. Students will access at least 1 World Around Us lesson per week and will be offered additional 'drop in' support from trained health professionals.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

6. Key rights and responsibilities for Relationships and Sex Education

The policy applies to:

- All school staff
- Students
- Parents/carers
- The governing body

Responsibilities	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinating RSE provision, ensuring a spiral curriculum, policy development and review, including consultation. • Accessing and coordinating training and support for staff. • Establishing and maintaining links with external agencies/other health professionals. • Establishing and maintaining links with parents/carers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher and Senior Leaders • Lead Teacher for PSHE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the policy; monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing child protection/safeguarding issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Safeguarding Leads / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

All staff will:

- Ensure that they are up to date with this RSE policy and curriculum requirements regarding relationships and sex education.
- Report back to the Personal Development Lead on any areas that they feel are not covered or inadequately provided for in the school's RSE provision.
- Attend and engage in professional development training around relationships and sex education provision, when appropriate.
- Encourage students to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal, and emotional development in confidence and listen to their needs and support them seriously.
- Follow the school's reporting systems if a student comes to a member of staff with an issue that they feel they are not able to deal with alone.
- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSE in school.
- Tailor their lessons to suit all students in their class, across the full range of abilities, faiths, beliefs, and cultures, including those students with special educational needs, asking for support in this should they need it.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE however it is important that they feel comfortable to take RSE classes. We will make available regular professional development training in how to deliver relationships and sex education.

The continuing professional development (CPD) needs of staff, including non-teaching staff, are identified, and met through the following ways:

- Training and support is organised by SLT and the PD Lead.
- Staff will be offered generic RSE guidance; this includes guidance on handling controversial issues, responding to awkward questions, an introduction to the rationale of why teaching RSE is so important, current law and guidance, learning outcomes and school policy.
- Staff involved in the delivery of RSE issues seen as potentially more sensitive will be offered appropriate training to encourage confidence in dealing with matters of confidentiality, child protection, sensitive issues, and with potentially challenging questions.

Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

All staff are responsible for Personal Development (which includes PD, PSHE, RSE, SMSC, Character Education and Cultural Capital) will:

- Develop this school policy and ensure it is reviewed annually.
- Ensure all members of the governing body will be offered appropriate RSE training.
- Ensure that all staff are given regular and ongoing training on issues relating to RSE and how to deliver lessons on such issues.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with resources, local support, policy changes, and are familiar with school policy and guidance relating to RSE.
- Provide support to staff members who feel uncomfortable or ill-equipped to deal with the delivery of RSE to students.
- Ensure that RSE is age appropriate and needs-led across all year groups; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as the students do and meets their needs.
- Ensure that the knowledge and information regarding RSE to which all students are entitled is provided in a comprehensive way.
- Support parent/carer involvement in the development of the RSE curriculum.
- Ensure that staff's personal beliefs, values and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSE in school.
- Communicate freely with staff, parents/carers, and the governing body to ensure that everyone is in understanding of the school policy and curriculum for RSE, and that any concerns or opinions regarding the provision at the school are listened to, considered, and acted on as is appropriate.
- Ensure that provision of RSE at home is complementary to the provision the school provides and communicate to parents/carers any additional support available where necessary or requested.

All students:

- Are expected to attend the statutory National Curriculum Science elements of the RSE curriculum.
- Should support one another with issues that arise through RSE.
- Will listen in class, be considerate of other people's feelings and beliefs, and comply with confidentiality rules that are set in class.
- Will be encouraged and supported to feel as comfortable as possible if they want to talk to a member of staff, in confidence, regarding any concerns they have in school related to RSE or otherwise.
- Will be asked for feedback on the school's RSE provision. Opinions on provision and comments will be reviewed by the lead member of staff for RSE and taken into consideration when the curriculum is prepared for the following year's students.

The law states that, 'children and young people have the right to be heard and express their opinions.'

Human Rights Act 1998

Asking students for their views on RSE gives them an opportunity to be active citizens and ensures that teaching can meet the specific needs of the children at whom it is aimed. Findings from consulting students are also a powerful tool for communicating the needs of children to parents/carers, school staff and governors.

We hope that students will feel safe in the school environment to talk to any member of staff in confidence about any areas of concern regarding their personal, social, and emotional development, including matters raised by or relating to relationships and sex education.

We promote the school ethos as one of inclusion and acceptance throughout all areas of school activity and hope that students respond to this by feeling comfortable to ask questions and continue their learning both in and outside of the classroom.

For parents/carers the school will:

- Keep parents/carers informed about all aspects of the RSE curriculum, including when specific, discrete lessons around sex education will be delivered, and advise them to read this policy.
- Provide access to resources and information being used in class and do everything to ensure that parents/carers are comfortable with the education provided to their children in school by ensuring they are aware they can contact SLT or the PD Lead.
- Expect parents/carers to share the responsibility of RSE and support their children's personal, social, and emotional development.
- Encourage parents/carers to create an open home environment where students can engage, discuss, and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through RSE.
- Encourage parents/carers to seek additional support in this from the school where they feel it is needed.

7. Inclusion, equality, and diversity

All students, whatever their experience, background, and identity, are entitled to quality RSE that helps them build confidence and a positive sense of self, and to stay healthy.

All classes will be sensitive to and considerate of:

- Religious and cultural diversity
- Differing needs of boys and girls
- Diverse sexuality of children and young people
- Homophobic/transphobic bullying and behaviour
- Children's age and physical and emotional maturity
- Students who are new to English

To encourage students to participate in lessons, teachers will ensure content, approach and use of inclusive language reflects the diversity of the school community and helps each and every student to feel valued and included in the classroom.

RSE is an important vehicle for addressing both multicultural and gender issues and ensuring equal opportunities for all. Our policy values the diverse backgrounds of all students in school and, in acknowledging and exploring different views and beliefs, seeks to promote respect and understanding. We encourage respect for all religions and cultures. We do not ask students to represent the views of a particular religious or cultural group to their peers, unless they choose to do so.

RSE should help all students to understand their physical and emotional development and enable them to make positive decisions in their lives. We will ensure that provision is appropriate to the particular needs of our students, taking specialist advice where necessary. Staff will differentiate lessons to ensure that the vast majority of children can access the information; we recognise that some aspects of RSE will not be accessible for individuals with significant learning needs.

8. Safeguarding and child protection:

RSE plays an important part in fulfilling the statutory duties all schools have to meet. The subject helps children understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships and equips them with the knowledge and skills to get help if they need it.

Children have the right to:

- Say no
- Respect their own body
- Speak out and know that someone can help

If the school has any reason to believe a student is at risk, and/or there are any disclosures of abuse, all staff are aware of safeguarding procedures which will be immediately followed.

Our use of the correct anatomical terms for body parts helps to ensure that students are able to describe abusive behaviours if they need to.

Ground rules at the start of sessions help to establish and maintain a safe learning environment; this is important for good learning to take place, and also contributes to effective safeguarding.

9. Confidentiality and informing parents/carers

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a student for help and this will be made clear. Child protection procedures will be followed when there are any disclosures about abuse. It is rare for a student to request absolute confidentiality and, if they do, staff will make careful judgement about whether a third party needs to be informed. This should be based on:

- The seriousness of the situation and the degree of harm the student may be experiencing
- The student's age, maturity, and competence to make their own decisions

Unless clearly inappropriate, students should be encouraged to talk to their parent/carer.

10. Concerns and withdrawal of students

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from any RSE that is provided outside the Statutory Science, but schools must inform them of the effect such a decision might have on the child.

Education Act 1996 and Learning and Skills Act 2000

RSE is a vital part of the school curriculum, and we strongly advise parents/carers to carefully consider their decision before withdrawing their child from this aspect of school life.

Parents/carers do have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns sixteen. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

We will work in active partnership with parents, value their views and keep them informed about our provision. Should they have any concerns we will take time to address them.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The headteacher and PD Lead will meet with any parent/carer to discuss the request and take appropriate action including arranging alternative work.

Appendix 1: By the end of secondary school students should know

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 diverse 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

Appendix 2: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent/carer		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent/carer signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parent/carer	