

Mercenfeld Primary School



Relationships Education Policy Including Sex Education Policy

1. Context

1.1 Relationships Education in our school

In September 2020 Relationships Education became a statutory component of the PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) curriculum.

We believe Relationships Education is learning about emotional, social and physical aspects of our lives, about ourselves and our relationships. It enables pupils to develop essential life skills for building and maintaining positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships. It equips pupils with information and skills they need to understand about themselves, their peers and people they meet in the wider community. It explores risks, choices, rights, responsibilities and attitudes. It will help pupils to develop skills to keep themselves and others safer, physically and emotionally, both on and offline. Relationships Education enables pupils to explore their own attitudes and those of others respectfully.

As Relationships Education is statutory, parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from this part of the curriculum.

1.2 Context of Wider PSHE

We deliver Relationships Education as part of our wider provision of Personal, Social, Health and Economics Education (PSHE), which also includes statutory Health Education.

The aims of Relationships Education are further supported by extracurricular and enrichment activities that we provide.

1.3 Aims of Relationships Education

Through the delivery of Relationships Education, we intend to further our school's aims of providing a curriculum which is relevant to the needs of pupils, both now and in the future. It will enable pupils to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes, which enhance their personal development and wellbeing. This will have a direct, positive effect on their progress and achievement in school.

All adults in school will work towards achieving these aims for Relationships Education. We seek to enable our children to:

- develop a confidence in sharing their own thoughts and opinions with others
- show tolerance of others' beliefs and life choices
- develop skills and attributes to keep themselves healthy and safe
- develop skills to build positive, respectful relationships with other people
- develop their understanding of a variety of families and how families are central to the wellbeing of children
- recognise and avoid coercive and exploitative relationships
- explore relationships in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development
- value, care for and respect their bodies
- build confidence in accessing additional advice and support for themselves and others

2. Implementing Our Policy

2.1 Inclusion

We understand the importance of ensuring that all children in our school receive their entitlement to Relationships Education. Our Relationship Education curriculum is inclusive and meets the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

2.2 Equality

The Equality Act 2010 has special resonance in Relationships Education. Through this area of learning we seek to develop key interpersonal skills such as respect and empathy which enable pupils to understand the rights and responsibilities we all have towards one another.

We will aim for our provision of Relationships Education to reduce discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and encourage good relations between different groups.

In order to ensure that Relationships Education meets the needs of all:

- We will reflect a range of lifestyles and family structures so that all children see themselves and their families reflected back in the lessons.
- We will ensure that the law in relation to, for example, marriage, online behaviours, sexuality, gender and violence are explained in age-appropriate ways.
- Where there are different cultural or religious views about families, relationships or behaviours, we will share these to ensure children see their family views represented.
- We will not seek to gain consensus, but will accept and celebrate difference.
- We will, as appropriate, ensure that a variety of views and beliefs are reflected back to pupils. We will not ask children to represent the views of a particular religious or cultural group to their peers, unless they choose to do so.

We support children in developing their knowledge and attitudes towards diversity throughout units of work including:

- Diversity and Communities
- Family and Friends

We will carefully consider special educational needs or disability, gender, sexual orientation and age, nationality, religion, cultural and linguistic background when planning and delivering RSE. We also aim to support and respect gender, age, racial equality and diversity and represent the LGBTQI+ community through our Relationships curriculum.

2.3 Safeguarding

We understand the importance of high quality Relationships Education as we fulfil our statutory safeguarding duties. Relationship Education enables pupils to understand about mutual, consensual and reciprocated relationships in all their forms. Whether the children are learning about friendships, families, relationships in school or the wider community, they will be developing essential skills which underpin their ability to recognise abusive relationships. Teaching about 'Family and Friends' and 'Anti-bullying' enables us to fulfil our statutory duty to prevent 'child-on-child' abuse.

In the case of Relationships Education and Personal Safety, we recognise that effective teaching may alert children to what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour (including inappropriate sexual behaviour) and that there is an increased possibility that a disclosure relating to abuse may be made. Relationships Education and Personal Safety enable us to fulfil our duty to prevent Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

All staff are aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and will report disclosures or concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Kirstie Randle) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (Lindsay Weatherill, Laura Kasler, Donna Jewitt, Rebecca Willett) immediately - this will be done via CPOMS

2.4 Development of the Policy

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, the local advisory board and parents/carers.

All views expressed by staff, the local advisory board and parents/carers about the policy have been considered. The final decision on the policy and delivery has been made by the school, having listened to the needs and views of the school community.

2.5 Consulting on our Policy

Parents/Carers will be consulted if any changes are made when renewing this current policy.

In previous years, parents have been given information about Relationship Education via a parent information evening, and the content for this has not changed.

The policy will be ratified every academic year by the local advisory board and we will be more than happy to take on parental views at any point. The policy will be available on our website at all times.

3. Involving the Whole School Community

3.1 Working with Staff

Teaching Relationships Education can be very rewarding, but we understand that, in order to feel confident, staff need opportunities to develop their own knowledge, skills and attitudes. We recognise that every adult has different personal beliefs and attitudes, but that all teachers must understand and comply with their duties connected with safeguarding, equality and inclusion.

Teachers have a duty to deliver statutory areas of the curriculum and all teachers will be supported to develop their skills in delivering non-statutory areas such as sex education. We will discuss relevant issues and staff concerns and, where appropriate, arrange training to enable staff members to feel confident in delivering the various aspects of Relationships Education. We will also encourage the sharing of good practice. We may also use team teaching to develop confidence.

Those with special responsibility for the development of Relationships Education will be offered opportunities to consult with advisors and attend external training courses.

3.2 Engaging with Pupils

- We will involve pupils in the evaluation and development of their Relationships Education in ways appropriate to their age. We will seek opportunities to discuss children's views about the content of their PSHE lessons.
- We will engage the pupils in assessment activities to establish their development needs, for example 'Draw and Write' activities.
- We will encourage pupils to ask questions as they arise by providing anonymous question boxes.
- We will ask pupils to reflect on their learning and set goals for future learning.

3.3 Working with the Local Advisory Board

The local advisory board as a whole plays an active role in monitoring, reviewing and developing the policy and its implementation in school.

The role of the local advisory board consider the following when monitoring our policy:

- pupils make progress in Relationships Education in line with the expected educational outcomes
- the subject is well led, effectively managed and well planned
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- teaching is delivered in a way which is accessible to all
- clear information is given to parents/carers
- the subject is resourced and taught in a way which enables the school to fulfil statutory requirements.

3.4 Communicating with Parents/carers

Parents/carers are the first educators of their children about relationships, emotions, empathy, respect and growing up. We recognise that many children like to receive information about relationships from their parents/carers in addition to their learning in school. Therefore we seek to work in partnership with parents/carers when planning and delivering Relationships Education. We will encourage this partnership by:

- Sharing details of our curriculum on our website – please note that if requested, class teachers can share specific lesson plans and resources with parents/carers, providing that the content will not be copied or shared further
- Informing parents/carers of forthcoming Relationships Education topics e.g. Personal Safety, Anti-bullying and RSE
- Inviting parents to learn more about the approach used in Relationships Education and RSE
- Informing parents/carers about PSHE, Relationships Education and RSE programmes as their child joins the school through the school website
- Providing supportive information about parents' role in Relationships Education
- Inviting parents to discuss their views and concerns about Relationships Education on an informal basis
- Signposting parents/carers to sources of support to help them address the needs of their child or build their own confidence in talking about relationships with their children.

3.5 Working with External Agencies and the Wider Community

We believe that all aspects of Relationships Education are most effectively taught by those who know our pupils well and are aware of their needs. We encourage visitors to our school, who may enhance, but never replace, our planned provision. We will work closely with visitors to ensure that the needs of our pupils are met.

We will follow this Code of Practice when working with visitors:

- The care and management of pupils is the responsibility of the school at all times.
- In class teaching situations, visitors will not be asked to work alone with pupils, but will be supported by a member of staff.
- The school will know whether visitors are DBS checked and arrangements will be made to accompany them as appropriate.
- All visitors will be made aware of the content and principles of this policy, prior to their visit.
- All lessons will be planned in direct liaison with the PSHE Co-ordinator/Class teacher, taking account of the age and needs of the group and the context of the work within the Relationships Education programme.
- Visitors will be reminded that, whilst contributing to Relationships Education in a classroom setting, they must adhere to the same confidentiality code as staff members. Class teaching must be seen as separate from health or other targeted interventions to support wellbeing.
- Any resources which a visitor wishes to use or distribute will be discussed and agreed with the PSHE Co-ordinator/Class Teacher beforehand.
- The contributions of visitors will be regularly monitored and evaluated.

4. Curriculum Organisation

Our Relationships Education curriculum is wholly consistent with the DfE statutory requirements for Relationships Education and Health Education (2020), National Curriculum (2014), other DfE and OfSTED guidance. It also reflects best practice described by the Sex Education Forum and PSHE Association. We consider Relationships Education to be a continuous process of learning, which begins before the children enter our school and continues into adulthood. We have planned a curriculum appropriate to each age group with a spiral of progression. All adults working with children have a part to play in supporting the delivery of Relationships Education.

Relationships Education is learning about:

- Families and People who care for me
- Caring Friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online Relationships
- Being Safe

Our PSHE topic structure does not separate delivery of Relationships Education from Health Education and wider PSHE. We deliver topics which, taking the lead from children's lived experiences, consider related themes including development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in an integrated way. The topics where Relationships Education is a significant driver are:

- Anti-bullying
- Diversity and Communities
- Family and Friends
- Managing change
- My emotions
- Personal Safety
- Relationships and Sex Education (Year 6)

Relationships Education will be taught in:

- PSHE through designated lessons, circle time, focused events, health weeks
- Other curriculum areas including Science, RE, PE and Computing (internet safety)
- Enrichment activities, especially our Commando Joes programme, involvement in school trips and adventurous activities.

4.1 Teaching Methodologies

Our aim is that teachers use a range of teaching methodologies where skills such as communication, compromise and negotiation are practised in classroom situations and where attitudes such as respect and empathy are modelled and discussed. We encourage teachers to ensure that group work, debate, taking other people's view points and working together are practised in all PSHE lessons and across the wider curriculum. Our Relationships Education lessons are not simple opportunities to give information, but to explore views and perspectives and develop possible solutions through discussion and interaction.

In keeping with this approach, we base our curriculum on a series of questions children will have the opportunity to engage with, rather than banks of knowledge they will acquire.

Ground Rules: Relationships Education is taught in a safe, non-judgemental environment where all adults and children are confident that they will be respected. Specific ground rules will be established at the beginning of any Relationships Education work, in addition to those already used in the classroom. They will cover the following areas:

- appropriate use of language
- the asking and answering of personal questions
- strategies for checking or accessing information.

Distancing Techniques: In order to protect children's privacy, we will employ teaching and learning strategies which enable them to discuss issues without disclosing personal experience. For example, we will use *fiction, puppets, case studies, role-play, videos, theatre in education* to enable children to share ideas and opinions and to practise their decision-making skills in a safe learning environment.

4.2 Consent

As a school, we think it is important to teach the idea of consent (asking/giving permission). This will be taught from EYFS through to Year 6, in an age-appropriate way.

For example:

EYFS/KS1

- Asking/giving permission to join in a game or borrow somebody's toy
- NSPCC PANTS
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/pants-underwear-rule/>

KS2

- Consensual relationships
- Social media e.g. sharing/taking pictures

4.3 Health Education

We will combine our Relationships Education (e.g. learning about families, personal safety and emotional wellbeing) with aspects of Health Education (e.g. learning about the spread of illnesses and the changing adolescent body). Some elements of this are also part of the statutory National Curriculum for Science (e.g. the biological aspects of puberty, reproduction and the spread of viruses).

We will ensure that children receive teaching about puberty from Y4 onwards in order to prepare them for the physical, emotional and social changes they are approaching or undergoing. Please note that this will be taught in an age-appropriate manner and we will consider the needs of each cohort.

We understand that at times children will benefit from varying methods of delivering this curriculum. We will teach most lessons mixed gender but will also teach some sessions separately (from Year 4 upwards) to enable children to ask questions that they may not in a mixed gender setting. We will ensure there are positive educational reasons for each method of delivery.

4.4 Curriculum Materials and Resources

We will primarily use the *Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme* and the resources recommended within it when planning and delivering Relationships Education. We will avoid a 'resource-led' approach, instead focussing on the needs of the children and our planned learning objectives. We will carefully select resources which meet these objectives. We will evaluate teaching resources thoroughly before using them. We will select resources which are consistent with our curriculum for Relationship Education by making sure they -

- relate to the aims and objectives of this policy
- are suitable to the age, maturity, needs, linguistic proficiency and ability of the children
- are up-to date in factual content
- are produced by a reputable organisation
- do not show unfair bias e.g. towards a commercial product, religious view point
- avoid racial, gender, sexual, cultural and religious stereotyping
- encourage active and participative learning
- conform to the statutory requirements for Relationships Education.

We will also use resources from Twinkl where appropriate. When delivering Sex Education in Year 6, teachers will also follow a specific Sex Education programme 'A whole school primary curriculum for Sex and Relationships education', which has proven successful in the past.

4.5 Safe and Effective Practice

Staff are unable to offer absolute confidentiality in cases where a safeguarding issue is identified. We will reassure children that staff will act in their best interests and that this may involve sharing information if the child is at risk of harm. Children will be told if information is to be shared (taking special care with very young children or those with significant special needs) and will be offered appropriate support.

Answering Questions: We acknowledge that sensitive and complex issues will arise in Relationships Education, as pupils will naturally ask questions. When spontaneous discussion arises, it will be guided in a way which reflects the stated school aims and curriculum content. As a first principle, we will answer questions relating to the planned curriculum for that age group or below to the whole class. We will answer questions relating to areas beyond the planned curriculum for that age group, in a sensitive and age appropriate way, only to the pupil/s who have asked the question. Teachers will inform families about questions which go beyond the planned curriculum, in order to further home/school partnerships. If a member of staff is uncertain about the answer to a question which goes beyond the curriculum, or indeed whether they wish to answer it, they will seek guidance from the PSHE leader/Designated Safeguarding Lead. In some cases the question will reach beyond the planned curriculum for Y6 and the question will not be answered in school. The child will be asked if they would like support to ask their questions at home or to another trusted adult.

When answering questions, we shall ensure that sharing personal information by adults, pupils or their families is discouraged. Where the question indicates the need for pastoral support, the conversation will be deferred to a time outside the teaching session and other colleagues may be involved. Where a question or comment from a pupil in the classroom indicates the possibility of abuse, coercion or exploitation, teachers will pass this information to the DSL in line with the school Safeguarding policy.

Sexually Active Pupils: There are extremely rare occasions where a primary-aged child, who is sexually active or contemplating sexual activity, approaches an adult. If this occurs in our school, it

will be viewed as a child protection issue. The designated member of staff will follow Safeguarding Procedures and seek advice from the DSL.

4.6 Assessment, Recording, Reporting

We will use our class books to record whole class discussions and group work in PSHE. We also highly value pupil voice and will take into account the opinions of our children about what they would like to learn.

From time to time, the PSHE leader will ask staff to reflect on the effectiveness of learning in particular units of work, using the rating sheets in each unit. Best practice will also be shared through lesson observations, monitoring of planning and children's work and also through training opportunities.

5. Sex Education Policy

5.1 Definition of Sex Education

Following guidance from the DfE, we define Sex Education as learning about 'how a (human) baby is conceived and born'.

This extends the learning about sexual reproduction in 'some plants and animals' required through the Science national curriculum. It also complements the statutory requirement to teach about puberty as part of Science and Health Education, as understanding sexual reproduction in humans enables children to understand the processes of puberty.

We have taken into account the DfE's recommendation that all primary schools have a Sex Education programme and we understand that this is not statutory. We understand that our teaching in sex education must be tailored to the needs and physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.

Our school has decided that Sex Education will be taught in Y6

5.2 Content of Sex Education

The children will not learn about human sexual reproduction until Y6.

If Sex Education is brought up in questions and answer sessions before Year 6, it will be discussed but only in a scientific manner, which links to the statutory Science content.

5.3 Teaching Methodologies

In Sex Education there is a certain amount of knowledge which has to be imparted. Teachers will give the facts in an accessible way using a range of approaches, such as picture books and scientific descriptions. Pupils will be asked to consolidate their learning in ways which enable them to develop skills to discuss sexual body parts and functions confidently.

5.4 Delivery of the Sex Education Curriculum

Sex Education will be delivered in Year 6 as part of our Relationships Education by a teacher, who knows the needs and natures of the children. The teacher is best placed to tailor the learning to the needs of the pupils.

Parents/carers will be informed about the content of the curriculum in advance of teaching and will be invited to talk to staff if they have questions.

Teachers will be offered support to develop their skills and to learn from others where needed.

5.5 Right to be excused from Sex Education

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be excused from some or all of Sex Education delivered as part of statutory Relationships Education. Before granting any such request the Head Teacher will discuss the request with parents/carers (and if appropriate with the child) to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The educational, social and emotional benefits for the child of being part of the lessons will also be discussed. We will record the discussion and the outcomes on CPOMS.

We will consider compromise arrangements which will enable the child to receive Sex Education at school.

6. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Monitoring, review and evaluation of the policy is the responsibility of the PSHE leader. The local advisory board will ask for information relating to the effectiveness of the policy when it is monitored every year.

7. Appendices

7.2 Linked National Documents

RSE and Health Education

Children and Social Work Bill 2017.

Sex and Relationships Education for the 21st Century’.

Equality Act 2010

Keeping Children Safe in Education

NSPCC PANTS