

Relationships & Sex Education Policy

(February 2022)

Park Community School

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RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

1 Background and Context

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

Relationship and Sex education is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development and includes the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect (both mutual and self) and the love and care for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes so that pupils leave able to make informed decisions in all their relationships they form. See section 34 of the Children & Social Work Act 2017.

Furthermore, in accordance with the DfE Relationship and Sex Education Guidance (Sept 2021) the school will build upon the work begun at Primary level by presenting facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner, set within the framework of values identified in this paragraph and promoting an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour. Pupils will also be encouraged to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications, the risks of certain types of behaviour, and to accept that both sexes must behave responsibly in sexual matters. We, the school, firmly believe that the key to this is the development of the students' self-esteem and a positive feeling of self-worth.

We also recognise that the children come from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds which will enrich the understanding of all students, but that sensitivity will be needed to avoid causing hurt and offence to them and their families. The teaching of sex education is seen as a partnership between home and family and parents have an important role in this aspect of their child's development.

2 Aims

At Park Community School the aims of the RSE programme will be delivered within and by promoting the moral framework as follows:

- to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful;
- to understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect and to understand that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing;
- to believe they can achieve goals and that in order to achieve those goals they must stick at tasks despite the challenges they may face
- to be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way;
- to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence including honour-based violence and forced

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marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for themselves or others at risk;

- to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and when to report issues to keep them safe online;
- to, within the law, be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives in the future, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs.

While also recognising that all pupils have an entitlement to:

- Age and circumstance appropriate RSE
- Access to help from trusted adults and signposting to relevant and appropriate services.

3 Statutory Guidance

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. This policy was developed in response to:

- [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Behaviour and discipline in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Alternative provision - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Mental health and behaviour in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Preventing bullying - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Advice and guidance | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](http://equalityhumanrights.com)
- [Advice template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [Regulating independent schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [National Citizen Service: guidance for schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

4 Formal Entitlement

Throughout Key Stage 3 and 4 relationship and sex education is mainly taught through weekly dedicated SMSC lessons and Challenge Days (part of the SMSC programme). Other subjects such as Science and RE make important contributions as appropriate. It is the responsibility of the SMSC lead to ensure this coverage is tracked, kept up to date and that new developments are included.

Informal Entitlement: Whole Class Issues

It is recognised that many issues relating to relationship and sex education will evolve informally through class discussions and through teaching materials used by

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teachers. Such issues will be sensitively dealt with, this will involve clear ground rules and techniques for depersonalising discussion. If a teacher deems a question to be inappropriate for class discussion, he/she will address the issue later the same day with the pupil concerned. The use of an 'Ask it Basket' also enables pupils to ask questions that they don't want to ask publicly, but that can be addressed by tutors either individually or as a whole class discussion.

Informal Entitlement: Individual Issues

It is possible that individuals will occasionally seek advice from individual teacher. Where this involves advice on contraception to pupils under 16 or other matters which raise legal issues teachers will follow the guidance of the Confidentiality Policy which is a separate document, under this guise is also the Child Protection Policy, both of which are available on request. Generally, the normal process for a teacher to follow will be to advise the student to talk to their parents, if not to seek help from a medical professional, or signpost appropriate external agencies.

5 External Speakers

Where appropriate teachers will, with the approval of the Head teacher, invite external specialist to present parts of the relationship and sex education programme. The teacher who invites the speaker will ensure they know and understand the school policy for sex education and understand how their contribution fits into the sex education programme. The teacher will also discuss their input with the speaker and be present at the presentation. A service level agreement should be signed.

6 Parents

Relationship and Sex education is seen as a joint responsibility of both parents and school. Staff at Park Community School will support the work of parents in this area and wherever possible will provide appropriate supportive material for them to study and use. Parents may also have access to classroom materials and appropriate syllabuses for sex education, should they so wish.

Parents will have access to the school policy either at the school, or, on request, by copy forwarded for their own use. Through these documents parents will also be made aware of their rights to withdraw their child from specifically the sex education aspect of RSE, other than that covered by the Science national curriculum. Such requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher who will make alternative arrangements for such students. Parents will be informed in writing of specific RSE sessions taught outside of science for instance contraception to allow them to withdraw their child if they feel it necessary.

7 Equal Opportunities

Relationship and Sex Education is an entitlement for all students and this policy has been drawn up in accordance with the School Equal Opportunities Policy.

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8 Safeguarding

At the heart of these subjects there is a focus on keeping children safe, and schools can play an important role in preventative education. [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) sets out that all schools and colleges should ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

Good practice allows children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children should be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This should include processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.

KCSIE is clear that all staff should know what to do if a pupil tells them that they are being abused or neglected or are witnessing abuse. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is informed of anything that is safeguarding-related in the context of these subjects. They will potentially have knowledge of trusted, high quality local resources that could be engaged, links to the police and other agencies and the knowledge of any particular local issues which it may be appropriate to address in lessons.

Where the school invites external agencies in to support delivery of these subjects, they agree in advance of the session how a safeguarding report should be dealt with by the external visitor. It is important that children understand how confidentiality will be handled in a lesson and what might happen if they choose to make a report.

There are some important points for teachers in terms of how they approach this content and how they consider their planning. When teaching the new subjects, school is aware that children may raise topics including self-harm and suicide. In talking about this content in the classroom, teachers are made aware of the risks of encouraging or making suicide seem a more viable option for pupils and avoid material being instructive rather than preventative. To avoid this, they take care to avoid giving instructions or methods of self-harm or suicide and avoid using emotive language, videos or images. PSHE's [Teacher Guidance: preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#) provides useful support for teachers in handling this material.

If teachers have concerns about a specific pupil in relation to self-harm or suicidal ideation or attempts, they must follow safeguarding procedures.

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9 Training

Training and support will be made available for all staff involved with the sex education programme as appropriate and as resources allow. It will be the responsibility of the Head of Department to liaise with the senior member of staff with responsibility for professional development to identify and meet training needs.

10 Assessment

Assessment of student learning is being developed in accordance with the School Assessment Policy. The aspects of relationship and sex education contained within the National Curriculum will be subject to the appropriate statutory assessment requirements. Other aspects of the sex education programme will be assessed by pupil self assessment and feedback from visiting speakers and staff delivering the programme.

11 Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability

The RSE lead will monitor and evaluate the development of the relationship and sex education policy and will report to the Deputy Headteacher, who, in turn will report to the Senior Leadership Team.

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Appendix 1 - Teaching Strategies for Relationship and Sex Education

Extract from DfE Sex and Relationship Guidance 116/2000 Section 4 and Paragraphs 7.11, 7.12

This section looks at some practical strategies for teaching sex and relationship education. Schools may already be making use of these in their programmes.

4.1 It is essential that schools can help children and young people develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about sex and relationships. Teachers and other staff may need to overcome their own anxieties and embarrassment to do this effectively. Partnership between school and parents is the key to success. There are a number of teaching strategies that can help this, including:

- establishing ground rules with their pupils; _ using `distancing' techniques;
- knowing how to deal with unexpected questions or comments from pupils;
- using discussion and project learning methods and appropriate materials; and
- encouraging reflection.

4.2 Some teachers will need training and support, perhaps by team teaching or by inviting visitors from outside services or agencies.

Ground rules

4.3 A set of ground rules will help teachers create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from pupils. Ground rules might be developed as part of the school's sex and relationship education policy or individually with each class or year group. For example, one class worked out this set of ground rules together:

- no one (teacher or pupil) will have to answer a personal question;
- no one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
- only the correct names for body parts will be used; and
- meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.

Distancing techniques

4.4 Teachers can avoid embarrassment and protect pupils' privacy by always depersonalising discussions. For example, role play can be used to help pupils `act out' situations. Case studies with invented characters, appropriate videos, and visits to theatre in education groups can all help pupils discuss sensitive issues and develop their decision-making skills in a safe environment. Some of these methods are listed below under discussion and project learning.

Dealing with questions

4.5 Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole-class situation. Having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this

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happening but teachers will need support and training so that they are prepared for the unexpected. For example:

- 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, helpline, or an outside agency or service;
- 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 or both together research the question later;
- If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have been treated with respect, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect the teacher must remember to talk with the pupil later; and
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's child protection procedures.

Discussion and project learning

4.6 Research into what makes relationship and sex education effective shows that discussion and project learning encourages learning and is enjoyed by pupils. Pupils take part in a structured activity in which they can:

- draw on previous knowledge to develop more understanding;
- practise their social and personal skills;
- consider their beliefs and attitudes about different topics;
- reflect on their new learning; and
- plan and shape future action.

4.7 Active learning is most effective when pupils are working in groups. Methods include discussion techniques such as the use of circle time in primary schools, case studies and project work.

4.8 Teachers should also assess the usefulness of providing factual information in written form for young people to keep for future reference.

Reflection

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

- What was it like doing this discussion today?
- What did you learn from the others, especially those who had a different experience or belief from your own?
- What do you think you will be able to do as a result of this discussion?
- What else do you think you need to think or learn about?

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Key points

Schools need to help children and young people develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about relationships and sex.

Teachers and other staff can use a range of strategies to help them do this, including establishing ground rules, introducing 'distancing' techniques, making use of discussion and project learning, and encouraging reflection.