

# Birkdale High School



Birkdale  
High School

Aspire - Thrive - Succeed

**RSE Policy**  
(Relationships & Sex Education)  
March 2021-2024



## Birkdale High School RSE (Relationships & Sex Education Policy)

*Date of Policy:* March 2021  
*Members of staff responsible:* Associate Assistant Head Teacher (Mrs Cassidy)  
*Review date:* March 2024

### Rationale

RSE contributes to the requirement of the 1988 Education Act that states that the school curriculum should *promote the spiritual, moral and cultural, mental and physical developments of pupils at school and of society and prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The Sex and Relationships policy confirms that the school conforms with the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (2000) produced by the DfE.*

We recognise that there are a range of values and morals held within the school community. Therefore, the sex and relationships programme will reflect the school ethos and demonstrate and encourage the following values:

- respect for self and others
- understanding and care for others
- acceptance of responsibility for own behaviour
- the right to hold one's own views
- tolerance of difference and diversity

RSE will also help to deliver the knowledge and promote the skills that young people need to make informed choices and assess risk.

Parents play an important role in the delivery of RSE to their children and the school is committed to working in partnership with them. We recognise that many parents will be teaching their children about sex and relationships and establishing them in their own family culture and values. The school will consult with parents on the development and review of the RSE policy and practice as and when necessary.

Birkdale High School has approximately 830 pupils from across the Southport area. All pupils have an entitlement to the RSE programme. No pupil will be excluded from this programme by the school because of race or religion. The programme will reflect and include values held by the variety of religious and ethnic communities with an emphasis on those held within the school.

## Aim

To provide opportunities for students to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent and safe lives

To ensure that there is good quality provision for RSE which can be delivered based on the principle that prejudice, discrimination and bullying are harmful, that tolerance and understanding of different genders and sexual orientations are expected and that respect for others is essential.

## Objectives

To develop confidence and self-esteem

To develop knowledge of healthier and safer lifestyles thus enabling safer choices

To encourage personal responsibility in all forms of sexual and moral behaviour

To provide accurate and factual information relating to sexual health

To provide information on sex and the law

To provide opportunities for students to discuss healthy and abusive relationships including domestic violence and sexual exploitation

To provide opportunities for students to discuss sex and the media including pornography

To provide opportunities to discuss self-esteem and body image

To develop respect and consideration for others with particular focus on LGBT issues

To ensure that pupils are aware of agencies that can offer help, support or services

## General organisation of the teaching programme

RSE is taught to pupils as part of the Science and Religious Education curriculum and as part of the PSHCE programme.

All teachers could be responsible for lesson delivery during PSHCE. Any teacher who has concerns about teaching the material should consult with the Head of Department and the appropriate PSHCE co-ordinator well in advance. The preparation of the material for PSHCE lessons is the responsibility of the PSHCE coordinator and Heads of Year along with collaborations with the pastoral assistant and Deputy Headteacher.

### Science Curriculum

Year 7 - Human sexual reproduction including puberty

Year 11 - Human reproduction, IVF, contraception

### RE Curriculum

The RE curriculum looks at sex and relationships from the point of view of religious believers from different faith groups. It encourages discussion and asks pupils to evaluate their own opinions and outlooks.

Ethical decisions (starting a sexual relationship, abortion etc)

Chastity, Contraception, Family life, responsibilities within a relationship, gender issues, same sex relationships.

## PSHCE Curriculum

PSHCE will be delivered through a fixed lesson one period a week from 2021/22. See appendix 1 full outline of the curriculum content and appendix 2 for how this content is then mapped out.

### Teaching methods and resources

Teaching methods need to reinforce educational approaches and objectives. Teachers will:

- take responsibility for the planning, teaching and evaluation of RSE
- start with pupils' understanding
- not impose their views
- be sensitive to pupils' background, religion, culture and family membership.
- not embarrass pupils or put them on the spot
- develop ground rules to ensure a non-threatening learning environment
- explore issues and answer questions honestly

Pupils' questions will be answered as in every other lesson, in an honest and sensitive manner appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupil and in keeping with their religious and cultural background. Question boxes may be used in lessons to enable teachers to answer pupil's questions appropriately.

Resources chosen will be appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils. Parents will be able to see resources on request. Resources will be checked by the PSHCE coordinators against the following criteria:

- the resource should match the level of concept and language with the age and ability of the pupils
- there should be positive messages and images of different races, religions, sexuality and ability.
- resources avoid and/or challenge stereotypes
- they should encourage debate rather than close down communication
- resources should not contain subtle messages that reinforce dogmatic viewpoints
- material should not be judgmental; they should support the self-esteem of all pupils
- the teacher and the pupils are comfortable and confident with the resource
- the resource is accurate and up-to date
- the resource links community and parents
- the resource has a stimulating approach both visually and conceptually that is not patronising
- the aims and purposes of the company or organisation behind the resource are consistent with those of PSHE and education within schools.
- the authors or editors have credibility

### Involvement of outside speakers

In accordance with school policy, visitors may be invited into school in order to supplement or complement the programme. Examples used are; Stonewall to talk about issues connected with same sex relationships, bisexuality and transgender issues, or healthcare professionals to talk about sexually transmitted infections and contraception. All materials used will be discussed prior to the visit and a member of staff will remain in the class with the speaker. All outside agencies will be made aware of the school's RSE policy and due diligence will be taken to ensure that their input is in line with the policy and suitable for the age and maturity of the year group

## Liaison with parents

Parents will be consulted via our Wednesday Letter and the policy will be available on our website. Where RSE is part of the curriculum, they will be invited to contact the school if they have any concerns or questions they wish to be answered. All queries should be directed to the PSHCE coordinator.

Under the Education Act 1993 parents can withdraw their child from any part of the SRE Programme which is not part of the National Curriculum (see sections highlighted in appendix 1). Parents wishing to exercise this right are invited to discuss their concerns and arrangements for their child by contacting the PSHCE coordinator via the school office.

Any complaints, from individual lessons, should be taken to the class teacher, in the first instance. If the teacher is unable to resolve the situation satisfactorily, the PSHCE coordinator or Head of Department should be informed and ultimately, the headteacher.

## Confidentiality

This is a sensitive issue and there are conflicting priorities involved. If a pupil discloses information to their teacher and requests the information to be kept confidential, the teacher should first seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, without being deemed to have broken confidence. This will allow the school to act in the best interest of the child and assess if there are any child protection matters arising from the disclosure.

In summary, the school will usually inform parents of confidential issues relating to sex and relationships. Occasionally this may be against the wishes of the child and/or may place the child at risk. On these rare occasions the school may act in the best interests of the child by not informing parents.

## Assessment

Sex and Relationships Education is only assessed formally when it is part of the National Curriculum in Science. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning and participation at all times. Feedback will be sought from pupils to assess the success and learning value of PSHCE activities.

## Dissemination of the policy

Governors will receive a copy of the policy. The policy will also be placed in the electronic staff handbook. The policy will also be available on the school website. A paper copy will be available from the office on request.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed every three years by the PSHCE coordinators and a member of SLT. A report with any recommendations will be given to the governors.

Parents, teachers and pupils may be invited to be involved in the evaluation and review process.

Teachers will review the policy in terms of teaching RSE and being able to respond effectively to any pastoral or welfare issues that have arisen.

## Appendix 1: Curriculum Content

### **Families**

Pupils should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children
- what marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting
- how to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

### **Respectful Relationships, including Friendships**

Pupils should know:

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationships
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- 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 people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

### **Online and Media**

Pupils should know:

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- the impact of viewing harmful content
- that specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners

- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

## **Being Safe**

Pupils should know:

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).

## **Intimate and Sexual Relationships, including Sexual Health**

Pupils should know:

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

## **The Law**

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions. Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- peer on peer sexual abuse
- 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)
- sexting.

## **PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL WELLBEING**

### **Mental Wellbeing**

Pupils should know:

- how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary
- that happiness is linked to being connected to others
- how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns
- common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression)
- how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others’ mental health
- the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness
- the potential issues surrounding body image.

### **Internet Safety and Harms**

Pupils should know:

- the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image), how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning
- consumer of information online
- how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.

### **Physical Health and Fitness**

Pupils should know:

- the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress
- the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardiovascular ill-health
- about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

## Healthy Eating

Pupils should know:

- how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.

## Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Pupils should know:

- the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions
- the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances
- the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood
- the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency
- awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks
- the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so

## Health and Prevention

Pupils should know:

- about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics
- about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist
- the benefits of regular self-examination and screening
- the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination
- the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.

## Basic First Aid

Pupils should know:

- basic treatment for common injuries
- life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR
- the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.