

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE) in Church of England Schools

“It is our responsibility to learn and achieve our dreams as a family.”

Opening minds, widening horizons and developing a better world

Valuing Compassion, Community, Endurance, Friendship, Hope, Respect, Thankfulness, Wisdom

The Church of England Education Office faith sensitive inclusive approach to Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education¹ (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE) is underpinned by two key biblical passages:

‘So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them’ (Genesis 1:27, NRSV)

All people should be given dignity as all people are made in the image of God and loved equally by God. This truth underpins what pupils learn about the differences that are permissible under UK law.

‘I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10, GNB)

All pupils have a right to an education which enables them to flourish and is set in a classroom culture where differences of lifestyle and opinion are given dignity; bullying of all kinds is eliminated; and where they are free to be themselves and fulfil their potential without fear.

Some key principles

Church of England schools should ensure that their RSHE curriculum protects, informs and empowers all pupils. It should ensure that children are able to cherish themselves and others as unique and wonderfully made, and to form healthy relationships where they respect and offer dignity to others (SIAMS schedule page 11). It will provide pupils with the knowledge that will enable them to navigate and contextualise a world in which many will try to tell them how to behave, what to do and what to think. It will help them to develop the skills to express their own views and make their own informed decisions. This is a responsibility that should normally be shared between parents and school.

Church Schools are maintained schools and are required to act within the requirements of the law, including the Equalities Act of 2010. The Church of England welcomes, supports and expects the teaching of Relationships and Health Education in all Church of England Primary Schools. Primary Schools can decide whether they wish to choose to teach some aspects of Sex Education. In Church of England Secondary Schools Relationships, Sex and Health Education will be taught. Where Sex Education is taught parents will have the right to withdraw their children from that part of the curriculum ‘other than as part of the science curriculum’²

¹ Where, after consultation with parents and carers, primary schools decide to include elements of sex education in their curriculum.

² *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and health education 2019*. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education> page 18 paragraph 49.

We encourage all schools to approach RSHE in a faith sensitive and inclusive way. Such an approach should seek to understand and appreciate differences within and across the teachings of the faith and other communities the school serves. It should give dignity and worth to the views of pupils from the faith and other communities represented in the school as part of ensuring that the Equalities Act of 2010 is applied in the school. It should recognise that there is no hierarchy of protected characteristics in the Equalities Act and that sometimes different protected characteristics can be in tension as they cannot necessarily be equally protected at all times.

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 comes into force on Monday 27 February 2023. Under existing law, people can enter a marriage or civil partnership at age 18, or 16 to 17 with parental or judicial consent. The Act raises the minimum marriage and civil partnership age to 18, removing all consent requirements.

The Act extends existing forced marriage legislation, so it will be an offence to carry out any conduct causing a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion aren't used.

A CHARTER FOR FAITH SENSITIVE AND INCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION, RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) AND HEALTH EDUCATION (RSHE)³

In St Helena's we seek to provide Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE), which will enable all pupils to flourish.

We commit:

- 1. To work in partnership with parents and carers.** This will involve dialogue with parents and carers through all stages of policy development as well as discussing the resources used to teach their children and how they can contribute at home. It must, however, be recognised that the law specifies that what is taught and how it is taught is ultimately a decision for the school.
- 2. That RSHE will be delivered professionally and as an identifiable part of PSHE.** It will be led, resourced and reported to parents in the same way as any other subject. There will be a planned programme delivered in a carefully sequenced way. Staff will receive regular training in RSHE and PSHE. Any expert visitors or trainers invited into the school to enhance and supplement the programme will be expected to respect the schools published policy for RSHE.
- 3. That RSHE will be delivered in an inclusive way that gives dignity, respect to all that make up our wonderfully diverse society, including the LGBT+ community.** It will be taught in a way that is sensitive to the faith and beliefs of those in the wider school community and will seek to fairly explain the tenets and varying interpretations of religious communities on matters of sex and relationships. It will value the importance of faithfulness as the underpinning and backdrop for relationships. It will encourage pupils to develop the skills

³ RSHE is used to indicate either Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education as determined by the school context since, after consultation with parents and carers primary schools may decide to include elements of sex education in their curriculum.

needed to disagree without being disagreeable, to appreciate the lived experience of other people and to live well together.

4. **That RSHE will seek to build resilience in our pupils to help them form healthy relationships and resist the harmful influence of pornography in all its forms.** It will give pupils opportunities to reflect on values and influences including their peers, the media, the internet, faith and culture that may have shaped their attitudes to gender, relationships and sex. It will promote the development of the wisdom and skills our pupils need to make their own informed decisions.
5. **That RSHE will promote healthy resilient relationships set in the context of character and virtue development.** It will reflect the vision and associated values of the school and develop character and virtues such as honesty, integrity, self-control, courage, humility, kindness, forgiveness, generosity and a sense of justice. It will encourage relationships that are hopeful and aspirational.
6. **That RSHE will be based on honest and medically accurate information based on reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights.** It will present a positive view of human sexuality. It will distinguish between different types of knowledge and opinions so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health as appropriate to their age and maturity.
7. **To take a particular care to meet the individual needs of all pupils including those with special needs and disabilities.** It will ensure that lessons and any resources used will be accessible and sensitive to the learning needs of the individual child. We acknowledge the potential vulnerability of pupils who have SEND but recognise the possibilities and rights of SEND pupils to high quality relationships and sex education.
8. **To seek pupils' views about RSHE so that the teaching can be made relevant to their lives.** It will discuss real life issues relating to the age and stage of pupils, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, exploitation and safe relationships online. This will be carefully targeted and age appropriate based on a teacher judgment about pupil readiness for this information in consultation with parents and carers.

Implementation of the Relationships, Sex, Health Education Curriculum

All staff will be responsible for teaching the programme, drawing upon PSHE Association resources, "Goodness and Mercy" resources, National Online safety learning and "Living and Growing".

It will be timetabled alongside the appropriate National Curriculum orders for Science in order to make the learning connections. It may be pertinent to teach the programme if a specific concern arises within the group.

All children will be taught in mixed gender groups with at least 2 adults present.

In particular, in Sex Education:

5-7 year olds will explore the differences between the sexes, growth and change from the foetus to an adult and the correct terminology for the main external parts of their body.

7-9 year olds will explore the changes that take place in puberty, the process of reproduction within a caring relationship, roles and responsibilities and the development and needs of an unborn baby.

9-11 year olds will explore difficult questions young people have during this period of change, including masturbation and wet dreams and the mixed messages received about sex.

This teaching will be primarily supported by the Channel 4 "Living and Growing" video programmes. Other resources can be found on the S Drive and in the staff room resource cupboard.

The teaching strategies of discussion and reflection will be a major influence on the work. Ground rules will be established together with each teaching group before discussion begins. They must include points about respect, trust, confidentiality, diversity, support and awareness of others. (Guidance can be found in the RSHE folder on the S Drive.)

A box must be available before and after the discussion sessions for all children to pose their own questions. Children must realise that some questions may not be answered if the content is inappropriate for the age of the group. If a child wants a confidential answer, they must put their name on the question paper.

Continuous professional development will be considered within the individual teacher's Performance Management process and to take account of national initiatives.

Specific Issues Statement

The delicate nature of the subject means that its teaching will be done with extra care and sensitivity, bearing in mind some children may have unhappy experiences of family life.

Personal or explicit questions will be dealt with individually and if appropriate with a support agency. All children need to be made aware that adults cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. If a personal disclosure is made, the child must be reassured that he or she will be informed first if confidentiality is broken and support will be found.

Child protection issues must be reported to the Head/Deputy Designated safeguarding lead and up to date procedures will be followed.

Statutory Requirement

All parents will be notified when the teaching and learning is to take place and will have the opportunity to view the teaching resources prior to the children's sessions.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from part of or the entire programme excluding National Curriculum Science requirements. It is recommended that parents wishing to withdraw their child from the programme discuss the content with the Head teacher first.

Alternative arrangements in school will be made for the pupil during these sessions. The curriculum information for parents withdrawing their child will be sent for home use.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils are entitled to quality RSHE to meet their individual needs and we will endeavour to deliver this either within the main classroom or through small group teaching sessions. Teachers will bear in mind the needs of all children but especially those with specific learning needs.

Resources will be checked by all teachers for any racial, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender issues and will be removed from the curriculum. Resources will be carefully chosen for the age and ability of the children.

Links with other Policies

- PSHE and Citizenship
- Behaviour / Discipline
- Anti-bullying
- Drug Education and Dealing with Drug Related Incidents

This policy will be reviewed annually by staff and governors.

Useful Organisations

Black Health Agency

0161 226 9145

www.blackhealthagency.co.org.uk Provides a range of health-related services and initiatives for the diverse Black communities locally, regionally and nationally.

Brook

020 7248 6040

www.brook.org.uk Publishes a range of resources for young people and professionals

Centre for HIV and Sexual Health

0114 226 1900

www.sheffhiv.demon.co.uk Offers training, consultancy and resources for children, young people and professionals.

Sex Education Forum

020 7843 6056

www.ncb.org.uk/sexed.htm Offers a range of publications and factsheets including *Sex Education Matters*, a termly newsletter currently free of charge to all schools.

Working with Men

020 8308 0709

Training and resources for working with boys and young men.

Education for Choice

020 7837 7221

www.efc.org.uk Provides materials and training for teachers and professionals working with young people on abortion and choice.

RPA

020 7837 5432

www.rpa.org.uk Offers training and consultancy as well as resources for children, young people and professionals.

Health Development Agency

020 7430 0850

www.hda-online.org.uk Offers research, support and resources. The National healthy School Standard national team is based at the Health Development Agency.

Image in Action

01494 481 623

Image in Action works with young people with learning disabilities using drama, group work and active learning to teach sex education. Has produced two resources.

National Children's Bureau

020 7843 6000

www.ncb.org.uk Offers and information service and produces a range of resources, and offers training and consultancy on all aspects of PSHE and Citizenship.

Websites that can support curriculum planning

- Goodness and Mercy www.goodnessandmercy.co.uk
- Wired for Health www.wiredforhealth.co.uk
- National Grid for Learning www.ngfl.gov.uk
- DfES PSHE and Citizenship websites www.teachernet.gov.uk/pshe
www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship/
- Sex Education Forum website www.ncb.org.uk/sef