



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY GUIDANCE

I STATEMENT OF INTENT

This relationships and sex education (RSE) policy provides an overview of how Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) schools will carry out their legal responsibilities in respect of delivering relationships and sex education in schools. It is not a statement of prescribed curriculum content or the teaching style to be used which is a devolved responsibility of the local governing body. It is however a reminder of the statutory and advisory content of any such scheme of work.

II INTRODUCTION

The Education Reform Act 1988 (Section 1) states that schools should provide a curriculum that “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 a child’s statutory entitlement. While academies are not obliged to teach RSE, schools in ODST will do so and will have regard to the relationships and sex guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

III THE NEW REQUIREMENTS

From September 2020, all schools with a primary phase will need to provide:

- Relationships education
- Health education

Schools are likely to cover parts of these topics already if they teach sex and relationships education (SRE) or PSHE – which are currently optional for state-funded primary schools.

This sets out the Department of Education’s (DfE) guidance, which it finalised following a consultation.

Sex education continues to be non-compulsory and schools in the primary phase will not be required to provide sex education, but the DfE recommends that schools have a programme in place.

Schools require a policy for relationships (and sex) education and must consult parents when the policy is developed and reviewed. Depending on what SRE teaching the school currently provides, the requirements for this new policy are similar to those of its existing SRE policy.

It is recommended that schools use the model policy (see Appendix 1) when reviewing existing policies. Schools will need to add any sex education it chooses to teach into this policy.

IV OBJECTIVES

The RSE policy aims to:

- Outline how ODST schools will carry out their statutory responsibilities in respect of delivering sex education in schools tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the children

- Provide an overview of the aims and benefits of the policy
- Provide clarity to parents and guardians as to how ODST schools will carry out their responsibilities to deliver RSE in schools

V SCOPE

- Governing Body
- Teaching Staff
- Headteacher
- Support staff
- All School Staff
- Pupils
- Central Office Staff
- Contractors/ Service Providers

VI RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Education Reform Act 1988
- Equality Act 2010
- Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DfE 2000)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Section 403 Education Act 1996

VII RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- ODST Confidentiality Policy
- ODST Child Protection Policy
- ODST Staffing Policies including capability and discipline

VIII DATE OF REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed as required by the Board of Directors of ODST to take account of any legislative changes and / or national policy development as well as feedback from ODST staff and schools annually.

IX GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Definitions

- Where the term “relevant body” has been used this refers to the Board of Directors of ODST;
- Unless indicated otherwise, all references to “school” include both schools and academies;
- Unless indicated otherwise, all references to “teacher” include the headteacher;
- Unless indicated otherwise, all references to ‘staff’ include teaching and support staff.

X DELEGATION

ODST has chosen to delegate its functions to local governing bodies and headteachers as set out in this policy.

XI MONITORING & EVALUATION

The Local Governing Body and headteacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school’s RSE policy and deal with any queries relating to it. ODST, through the ethos committee, will monitor any concerns or complaints raised in relation to the policy on an annual basis.

Fir Tree Junior School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

1. Overview

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.” Relationship and sex education is an important dimension of this statutory entitlement.

RSE is an umbrella term for all the teaching and learning we offer pupils to understand our own and others’ sexuality and to develop skills for relationships and informed decision making.

ODST believes that RSE is the entitlement of each child and is committed to deliver it within the context of a broad and balanced programme of health education¹.

2. Aims

In ODST we aim through implicit and explicit learning experiences to:

- Ensure that RSE is fully integrated into the PSHE and Science curriculum and not isolated, taken out of context or over-emphasised in any way.
- Foster self-esteem and respect for others as the cornerstone of good health education and of therefore good sex and relationship education.
- Encourage schools to provide a RSE programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the children.
- Nurture a partnership between caring adults – governors, teachers, other staff and parents – to ensure sensitive support for children and young people as they grow and mature.
- Ensure children have the ability to accept their own and others’ sexuality.
- Encourage children to enjoy relationships based upon mutual trust and respect, free from any abuse.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without embarrassment.
- Avoid sexual stereotyping and sexual discrimination.
- Adopt a whole school approach to RSE.

3. Benefits

Effective teaching of sex education will increase pupils’ knowledge of:

- Body language
- Human growth and development
- Families, parenting and life cycles.
- Safety and child protection.
- Helping agencies.

It will also enable pupils to:

- Improve their self-esteem.
- Make informed choices and decisions.

¹ Sex and relationship education (SRE) is compulsory from age 11 onwards. It involves teaching children about reproduction, sexuality and sexual health.

- Develop personal initiative and be able to take responsibility.
- Recognise personal skills and qualities in themselves and others.
- Maintain and develop relationships.
- Develop self-confidence.
- Develop assertiveness in appropriate situations.
- Develop the motivation to succeed

4. Context

ODST recognises that a planned, appropriate and sensitive approach to the provision of sex education is a fundamental entitlement of all our pupils. This policy statement will be continually developed in consultation with parents, pupils and governors, to reflect that the Trust plays a supportive and complementary role to that of parents in preparing pupils to meet maturely, the challenges of adult life.

The aim of the RSE policy is to clarify the provision of RSE to all pupils (including education about growth, puberty, reproduction, sexuality and sexual health) in line with the Trust's and School's values and as set out in the guidance published by the Department for Education in July 2000. Relationship and sex education is delivered through PSHE and other appropriate elements of the curriculum.

This policy statement is designed to be complementary to, and supportive of, the role of parents in educating their children about sexuality and relationships. It recognises that the prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents/carers.

We aim to teach RSE in the context of the Trust's and School's aims and values framework and in the belief that:

- It is an integral part of the learning process, beginning in childhood and continuing into adult life
- It should be provided for all children and young people including those with physical, learning or emotional difficulties.
- It should encourage consideration of values, moral issues, sexuality, personal relationships and the development of communication and decision-making skills.
- It should foster self-esteem, self-awareness, the skills to avoid and resist unwanted sexual experiences and a sense of moral responsibility.
- RSE is part of a wider social, personal, spiritual and moral education process.
- Children should be taught to have respect for their own bodies and learn about their responsibilities to others.
- It is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect and taught in the context of marriage and family life.

5. CURRICULUM CONTENT

Relationships education expectations

Pupils will need to know:

5.1 Families and people who care for the pupil

- 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 characterized by love and care
- that stable, caring relationships, which may be different types, are at the heart of happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up
- that marriage (available to both opposite and same sex couples) and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognized commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong
- how to recognize if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe and how to seek help or advice from others if needed

Caring friendships

- 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 situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed

5.2 Respectful relationships

- the importance of respecting others, even when they're very different (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 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 (primary 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

5.3 Online relationships

- that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they're 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

5.4 Being safe

- what sort 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's 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) who they do not know
- how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling unsure about any adult
- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others and to keep trying until they're heard
- 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)

6. Health education expectations

Pupils will need to know:

6.1 Mental wellbeing

- that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health
- that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations
- how to recognize and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings
- how to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate
- the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, voluntary and service-based activity on mental wellbeing and happiness
- simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family; the benefits of hobbies and interests
- isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for children to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support
- that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing
- where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they're worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online)
- it is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough

6.2 Internet safety and harms

- that for most people the internet is an integral part of life and has many benefits
- about the benefits of rationing time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing
- how to consider the effect of their online actions on others and know how to recognise and display respectful behavior online and the importance of keeping personal information private
- why social media, some computer games and online gaming, for example, are age restricted
- that the internet can also be a negative place where online abuse, trolling, bullying and harassment can take place, which can have a negative impact on mental health
- how to be a discerning consumer of information online including understanding that information from search engines, is ranked, selected and targeted; inaccurate/misleading information can be presented as fact and that images can be altered and falsified.
- where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online

6.3 Physical health and fitness

- the characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle
- the importance of building regular exercise into daily and weekly routines and how to achieve this; for example, walking or cycling to school, a daily active mile or other forms of regular, vigorous exercise
- the risks associated with an inactive lifestyle (including obesity)
- how and when to seek support including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health

6.4 Healthy eating

- what constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content)
- the principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals
- the characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health)

6.5 Drugs, alcohol and tobacco

- the facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use and drug-taking

6.6 Health and prevention

- how to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss or unexplained changes to the body
- about safe and unsafe exposure to the sun; how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer
- the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and that a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn
- about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including regular checks at the dentist

- about personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and treated, and the importance of handwashing
- the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination

6.7 Basic first aid

- how to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary
- concepts of basic first aid, for example dealing with common injuries, including head injuries

6.8 Changing adolescent bodies

- key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes
- about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle

6.8 Sex education expectations (non-compulsory)

There is no list of expectations for sex education at the primary level, as it isn't compulsory. At Fir Tree we teach the following in Year 5 and 6 using guidance from the School Nurse Team:

- make sure boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings
- draw on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in science lessons to explain how a baby is conceived

7. The role of parents

The Trust is well aware that the primary role in children's RSE lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we:

- Inform parents about the school's sex education policy and practice.
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the sex education programme for their child.
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSE in the school.

8. The right to withdraw

From September 2020, parents will not be able to withdraw their children from Relationships Education or Health Education (which includes learning about the changing adolescent body and puberty). However, parents will be able to withdraw their children from the non-compulsory Sex Education content outlined above, other than that which is part of the science curriculum.

Whilst we strongly encourage all pupils to take part in sex education lessons, which are always delivered in a safe learning environment underpinned by our school ethos and values, we will always let you know in advance of covering the non-compulsory sex education content above so that you can consider whether you wish to withdraw your child from the lesson.

If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from RSE lessons, they should discuss this with the Headteacher, and make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The school always complies with the wishes of parents in this regard.

9. Consultation

This policy was shared with the parent governors, as representatives of the parents of Fir Tree, for consultation in July 2020, with all responses considered by Governors before finalising in September 2020

The Trust fully recognises that the views of parents need to be borne in mind when developing a RSE policy. Parents are welcome to comment on the extent to which this policy reflects their wishes and the culture of the community served by an ODST school.

10. The role of the Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our RSE 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 with sensitivity.

Along with the Governing Body the Headteacher will support the design of a programme of study which ensures that the central aims of this RSE policy are covered and which meet the needs of pupils. In doing this the Governing Body and Headteacher will have regard to guidance on teaching styles, appropriate curriculum content and the age and maturity of the pupils.

The Headteacher may liaise with external agencies regarding the school RSE programme, and ensure that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy and that they work within this framework and that of the school safeguarding policies.

10. Confidentiality

Teachers conduct RSE lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes reference or a disclosure to being involved or likely to be involved in sexual activity or indicates that he/she may have been a victim of any kind of abuse then this will be dealt with as a matter of child protection and safeguarding. (See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.)

11. Implementation

The programme will teach about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood as well as reproduction and sexual health. RSE is linked with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol.

Teachers have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils. RSE will be undertaken within the broad framework of the Trust's core underpinning values and those of the school. The personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of RSE within the PSHE framework.

Pupils need to be taught to behave responsibly towards reproduction and sexual health issues and be able to understand how to make informed decisions about relationships and their behaviour.

It is expected that a programme will be taught in the transition year for pupils moving to secondary school which will include:

- changes in the body related to puberty, such as periods and voice breaking;
- when these changes are likely to happen and what issues may cause young people anxiety and how they can deal with these; and how a baby is conceived and born.

12. Organisation

In order to help pupils make informed choices, establish a healthy lifestyle and build up a carefully considered system of values, the teaching methods used are as important as the content of the lesson. The participation of pupils in lessons is essential in order to encourage them to learn from others and to help them to use appropriate language in ways which are understood by others. This requires the use of a balanced range of teaching methods.

Boys and girls have separate sessions with the focus on growing and changing. They are given an opportunity to write questions and hand them to the teacher

13. Delivery of sex education

RSE may be carried out in a variety of different ways and by different specialists as well as teachers including:

- Trained staff within the PSHE programme
- School Nurse Team
- Police Schools Liaison Officer
- Youth and Community workers

Certain lessons are compulsory under the National Curriculum in Science and are excluded from the right of parents to withdraw their children.

RSE will not be isolated, taken out of context or over-emphasised in any way.

14. Morals and Morality

Morals and morality are essential dimensions of relationships. The programme will respect individual differences - inspired by cultural, religious, ethnic and family backgrounds - and it will endeavour to promote those values of respect and dignity for human life which are common to all faiths and societies. Other values drawn from the School's core beliefs include promoting respect for each individual, positive self-esteem, self-respect and care for others. Pupils will be encouraged to consider the implications of these core values within the context of their relationships.

15. Relationships

Relationships have an important part to play in sex education. Friendship, making relationships, valuing friendship, will be topics in the early part of the programme. Choosing a partner, assessing personal qualities, considerations before marriage, together with relationships within the family, will be considered; together with roles, avoidance of stereotyping and acknowledging different attitudes and influences.

16. Menstruation

The onset of menstruation can be alarming for girls if they are not prepared. Research shows that about a third of girls are not told about periods by their parents and 10% receive no preparation at all before their first period. As with education about puberty our schools' programmes will include preparation for menstruation making adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls cope with menstruation and with requests for sanitary protection.

17. Sensitive issues

Avoiding sensitive or controversial issues does not make them go away and leaves children and young people confused and at risk. Sensitive issues can sometimes be raised by pupils within Relationships and Sex Education lessons, due to it being a safe environment to raise questions. Where these occur, they will be dealt with sensitively and age-appropriately, in line with the principles of this policy.

18. Aspects of sexual behaviour raised outside the sex education programme

The teaching of apparently unrelated topics may occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour. Provided that such a discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it will not necessarily form part of the school's RSE programme.

In such cases, particularly since they may involve pupils whose parents have withdrawn them from sex education as such, teachers will need to balance the need to give proper attention to relevant issues with the need to respect pupils' and parents' views and sensibilities.

The Governing Body expects that teachers will draw upon their professional judgement and common sense to deal effectively with such occurrences and that they will be conversant with this policy document and act accordingly.

19. Homosexuality

ODST schools recognise that within society there are a range of views with regard to homosexuality. Any form of prejudice, victimisation and the use of homosexual slang as a form of abuse are against our schools' values and will not be acceptable (See Behaviour Policy and Anti bullying Policy). Explicit and implicit homophobia in schools has a negative impact on the attendance and attainment of LGBT young people and ODST 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 will be no direct promotion of sexual orientation.

In our primary school this aspect is explored with reference to long-term committed relationships, and friendships and a broader focus on the emotional aspects of sexuality, with positive discussion about the feelings we experience during relationships.

Parents are welcome to discuss any part of the RSE programme we provide, if they have any queries or concerns.

20. Sexuality and physical development

The awareness of self and physical changes that occur are important in sex education, including development and puberty (physical/mental and social development) and acceptance of the nature of the sexuality in others together with the pressures imposed by such as peers and the media.

21. Consent

RSE at Fir Tree lays the foundations for developing empathy and understanding between girls and boys. Pupils are encouraged to consider the importance of equality and respect within friendships and relationships and to develop positive, non-violent behaviour.

22. Online and social media

Children and young people are growing up in a culture where technology and social media are important and have created more opportunity for sharing personal information. RSE encourages pupils to think about what they want others to know and see about them – whether on or offline. Teachers will address the core issues of safety, privacy, peer influence and personal responsibility. Internet safety is included in the new computing curriculum but doesn't cover the important relationship aspects, so it is vital to that our computing curriculum complements the RSE programme to avoid any contradictory messages.

'Sexting' and other self-made images and messages of a sexual nature, raise particular issues of safety, privacy, peer influence and personal responsibility. 'Sexting' is a term used by adults, referring to sexual content and images sent by mobile phones. Specific work about 'sexting' will be addressed in RSE as soon as it is identified as a potential issue. Teaching will cover communication skills, attitudes and values, the law, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and how to seek help.

23. Visiting speakers

Visiting speakers may be used to help enhance the RSE programme. Where they are used, they will be required to conform to this policy statement. 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 should follow the Trust's Confidentiality Policy.

24. Confidentiality Policy

Teachers are required to adhere to ODST's statement on confidentiality as set out in employee contracts of employment.

Pupils will 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 will be informed first and then supported, as appropriate.

It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the school will 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.