Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Ratified by Governors: February 2026

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Signed by Headteacher	Nicola Hirst
Signed (Chair of Governors)	Elizabeth Worthen
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VERSION CONTROL: Annual update	

The purpose of this policy is to outline the framework for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Ashford St Mary's Primary School. This policy is designed to ensure that RSE is taught in a manner that is consistent with our Christian values and meets the needs of our diverse pupil population.

Legal Framework & Statutory Requirements

The Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 have made **Relationships Education compulsory** in all primary schools. **Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools** and the content set out in this policy therefore focuses on Relationships Education. It is important to note that **The National Curriculum for Science *(see link in appendix 1)*** also includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age **(including puberty)** and reproduction in some plants and animals. **This has been on the compulsory curriculum for science since 2014.**

Parents' right to withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships education.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Science lessons (see appendix 1 for further details).

This policy adheres to the latest UK government legislation, including:

- Education Act 2002
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019

Aims and Objectives

- Provide pupils with the knowledge and understanding of relationships, including friendships, family relationships, and relationships with peers.
- Equip pupils with the skills to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.
- Promote respect for others and an understanding of diversity.
- Foster a safe environment for pupils to discuss and explore sensitive topics.

Inclusivity and Equality

We will meet our obligations under the Equalities Act (2010) by ensuring that our RSE curriculum and teaching is inclusive of all pupils. Teaching will be adapted to meet the different needs of individual pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, culture, nationality, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation.

Our RSE programme, as part of the wider PSHE curriculum, will help our children realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, use of prejudiced language, bullying and aggressive behaviour (including cyber-bullying). It covers how children should respond appropriately and how they can ask for help.

Relationships Education in Primary Schools Summary:

(from the Department for Education Statutory Guidance)
Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education - GOV.UK

Curriculum

Our RSE programme is part of our Personal, Social, Health & Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. At Ashford St Mary's, our PHSE/RSE curriculum is rooted in our Christian vision and values, equipping our pupils with the knowledge, skills, and personal attributes to thrive, both now and in the future. As a primary school serving a diverse community, we recognise the vital importance of developing our pupils' understanding of healthy relationships, personal well being, and their role as responsible citizens. The programme will be co-ordinated by the PSHE Subject Leader in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Lessons will be delivered by adults, with whom the children are familiar. Teaching assistants will provide additional support, for example with individuals who may find the content more difficult to access. **Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools and the content set out in our curriculum overview therefore focuses on Relationships Education. It is important to note that The National Curriculum for Science is compulsory and also includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals.** Other curriculum links are made to R.E., which explores moral, religious and cultural aspects; Computing, which teaches about online safety, and PSHE, which helps pupils to think about the different social contexts, influences and beliefs that affect personal behaviour. PSHE also develops a positive vocabulary and the strategies and skills children and young people need to stay healthy and safe.

Overview

Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks of positive relationships, including:

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

Main Points

The primary focus should be on teaching pupils the basics of what relationships are, the characteristics of positive relationships, and the importance of concepts like consent, personal boundaries, and respect for others.

- Pupils should be taught about healthy friendships, family relationships, and other relationships they are likely to encounter, enabling them to recognise both positive and less positive relationship dynamics.
- Relationships Education should address online safety and how information is shared and used online, as many primary pupils will already be using the internet.
- Teaching about families should be sensitive and inclusive, recognising the diverse range of family structures that pupils may come from. We will take care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families in our school include LGBT parents, grandparents as main carer, adoptive parents, foster parents)
- Relationships Education provides an opportunity to develop pupils' personal attributes and character traits, such as resilience, self-respect, and a sense of justice.
- Relationships Education should also cover how to recognise and report abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, while ensuring pupils understand that victim-blaming is never acceptable.

By the end of primary school:

Families and people who care for me	**Pupils should know** • that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability. • 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. • that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care. • 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. • that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong. • how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.

Caring friendships	**Pupils should know** • how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. • the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties. • that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. • that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right. • how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situ

Respectful relationships	**Pupils should know** • the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs. • practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. • the conventions of courtesy and manners. • the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. • that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority. • about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help. • what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. • the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

Online relationships	**Pupils should know** • that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not. • that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous. • the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. • how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. • how information and data is shared and used online.

Being safe	**Pupils should know** • what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). • about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe. • that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other contact. • how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know. • how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. • how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others • how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. • where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

Use of resources

We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the PSHE subject lead and SLT through:

- Lesson visits, book scrutiny and pupil voice interviews

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

This policy will be reviewed annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

Appendix 1

National Curriculum Science: Programme of Study for Key Stages 1 & 2

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a806ebd40f0b62305b8b1fa/PRIMARY_national_curriculum_-_Science.pdf