

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction

The Blake is a Church of England school, and all RSE is set in a context which is consistent with the school's Christian ethos and as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Context

RSE is taught within a framework of Christian values and the Christian understanding that sex is a gift of God as part of creation. Whilst sex education is used to inform children about sexual issues, it is done with regard to matters of morality and individual responsibility, and in a way that allows children to ask and explore moral questions. Sensitivity and respect are shown to all children when teaching about personal relationships and sexual activity. RSE upholds Christian values regarding marriage and relationships, while being mindful of and sensitive to the circumstances of pupils and the variety of expressions of family life. Pupils are given the opportunity to explore their own attitudes, values and beliefs and to develop an individual moral code that will guide their actions, within the understanding of the right of others to frame and hold their own views with an expectation of respect.

What is Sex and Relationship Education?

The Education Reform Act (Section 1) states that schools should provide a curriculum which "promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils...and of society; and prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life." RSE is an important dimension of this statutory entitlement.

RSE is an umbrella term for all the teaching and learning offered to pupils to understand their own and others' sexuality and to enable them to develop the skills needed for maintaining healthy and sustainable relationships and making informed decisions.

RSE is part of lifelong learning. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

Principles of Relationships and Sex education at The Blake School

- Inclusive Christian principles and values, emphasising respect, compassion, loving care and forgiveness.
- The belief in the absolute worth of all people and the unconditional infinite love of God.
- RSE is part of a wider social, personal, spiritual and moral education process.
- Relationships bring responsibilities and consequences.
- Violence and exploitation are always wrong.
- Everyone is responsible for their own behaviour and no one is ever responsible for any violence or abuse that they experience.

Aims

Through implicit and explicit learning experiences children will learn -

- About physical and emotional development.
- That the sanctity of marriage is an important belief in Christian teaching and practice and should be based on love and mutual respect
- About the significance of marriage and families as key building blocks of community and society.

- That the culture of advertising and the media influences their views, behaviour and understanding concerning sexuality.
- To have respect for their own and other people's bodies.
- How to protect themselves.
- That it is important to build positive relationships that involve trust and respect.
- To use technology responsibly in order to keep themselves safe, whilst respecting their own and others' well-being and integrity.
- How to foster their own self-esteem
- That questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without embarrassment.
- To avoid sexual stereotyping and sexual discrimination.

How is RSE provided?

Children need to be given accurate information in order to develop skills which enable them to understand difference, to respect themselves and others and also for the purpose of preventing and removing prejudice. A planned, progressive programme of RSE gradually and appropriately begins to prepare children for adult life. It teaches the skills they need to fully manage the natural physical and emotional changes that will happen to them as they grow and mature into healthy, confident and responsible adults. In line with national recommendations, RSE will be delivered as an integrated part of the R.E., PSHE (including SEAL) and Science curriculum. RSE is taught to each year group, starting in Reception.

Overview of RSE Programme.

- the physical and emotional changes of puberty
- sex and reproduction
- growing up
- naming sexual organs
- personal hygiene
- challenging sexual stereotyping
- considering media messages
- developing a positive body image
- changing relationships as we grow up
- aspirations and how we might see our futures
- different types of relationships
- how to find help and support
- developing emotional literacy
- peer influence and peer pressure
- considering rights and responsibilities
- raising self-esteem and increasing self-awareness
- exploring friendships – making, valuing and maintaining them
- challenging assumptions, stereotyping and prejudice
- communication skills – saying 'no' and being assertive, dealing with conflict, negotiation,

The three main elements of RSE:

1. Attitudes and values:

- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral considerations.
- Learning the value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.

- Developing critical thinking as part of decision making.

2. Personal and Social skills:

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Developing self – respect and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Managing conflict.
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

3. Knowledge and understanding:

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships.

The Blake School has in the past adhered to the Healthy School Standard, promoting health education. The principles of the scheme continue to be adhered to and therefore the school:

- consults with parents on matters of health education policy;
- trains teachers to teach sex education;
- listens to the views of the children in the school regarding sex education;
- looks positively at any local initiatives that support staff in providing a quality sex education teaching programme.

Organisation

RSE is delivered predominantly by the pupils' class teacher. It may be delivered in mixed or in single sex gender groups, depending on the topics being covered. Methods of delivery may include whole class discussion, independent learning, video/DVD discussion and a presentation/ talk by a health professional.

If a teacher is extremely uncomfortable with the idea of teaching the biological aspects of RSE, they may opt out from doing so and another teacher or professional well known to the children will deliver the programme instead. This is offered as an option because extreme discomfort with the topic is likely to impact on the quality of the delivery. In this event we would support the teacher through training and providing opportunities to observe lessons other more confident teachers deliver.

RSE is taught through different aspects of the curriculum (see Appendix 1). Whilst the main sex education teaching takes place as part of the Personal, Social, Health & Economic (PSHE) curriculum, it is also taught through other subject areas (for example, in science, PE and RE), where it is felt that they contribute significantly to a child's knowledge and understanding of his or her own body, and how it is changing and developing.

All parents and carers of children in Year 5 and 6 are informed of the content of the RSE programme of lessons, to explain what the issues are, how they are taught, and to provide them with the opportunity to see the materials the school uses in its teaching.

Homosexuality

Our schools recognise that within society there are a range of views with regard to homosexuality. Regardless of this, prejudice, victimisation and the use of homosexual slang as a form of abuse are contrary to our schools' values and will be actively discouraged. Explicit and implicit homophobia in schools has a negative impact on the attendance and attainment of LGBT young people and schools will take a whole school approach to addressing prejudicial behaviour and attitudes.

Young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. Our teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. There should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation.

Online and social media

RSE should encourage pupils to think about what they want others to know and see about them – whether on or offline. Teachers should address the core issues of safety, privacy, peer influence and personal responsibility.

‘Sexting’ and other self-made images and messages of a sexual nature raise particular issues of safety, privacy, peer influence and personal responsibility. Specific work about ‘sexting’ should be addressed in RSE as soon as it is identified as a potential issue. Teaching covers communication skills, attitudes and values, the law, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and how to seek help.

Consent

SRE lays the foundations for developing empathy and understanding between girls and boys, young men and young women. Pupils should be encouraged to consider the importance of equality and respect within friendships and relationships, and to develop positive, non-violent behaviour.

While men and women can be both victims and perpetrators, evidence shows that girls are disproportionately likely to experience pressure, coercion or violence from boys and men. They should learn to recognise physical, sexual and emotional violence and how to get help if they need it.

The law states that children under the age of 13 can never legally give consent and therefore anyone engaging in sexual activity with a child within the school is breaking the law. Sexual activity involving children within the school will always result in a child protection referral.

Pornography

Teaching makes clear that pornography is not the best way to learn about sex because it does not reflect real life, and can therefore be worrying, confusing and frightening for young people. Pupils are made aware that some pornography – child abuse images, for example – is illegal for any age. RSE should enable all young people to understand pornography’s influence on gender expectations of sex.

The Role of Parents

This policy statement is designed to be complementary to, and supportive of, the role of parents in educating their children about sexuality and relationships. The Blake School is well aware that the primary role in children’s sex education lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective staff:

- inform parents about the school’s sex education policy and practice so that the parents and school can work together to support the child with regard to sex education. We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing bodies and their increasing responsibilities.
- answer any questions that parents may have about the sex education of their child;
- take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for sex education in the school;

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education programme that we teach in our school, except for those parts included in statutory National Curriculum. If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from sex education lessons, they should discuss this with the headteacher, and make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not want their child to participate in. The school always complies with the wishes of parents in this regard. Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in the RSE programme until the parent notifies school that they wish their request for withdrawal to be removed. The school will ensure that appropriate provision is made for children who are withdrawn from RSE with particular emphasis placed on preserving the child's dignity.

The Role of Other Members of the Community

Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced professionals from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE in school. These visitors are invited into school because of the particular expertise or contribution they are able to make. In particular, members of the Local Health Authority, such as the primary health nurse and other health professionals, give us valuable support with our sex education programme.

The following guidelines are followed;

- All visitors are familiar with and understand the school's RSE policy and work within it.
- All input to PSHE lessons is part of a planned programme and negotiated and agreed with staff in advance.
- All visitors are supervised/supported by a member of staff at all times;
- The input of visitors is monitored and evaluated by staff and pupils. This evaluation informs future planning.
- Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with individual pupils but, in a classroom situation, they follow the Trust's Confidentiality Policy.

Confidentiality and Safeguarding Children Procedures

Pupils should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained. However, teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. If confidentiality has to be broken, the pupil should be informed first and then supported, as appropriate. As appropriate pupils should be encouraged to talk to their parents and given support to do so.

It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the school should be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. Where younger children are involved this will be grounds for serious concern and child protection issues will need to be addressed.

Teachers conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. If a child raises any concerns during these lessons related to child protection, teachers will inform the designated member of staff for child protection and safeguarding. The school's Child Protection and safeguarding policy will be followed and any actions taken will be in accordance with it.

The Role of the Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about the sex education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the headteacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues and questions with sensitivity. The headteacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school sex education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy, and that they work within this framework. The headteacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors on the effectiveness of the policy.

Resources

RSE resources are chosen and checked for

- being inclusive
- positive, healthy and unbiased messages
- age appropriateness
- promoting positive values
- accuracy
- being up to date

This RSE Policy has clear links with other school policies aimed at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

APPENDIX 1 - RSE Coverage.

Year Group	Area covered via Science	Area covered via RE and Values Education	Area covered via PSHE
Reception	How to keep healthy – foods, exercise etc.	Differences between people and cultures and how we respect the differences.	Family Links Hygiene Healthy living Citizenship
Year One	Ourselves -The senses and how humans and animals move and grow. Includes identifying main body parts.	Belonging – What it means to belong to a family, class, school, community, faith. Weddings – re-enact a Christian wedding ceremony and learn about the meaning of marriage and commitment. Family – people we care for and who cares for us. Health – being healthy and personal hygiene. Values education based on Christian values supporting relationships for life.	Family Links Playground games Healthy living Hygiene Citizenship
Year Two	Health and Growth -How animals, including humans grow (life stages), their basic needs and the importance of exercise, hygiene and healthy eating.	The parables Jesus told and what they teach us about our relationship with God and each other. Family – people we care for and who cares for us. Health – being healthy and personal hygiene. Values education based on Christian values supporting relationships for life.	Family Links Playground games Bullying Hygiene Internet safety Citizenship Bullying
Year Three	Animals -including human skeleton, the importance of a balanced diet.	Jesus' life, teachings and examples of how to live are embedded throughout the key stage.	Family Links Bullying Internet safety Citizenship Bullying
Year Four	Animals (including humans, teeth, eating, digestion)	The Ten Commandments and their importance to keep us safe and happy in our relationships.	Family Links Bullying Dealing with feelings Internet safety themes Citizenship Bullying

Year Five	<p>Animals – Describing the changes as humans develop from birth to old age including changes experienced in puberty, gestation periods of humans and other animals.</p> <p>Living things and Habitats (Life cycles of plants and animals)</p>	Y5 – The responsibilities of free will in every aspect of life.	<p>Dealing with feelings</p> <p>Bullying</p> <p>Internet safety</p> <p>Citizenship</p> <p>Bodily changes and personal hygiene</p>
Year Six	<p>Animals including humans- human circulatory system.</p> <p>Impact of diet, exercise drugs and lifestyle on human body.</p> <p>Evolution</p> <p>Recognising that living things produce offspring of the same kind but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents.</p>	Y6 – Life as a journey, Rites of passage, The importance of commitment.	<p>Dealing with feelings</p> <p>Bullying</p> <p>Internet safety</p> <p>Citizenship</p> <p>Relationships and reproduction including birth</p>