



Sheiling School Thornbury

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

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Contents

1. Definition and aims.....	2
2. Statutory requirements.....	2
3. Policy development.....	3
4. Links with other policies.....	3
5. Delivery of RSE and Curriculum Overview.....	3
6. Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
7. Safeguarding.....	5
8. Parents' Right to Withdraw.....	6
9. Training.....	6
10. Monitoring arrangements.....	6
11. Appendices.....	7

1. Definition and aims

Relationship and Sex Education is designed to: equip children and young people with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships; prepare children and young people for the changes and challenges of growing up; and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- Ensure pupils have the knowledge to keep themselves safe, and to identify acceptable behaviour and positive traits in relationships of all kinds.
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships.
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- Provide pupils with correct information on positive relationships, reproduction, sexuality, and equality, in order to prevent the formation of potentially harmful misconceptions.

2. Statutory requirements

As an independent special school we must provide relationships education to all pupils as per Section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State as outlined in Section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

At Sheiling School, we have a good understanding of our pupils' familial backgrounds, and aim to uphold positive relationships with parents, carers, and other professionals. Pupils' familial backgrounds must be taken into account in the planning and delivery of RSE, and guidance states that sensitive topics must be handled appropriately within the context of pupils' religion, belief, race, sex, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. As a school we are compliant with the [Equalities Act 2010](#), under which all the above are protected characteristics.

In teaching Relationships and Sex Education, we aim to ensure that our pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. The teaching of LGBT content is fully integrated into the curriculum in an inclusive manner, rather than delivered as a stand-alone lesson. This projects a sense of unity and belonging for young people who may identify as LGBT.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and government legislation and guidance. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
3. Pupil observation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE.
4. Observations of child development – an understanding of child development has been factored into curriculum guidelines around RSE, to ensure subjects or concepts are brought at the appropriate age and in line with our broader curriculum.

4. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies:

- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child protection and Adult Protection Policies
- Promoting fundamental British Values Policy
- SMSC Curriculum

5. Delivery of RSE and Curriculum Overview

RSE is taught within the Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) education curriculum. All classes teach at least one hour of SMSC throughout the week.

At Sheiling School, RSE is focused on teaching our pupils the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, healthy lifestyles, sexuality, diversity and personal identity. We also make particular reference to: friendship; family relationships; puberty and 'growing up'; reproduction; appropriate behaviour; being safe; and the concept of what is 'private'.

We aim to teach RSE at an age-appropriate but sensitive level that takes in to account each individual pupils' developmental and social needs to ensure that RSE lessons are meaningful and appropriate for each pupil. Pupils may also receive stand-alone Relationship and Sex Education sessions delivered by a trained professional.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, pupils and staff, also taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so pupils are fully informed. If a teacher does not know the answer to the questions, time should be taken to ensure that the pupil is fully informed as soon as possible. This avoids the pupil seeking answers from less credible sources such as the internet or being given false information by peers.

Our teachers also take into account that children of the same age may be at different developmental/emotional stages, leading to the need to adapt content. This adaptation should be managed sensitively to avoid any discomfort or embarrassment for the pupil. It may be the case that individual pupils require further 1:1 support during or after the lesson to account for developmental differences or specific social/personal needs.

For pupils within our **primary** faculty (classes 1-5), RSE will predominantly be Relationships Education focusing on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, including:

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

For pupils within our **secondary** faculty, RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

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

In **6th form**, the RSE curriculum is personalised to the needs of individual pupils. 6th form teachers will use the criteria for the secondary faculty as a basis to assess if the pupils have the appropriate knowledge to prepare them to develop and maintain healthy, positive relationships beyond Sheiling School.

For more information see the 'Positive Relationships' content area of our SMSC curriculum, see Appendices 1.

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).

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the Head Teacher to account for its implementation.

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher, supported by the Educational Leadership Team, is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE (see section 7).

SMSC Coordinator

The SMSC Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the quality of RSE across the school and regularly reporting this to the Head Teacher and Educational Leadership Team.

Teachers

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from non-statutory components of RSE.

Teachers do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Teachers who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Head Teacher.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

7. Safeguarding

At the heart of RSE there is a focus on keeping safe and the teaching of RSE can play a vital role in preventative education. [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#) (KCSIE) sets out that all schools must ensure children are taught about safeguarding as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. KCSIE also sets out that pupils should be made aware of how to raise any concerns they may have about themselves or a friend. Likewise, staff must know what to do if a pupil makes a disclosure of abuse or neglect, or being witness to abuse and

domestic violence (see our Child and Adult Protection Policies for further information on our safeguarding procedures).

Teachers may liaise with the school's Safeguarding Team in preparation for content that is safeguarding-related, or to ensure the quality and appropriateness of resources of a sensitive nature.

8. Parents' Right to Withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of Sex Education within RSE up to 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Head teacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Head teacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

9. Training

All staff are expected to read our RSE policy as part of their induction and it is included in our internal Continual Professional Development training.

The Head Teacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or other professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the SMSC Coordinator through a series of observations, learning walks, and discussions with teaching staff.

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the Educational Leadership Team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Head Teacher.

11. Appendices

MSC CURRICULUM	
Positive Relationships (Relationship and Sex Education)	
Primary Faculty	
Class 1: 6 -7	Pupils should know: That families are important for children growing up, because they can give love, security and stability. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different in their needs, expectations and cultural background. What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). About the concept of privacy and implications for both children and adults, including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe. The benefits of time outdoors on well-being and happiness. Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest.
Class 2: 7- 8	Pupils should know: The characteristics of healthy family life: commitment to each other (including in times of difficulty); protection and care for children and other family members; the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives. The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties. Practical steps to take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. The importance of giving and permission-seeking in relationships with friends, peers and adults. That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact. Where and how to seek support if they are worried about someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions.

<p>Class 3: 8-9</p>	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <p>That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their own family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.</p> <p>How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.</p> <p>That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.</p> <p>About different types of bullying, the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders and how to get help.</p> <p>That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not.</p> <p>That there is a normal range and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.</p> <p>Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of time spent with friends and families.</p> <p>That bullying has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing.</p>
<p>Class 4: 9-10</p>	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <p>That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up.</p> <p>That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can be worked through, so that the friendships is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right.</p> <p>How to manage conflict between friends; how to manage these situations.</p> <p>The importance of self-respect and how this links to the pupil's own happiness.</p> <p>How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others and to keep trying until they are heard.</p> <p>How to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others feelings.</p> <p>Simple self-care techniques, including the importance and benefits of hobbies and interests.</p>
<p>Class 5: 10-11</p>	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <p>That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.</p> <p>How to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to seek advice or help from others if needed.</p> <p>How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met.</p>

Secondary Faculty

<p>Class 6: 11-12</p>	<p>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. The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts) including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity. Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn. How our bodies change through the human lifecycle.</p>
<p>Class 7: 12-13</p>	<p>Pupils should know: What marriage is, including legal status. Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples, and why it must be freely entered in to. How to recognise an unsafe relationship. The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts) including boundaries and privacy. 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. How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment. What changes in their bodies as they grow; physical changes.</p>
<p>Class 8: 13-14</p>	<p>Pupils should know: What changes in their bodies as they grow; sexual maturity. The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting. How to recognise a relationship that is unsafe for others. The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts) including consent. The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.</p>
<p>Class 9: 14-15</p>	<p>Pupils should know: What changes in their bodies as they grow; hormones and mood changes. The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts) including management of conflict. That much sexually explicit material 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 they have the choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex. The importance of sexual health and what precautions are essential for good sexual health.</p>

<p>Class 10: 15-16</p>	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <p>The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts) including reconciliation and ending relationships.</p> <p>What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence, and why these are always unacceptable.</p> <p>The concepts of and laws relating to: rape; honour-based violence; sexual exploitation; FGM and grooming, and how these can affect current and future relationships.</p> <p>That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.</p> <p>The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.</p> <p>The facts around pregnancy, including miscarriage.</p> <p>That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options).</p>
<p>6th Form 16-19</p>	<p>The RSE Curriculum for our post-16 pupils is personalised to the needs of individual pupils. 6th form teachers will use the criteria for the secondary faculty as a basis to assess if the pupils have the appropriate knowledge to prepare them to develop and maintain healthy, positive relationships beyond Sheiling School.</p>