

## Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

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### Introduction

Highfield and Brookham Schools take their responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) to all of its pupils very seriously, and this policy outlines the school's approach to teaching RSE.

A definition of RSE can be found below:

*Relationships and sex education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.*

*Sex and relationships education addresses the questions and concerns raised by the biological facts. It provides balance to sometimes distorted messages about sex and gender roles in the media, and helps protect children by explaining boundaries and safety, and developing the language and understanding needed to recognise abusive behaviour and seek help. It also helps pupils to develop respectful and consensual attitudes and behaviours.'*

*([www.sexeducationforum.org.uk](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk))*

### Aims

RSE is deeply imbedded in Highfield's and Brookham's PSHE curriculums and mirrors the values of mutual respect and understanding that are so important to the school community. We aim to ensure that RSE is inclusive, informative and age-appropriate and teaches and develops the following three main elements:

#### **Attitudes and Values:**

- The importance of individual conscience and moral considerations;
- The value of family life, and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children;
- The value of respect, love and care;
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.

#### **Personal and Social Skills:**

- Managing emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- Learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice;

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- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- Managing conflict;
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

## **Knowledge and Understanding:**

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- Learning the reasons for delayed sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay.

In addition, we also aim to:

- Raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence;
- Develop communication and assertiveness skills that can help them stay true to their values;
- Develop acceptance of different beliefs, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, gender identity, physical and mental abilities, backgrounds and values;
- Support pupils to lead a healthy lifestyle, teaching them to care for and respect their bodies;
- Provide pupils with the right tools to seek information or support, when needed;
- Teach pupils about consent and their right to say no, in an age appropriate manner;
- Ensure that parents / guardians feel assured that our RSE curriculum will be delivered at a level appropriate to both the age and the development of pupils, so that RSE is a partnership between school and home.

The aim of RSE is **not** to:

- Encourage pupils to become sexually active at a young age;
- Promote a particular sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Sexualise children/

## Teaching and Learning

### **Brookham (2-8)**

At Brookham the relationships and sex education curriculum is delivered through PSHE and science. PSHE and science are taught by the class teachers. Assemblies address some issue including friendship and healthy relationships. In addition visitors such as the NSPCC give talks on particular areas e.g. online safety.

Teaching is delivered using age appropriate resources such as film clips, books and discussions and lessons are taught in classes. All activities are delivered sensitively with the age, stages and circumstances of the pupils in mind.

(Please see Brookham's PHSE scheme of work for the RSE coverage for 2 to 8 year olds.)



### Highfield (8-13)

At Highfield, the RSE programme is led by the respective Heads of PSHE and taught by appropriate teaching and pastoral staff. Specific roles and responsibilities are detailed below. The majority of RSE takes place within timetabled PSHE lessons with additional sessions in Year 5 and Year 8, as well as for other age groups, should the need be identified. An ethos of openness and honesty is adopted by all those delivering PSHE and the children are encouraged to ask questions.

We aim to ensure that children have an understanding of what is going to happen to them, their bodies and their relationships with others before it happens and therefore the following areas are covered in each year group:

#### Year 4:

- Identifying qualities of a good friend;
- Coping with conflict in relationships;
- Recognising puberty as a process of change that prepares the body for reproduction;
- Identifying the external genitalia in males and females using the correct terminology (*this will include the vulva, labia, clitoris, vagina, anus, urethra, penis, scrotum, testes, and foreskin*).

#### Year 5:

- Recognising positive and negative relationships;
- Different family models and the importance of love and respect within a family;
- Identifying problems with stereotypes, including perceived gender roles;
- *Human life cycle, including internal reproductive organs - taught in science lessons;*
- Physical changes that occur during puberty (*this will include growth, developing pubic hair, spots, changing voice, menstruation, vaginal discharge, erections, ejaculation and wet dreams*);
- Emotions of puberty.

#### Year 6:

- The importance of good hygiene during puberty and beyond;
- Recognising personal boundaries and understanding that your body belongs to you;
- Masturbation, including the idea that this is something to be done in private;
- Understanding how to act when personal boundaries are not respected;
- Bullying and the bystander effect.

#### Year 7:

- Emotions of puberty and how they may affect mental health;
- Recognising and identifying different types of relationship;
- Consider how relationships may change over time;
- Signs of a healthy and unhealthy relationship, including characteristics of abuse;
- Personal values and trust within relationships.

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Year 8:

- Managing peer pressure;
- Different sexual identities, orientation and labels;
- Diversity of sexual attraction;
- Highlighting issues with perceived gender roles and expectations in relationships;
- Consent and the law relating to sexual consent, including sexting;
- Purpose, importance and different forms of contraception\*;
- Understanding that certain infections can be spread through sexual activity\* (specific infections will not necessarily be discussed).

*\*Where appropriate, pupils will be split into separate gender groups. The same material is delivered to both groups but the children are often more confident to ask questions and have open discussions during these sessions when in single gendered groups.*

Children in all year groups will also spend time looking at the nature of online relationships and communication.

Assessment will be continuous and informal. Teachers will use written and creative tasks as well as discussion to monitor the children's understanding of the material delivered. This assessment will be taken into consideration for future RSE planning.

This curriculum aims to build on the foundations laid for children attending Brookham taught via the Jigsaw PSHE programme. The Heads of PSHE at both schools regularly discuss the overarching curriculum to ensure appropriate continuation for all.

## Inclusion

RSE at Highfield and Brookham will be taught without bias and will be inclusive and accessible for people of all abilities, genders, sexual orientations and faiths.

## Confidentiality, Child Protection and Answering Unexpected Questions

Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a safeguarding concern or a child protection issue, or discussion of personal circumstances. In line with the school's Safeguarding Policy, teachers will never promise confidentiality to the children and this will be made clear from the outset. Children will be encouraged not to use personal stories and examples during lessons. If such a situation does arise, the teacher will seek to reassure and support the child involved and follow school safeguarding procedures.

Due to the nature of the subject area, there may be times when a teacher feels that a question asked is not appropriate or is too personal to be answered in front of the whole group, or they do not feel confident in answering it themselves. In this situation, the teacher may:

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- Signpost further information – this may be through an appropriate website or resource or by talking to an additional adult such as the School Nurse or an external counsellor;
- Answer the question individually with the child at an appropriate time;
- Acknowledge that they need to gather further information and guidance themselves and will answer the question at a later date.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of PSHE will take the lead on the planning and delivery of RSE in the school. They will:

- keep up to date with developments and changes to RSE curriculum, trends, statutory and non-statutory guidance;
- ensure that RSE is age appropriate and needs-led across all year groups;
- develop the school policy and review it on a yearly basis;
- ensure teachers receive appropriate guidance and ongoing training;
- share the school's RSE provision with parents in order to ensure they can support this at home and are aware of the rights to withdraw.

The Headmaster, supported by the Deputy Head, takes overall responsibility to ensure that RSE is taught consistently across the school.

Those teaching RSE are responsible for delivering it in a responsible and sensitive way, monitoring progress, and responding to the needs of individual pupils. **All** teachers are responsible for modelling positive attitudes to RSE.

## Parent Involvement, Communication and Parents' Right to Withdraw

The School recognises that parents and carers are the first teachers of their children and that they play a vital role in:

- teaching their children about relationships and sex;
- maintaining the culture and ethos of the family;
- helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up;
- preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings.

Parents will be informed before children in Year 5 and Year 8 receive their RSE sessions outside of timetabled lessons. This will be done with plenty of warning to allow parents to have conversations with their children at home first, if they wish.

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of **sex** education delivered as part of statutory RSE, with the exception of biological aspects covered in science.

Before granting any such request, the Headmaster of Highfield or the Headteacher of Brookham will discuss the request with parents to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature



and purpose of the curriculum. The discussion will include highlighting the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher. The school acknowledges that such detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead.

This discussion will be documented to ensure a record is kept.

The Headmaster will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered in Years R-6 (primary school age), other than as part of the science curriculum. If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

**There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education.**

#### Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. The progress and views of the children will be taken into consideration when considering any changes.

**Reviewed 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021** PGSE / AK / HB / ZT

**Reviewed January 2022** PGSE, SEB, SJ, KWI, SFR, AB, BS, ZT

**Review January 2023**