



NEWARK ORCHARD SCHOOL

Together we thrive

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Policy

Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following legislation and statutory guidance which underpin Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education in England:

- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education Act 2002
- Academies Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- DfE Statutory Guidance: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 – Prevent Duty

The RSHE curriculum also supports the aims of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework by contributing to pupils' Personal Development, ensuring that pupils develop the knowledge, confidence and resilience required to form healthy relationships, manage risk and prepare for adult life.

1. Rationale and Ethos

Relationships Education is compulsory for **all** pupils receiving primary education and Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) compulsory for **all** pupils receiving secondary education.

As a school we wholeheartedly support the philosophy of RSHE and is taught as a stand-alone lesson, in addition to enrichment activities. The programme seeks to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils as well as preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life in a digital age.

Relationships and health education is compulsory in all primary and secondary schools, sex education is currently **not** compulsory in primary school, however the DfE continues to recommend that all primary schools should have a sex education programme that is tailored to the age and maturity of the pupils. As a special school, we have taken the content of the curriculum from the DfE guidance and ensured it meets the cognitive, emotional and social needs of our students.

As part of the Education Act 2002/Academies Act 2010 all schools must provide a balanced and broad-based curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, whilst also preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

All schools are required to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and should pay particular attention to the Public sector equality duty (PSED). Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual

orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). All schools must ensure that RSHE is accessible for all pupils and should comply with the SEND Code of Practice.

Whilst as a school we are aware we need to be mindful of and respectful to a wide variety of faith and cultural beliefs, and we will make every attempt to be appropriately sensitive; equally it is essential that young people still have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

We acknowledge that all young people deserve the right to honest, open and factual information to help better form their own beliefs and values, free from bias, judgement or subjective personal beliefs of those who teach them. This will be delivered at an appropriate level based on the needs of the individual student.

Newark Orchard School prides itself on upholding its ethos of 'Individual Growth, Individual People'. The core of the RSHE curriculum is to provide our young people with the foundations essential for personal understanding, relationships with others, developing a healthy lifestyle (including maintaining positive mental health) and staying safe. For our students, these building blocks provide a stable foundation for academic and personal growth. The curriculum and policy has been written to reflect the needs of our students, parents and stakeholders to ensure positive experiences and maximum growth for our young people.

2. Policy development process

This policy was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from;

- Members of staff – through working parties and staff training
- Governors – discussions at governor's meetings, training
- Parents/carers – parent questionnaires based on areas of support required, parental consultation letter
- Children – reflective practise on teaching sessions, student interest
- Other partners – visiting external providers in school; health, police, wider community, faith groups

This will ensure that the RSHE curriculum continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff and parents and that it is in line with current DfE advice and guidance

The Policy is available

- Online at www.newarkorchard.notts.sch.uk
- From the school office

3. Parental rights to withdraw

We are committed to ensuring that the education provided to pupils in relationships education/RSHE is appropriate to the age of pupils and compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Primary settings-We recognise, in accordance with statutory guidance, that parents have the right to request for their child to be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of the statutory RSHE (other than sex education in the National Curriculum as part of Science), but not from relationships education. at primary. Parents wishing to exercise this right must do so in writing to their class teacher, we will make reasonable adjustments and provide suitable work for their child(ren) at this time that follows the RSHE curriculum theme.

Secondary settings – parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from part or all, of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSHE. Any such request should be submitted to the

class teacher/RSHE leader. Good practice would be for the class teacher/RSHE leader to discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to discuss with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on a child; only in exceptional circumstances the school should not respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. At that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher – has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the governing body, parents/carers, LA and outside agencies and in identifying a lead teacher who will work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas in order to complement and not duplicate content.

The Lead teacher will take responsibility for;

Delete/amend as appropriate

- Policy development and review involving pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and relevant partners
- Implementing the policy and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice
- Ensuring evaluation takes place and that this informs policy review
- Assessing and coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- Manage all aspects of the RSHE programme developing curriculum materials where appropriate
- Liaise with external agencies to deliver specific elements of the programme
- Monitor and quality assure the programme to ensure continuity and progression within the spiral curriculum
- To ensure that this subject is fully represented at appropriate curriculum and pastoral meetings

5. Aims and objectives

The aim of RSHE is to help children build healthy friendships and positive relationships in an age appropriate way. The overall objectives of the RSHE curriculum are concerned about raising awareness of attitudes and values, developing personal and social skills and promoting knowledge and understanding. RSHE covers more than biological facts and information. It endeavours to help children develop self-esteem, self-responsibility as well as the acquisition of understanding and attitudes which prepare children to develop caring, stable, healthy relationships. Appreciation of the value of self-respect, dignity, marriage, civil partnership and parental duty should be encouraged in all pupils together with the sensitivity to the needs of others, loyalty and acceptance of responsibility. RSHE will look at aspects of diversity in an inclusive and non-judgemental way.

6. Staff training

RSHE can be a sensitive issue and teachers may welcome support and training. provision will be made available for teaching staff to clarify legislation, curriculum requirements and to consider appropriate teaching approaches and materials. The school will support the use of visitors from outside, such as health professionals, police and voluntary sector, and other organisations to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE.

7. Curriculum design

Orchard School recognises that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may be more vulnerable to exploitation, misunderstanding relationships, or misinterpreting social situations. The RSHE curriculum is therefore carefully adapted to ensure that pupils develop the knowledge and skills required to stay safe, develop healthy relationships and understand their bodies and emotions.

Teaching is adapted to reflect pupils' cognitive development, communication needs and EHCP outcomes. Staff use structured teaching approaches including visual supports, modelling, repetition, experiential learning and practical activities to support understanding.

Particular emphasis is placed on teaching pupils:

- understanding personal boundaries and consent
- recognising safe and unsafe relationships
- understanding private versus public behaviour
- recognising exploitation or manipulation
- knowing how and who to ask for help

In line with the SEND Code of Practice (2015), RSHE provision is personalised where required so that pupils can access learning in ways that reflect their developmental stage rather than simply their chronological age.

This is how the RSHE curriculum will be supplemented across the school:

- Curriculum focus days/weeks
- Charity days, e.g. Red Nose Day
- Life skills sessions
- Daily mindfulness sessions
- Links to other curriculum areas, e.g. PE, science, RE
- Play based activities
- Swimming/hydrotherapy
- Counselling/1:1/group activities with our mental health lead
- External agency support, e.g. CAMHs, Educational Psychologist
- External provider support, e.g. Oddballs, Newark Community First Aid
- Travel training (for selected students)
- Work experience programmes (Post 16 students)
- Vocational courses (KS4 and Post 16 students)
- Enrichment activities (KS4 and Post 16 students)

The programme will be delivered to all students by:

- Dedicated selected staff supported by a variety of professionals, including where appropriate, the school nurse, police etc, with expertise in specific topic areas.
- The RSHE curriculum is organised in a spiral curriculum which develops themes/topics, taking into account the age and maturation of the children. This means that topics are revisited in greater detail as students get older
- Teachers have been given the freedom to choose an appropriate 'stage' to teach from dependent on the needs of their students which match the life skills stage
- The Key Stage 4 and Post 16 content has been matched to the ASDAN accreditation for the students following those pathways
- Lessons are delivered to mixed-ability teaching groups
- A variety of teaching and learning styles will be used to ensure effectiveness and differentiation.

- Parents have the right to request withdrawal from all or part of the sex education element, but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction that is part of the National Curriculum science.
- The teacher will discuss and establish 'ground rules' at the beginning of every lesson which will enable everybody to discuss openly and honestly without fear and embarrassment or judgement
- All teachers will endeavour to create a supportive environment for all pupils
- Pupils are regularly informed of who can offer confidential support and where they can access sexual health services
- Across all key stages, students will be supported with developing the following skills;
- Communication – speaking and listening, including how to manage changing friendships, relationships and emotions
- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- Assertiveness
- Seeking help and support when required
- Informed decision making
- Self-respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and maximising a healthy lifestyle
- Managing conflict
- Discussion and group work

8. **Content – Stages 1 – 3** Through an effective and creative curriculum pupils should know about;

- Families and people who care from them.
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

Physical health and mental wellbeing

Pupils will be taught about the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing of the benefits and importance of daily exercise, good nutrition and sufficient sleep, and that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health. Within the curriculum and by the end of primary school, pupils should know about;

- Mental wellbeing
- Online behaviour and safety
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Health and prevention
- Basic first aid
- Changing adolescent body

Content – Stages 4 and 5

We will continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary;

- Families
- Respectful relationships including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health

In addition to the above, it is important for children to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people. Teaching about the following will help pupils know what is right and wrong in law, but also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussions about all types of relationships. Pupils will be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including;

- Marriage
- Consent, including the age of consent
- Violence against women and girls
- Online behaviours including image and information sharing (including ‘sexting’, youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes etc)
- Pornography
- Abortion
- Sexuality
- Gender identity
- Substance misuse
- Violence and exploitation by gangs
- Extremism/radicalisation
- Criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or ‘county lines’ drugs operations)
- Hate crime
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Physical health and mental wellbeing

Building on stages 1-3, teaching will focus on enabling pupils to make well-informed, positive choices for themselves. They will be taught about the impact of puberty, understand the physical and emotional changes and how these may impact on their wider health and wellbeing and what steps they can take to support their own health and wellbeing. During stages 4-5, pupils should know more about;

- Mental wellbeing
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Health and prevention
- Basic first aid
- Changing adolescent body

As part of all curriculums, the technical terms for the anatomy of the body will be used, e.g, penis, vagina, breasts. This is the advice provided by the PSHE Association and The Sex Education Forum to ensure consistency for the students. This will ensure there is no confusion for our students as the same terms will be used in all classes throughout the school. This will also ensure the highest level of safeguarding

can be maintained as if students refer to these terms any issues or concerns can be dealt with accordingly, following our safeguarding procedures. It would be appreciated if parents could support us by using the technical names for the body parts at home.

Responding to difficult questions

It is inevitable that controversial issues may occur as part of RSHE, such as divorce, rape, abortion, pornography etc. the issue will be addressed with sensitivity and at a level appropriate to the age group and developmental stage, in an objective manner free from personal bias. Any personal experience of these matters will be taken into consideration to ensure teaching is appropriate and avoid any trauma or distress. Consideration will be given to the potential for small group or 1-1 discussion for specific questions to be discussed. Account must be taken of different viewpoints such as different religious beliefs. Discussion should be set within the legal framework and students made aware of the law as it relates to these issues. Students are made aware that some information cannot be held confidential, and should understand that if certain disclosures are made, certain actions will ensue. At the same time students will be offered sensitive and appropriate support.

9. Monitoring, evaluation and review

To ensure the RSHE programme is effective, is meeting the needs of pupils and complies with the RSHE statutory guidance, the following strategies will be used to quality assure the programme of study;

- Comments from pupils and representatives from the pupil voice
- Whole class discussions

This policy is reviewed annually by the governing body who will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively

10. Confidentiality and child protection

The school recognises that RSHE has a critical safeguarding role in helping pupils recognise abuse, exploitation and unsafe situations.

Teaching staff delivering RSHE must follow the procedures set out in the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and be familiar with statutory safeguarding guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

Through RSHE, pupils are supported to understand:

- how to recognise abusive or unsafe relationships
- the meaning of consent and personal boundaries
- risks associated with online communication and image sharing
- exploitation including grooming, criminal exploitation and county lines
- harmful behaviours including coercion, bullying and harassment
- how and where to seek help if they feel unsafe

Staff must make it clear to pupils that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if a safeguarding concern is disclosed. Any disclosures must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their deputy in line with safeguarding procedures.

It is inevitable that effective RSHE which allows for open discussion to take place may lead to disclosures from pupils. It is essential that those teaching RSHE are completely familiar with the child protection procedures. Pupils disclosures or suspicion of abuse must be followed up with the pupil concerned, that same day and referred to the designated safeguarding lead, and if not present their deputy. They will deal with these disclosures or suspicions in line with the child protection policy.

11. Links with other policies

The RSHE policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies;

- Safeguarding
- Peer on Peer Abuse Policy
- Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- Online safety
- Inclusion
- Equality and Diversity

12. Useful documents

- DfE 2019, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education; Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers
- SEND Code of Practice
- Relationships Education
- Safeguarding: NSPCC PANTS rule with film.
- Example of model primary curricula from Catholic Education.
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Sexual health and relationships: up to date information on all aspects of sexual and reproductive health available on Sexwise's website which teachers may find helpful for their knowledge.
- Abuse in relationships: Disrespect NoBody from the Home Office and Government Equalities Office.
- Consent: PSHE Association lesson plans from the PSHE association.
- LGBT inclusivity: Stonewall lesson plans and materials for primary and secondary.
- Resources covering all contexts, including online, and specifically relationships and bullying, alcohol, smoking, stress, body image from Public Health England website with videos made by young people and resources tested with teachers.
- Example model secondary curricula from Catholic education.
- Mental health
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing lesson plans from PSHE Association.
- MindEd educational resources on children and young people's mental health.
- Online safety
- Education for a Connected World is the UK Council for Internet safety (UKCCIS) framework of digital knowledge and skills for different ages and stages.
- Sexting advice from UKCCIS for schools on preventative education and managing reports of sexting.
- Thinkuknow is the education programme from National Crime Agency (NCA) and Child
- Exploitation Online Programme (CEOP), which protects children both online and offline. The site offers materials for parents, teachers and pupils on a wide range of online safety issues and facts about areas such as digital footprints, recognising fake websites and checking URLs.
- PSHE
- PSHE Association Programme of study for KS1-5

- Drugs and alcohol
- Planning effective drug and alcohol education from Mentor-ADEPIS research and briefing papers with ideas for lessons
- Extremism and radicalisation
- Practical advice and information from Educate Against Hate for teachers, teachers in leadership positions and parents on protecting children from extremism and radicalization.
- Curriculum
- Non-statutory framework for Citizenship KS 1 and 2 (Non-statutory programme of study).
- Schools may wish to draw on the Citizenship programme of study in their planning.
- Data to understand the health and wellbeing needs of the local school-age population
- Public Health England's Child and Maternal Health Intelligence Network brings together a range of publicly available data, information, reports, tools and resources on child and maternal health into one easily accessible hub.
- It includes school-age health profiles and young people's health profiles.
- The indicators allow areas to see how they perform against the national average and against other local areas. These tools, accompanied by local health intelligence, will be useful in supporting schools to identify and respond to the particular health and wellbeing needs of their local school-age population.
- There are also early years health profiles.