

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction and ethos

Relationships in the 21st century are more diverse and complex than ever. Young people are having to navigate their way in a fast paced world in which their online and offline worlds often merge seamlessly and in which they can become exposed to a host of information, content and opinion that is both controversial and unchecked.

It is imperative that all children are provided with the knowledge, skills and understanding required to develop happy, positive and fulfilling relationships that are based on mutual respect, both now and in their future adult lives.

Highfield and Brookham Schools therefore 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 delivering RSE.

Effective RSE will teach children about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It will include an emphasis on choice, safety and well-being that puts each individual child at its center. Children at Highfield and Brookham will, from their very first day, be modelled examples of positive relationships through their interactions with adults and peers and be given a very clear understanding of consent and personal boundaries, in all areas of life.

Whilst children at Highfield and Brookham will be encouraged to take safe and managed risks, they will also be taught to recognise abusive and destructive behavior and given the language and understanding needed in order to seek help if required.

Aims

The aim of RSE at Brookham and Highfield School's is to, at an age appropriate level, help all children to:

- Provide accurate and easy to understand information that is relevant to the age and stage of the children
- Develop emotional literacy and the ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings clearly to others
- Consider the their own personal values within relationships, with trust and respect at the center
- Raise pupils self-esteem and confidence
- Develop empathy for others
- Be able to recognise feelings and signs of safety and security within relationships
- Be prepared for the physical and emotional changes they will go through as they grow up and have strategies to cope with these
- Know how to contribute positively in their relationships with others
- Understand the importance of choice
- Recognise their own personal boundaries and those of others
- Have the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions

- Recognise the importance of stable, loving relationships, including marriage, friendships, romantic and family relationships
- Develop acceptance of different beliefs, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, gender identity, physical and mental abilities, backgrounds and values
- Identify the appropriateness of different relationships and relate this information to how they may act
- Effectively manage conflict
- Recognise the signs of abuse
- Know where to go to seek further help, information and support

The aim of Key Stage 3 RSE at Highfield also includes:

- Understand the law regarding the age of consent and the arguments for delaying sexual activity to maturity and within a loving and responsible relationship
- Know how to keep themselves healthy and safe within a sexual relationship or encounter

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

RSE at Brookham and Highfield mirrors the values of mutual respect and equality that are so important to the whole school community and form a central part of the schools ethos and mission statement. It is taught predominantly through the PSHE program of study, but is also underpinned by the positive role modeling of all staff, through their expectations and interactions with each other and with pupils alike.

As with all teaching at Highfield and Brookham RSE is inclusive, informative and age-appropriate at all times.

When selecting resources and materials for use in RSE teachers will ensure they are age-appropriate, useful and unbiased. Resources will, where necessary, be available for parents to view.

Brookham (2-8)

At Brookham, the RSE curriculum is delivered predominantly through PSHE lessons where the Jigsaw program is followed and taught by class teachers. Assemblies supplement class learning and address issues including friendships and healthy relationships. In addition visiting speakers and workshops take place throughout the year to enhance learning.

Key teaching points for each year group are as follows:

EYFS:

- Being a good friend
- Falling out
- Family life
- Respecting my body
- Growth and change
- Standing up for yourself

Year 1:

- Feeling safe
- Recognising bullying
- Physical contact
- Celebrating special relationships
- Life cycles – humans and animals
- The differences between male and female bodies with correct terminology

Year 2:

- Different types of family
- Boundaries
- Secrets and conflict
- Growing from young to old
- Assertiveness, trust and appreciation

Year 3:

- Family roles and responsibilities
- Friendship and negotiation
- How babies grow
- The changes that the body undergoes through puberty (*terminology will include uterus, womb, testicles, sperm, penis, eggs, ovaries and vagina*)
- Family stereotypes

Highfield (8-13)

At Highfield, the RSE programme is led by the Head 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 appropriate 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

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. This will be a continuous process alongside the PSHE program of study, rather than as a separate topic.

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

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.

SEND

In line with the 2010 Equalities Act, Highfield and Brookham recognise that it is imperative that those pupils who have Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND), have full access to the RSE curriculum. The school and the teachers must be flexible and mindful of tailoring content and teaching to meet the needs of all SEND children, regardless of their developmental stage. This may require further work to be undertaken with a pupil/group of pupils; consideration given to differentiation and if necessary, delivering sessions on a one to one basis where appropriate. The decision to undertake one-to-one sessions will be agreed between the Head of Learning Support and Head of PSHE and parents must be made aware in advance. It is worth noting that children with SEND are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues related to their specific need(s).

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:

- 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 respective Heads of PSHE will take the lead on the planning and delivery of RSE across the two schools. They will:

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

At Highfield The Head, supported by the Deputy Head, takes overall responsibility to ensure that RSE is taught consistently across the school. At Brookham this role is undertaken by The Head.

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

The RSE Director meets regularly with the Safeguarding team from both schools to ensure the policy reflects the needs of children and parents. They are made aware of new developments and statutory guidance by the Safeguarding Lead.

Parent Involvement, Communication and Parents' Right to Withdraw

The School recognises that parents and carers 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.

This policy was developed in consultation with the parent body and they will continue to be notified of any changes or updates that are made. Parents will receive an up to date copy of the RSE policy at the beginning of each academic year and parents of children in Year 3, Year 5 and Year 8 will be notified ahead of time when their children are due to 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 Head of Highfield or the Head 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 respective Heads 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 26th May 2021	PGSE / AK / HB / ZT
Reviewed January 2022	PGSE, SEB, SJ, KWI, SFR, AB, BS, ZT
Updated June 2022	PGSE, SEB, AB, KW, ZTP, SJ
Updated September 2023	SC, VL, ZTP, GCP
Reviewed September 2024	SC, VL, ZTP