

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) (Secondary) Policy

August 2023

‘Because Children Deserve Better’

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Introduction

At Pivot Academy, pupils are entitled to a curriculum which contributes to a well-balanced education, developing the abilities and life skills of individual pupils so that they may become valuable, positive and have an active place in society. The entitlement is for all pupils at Pivot Academy, regardless of age, gender, race, religion or disability. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education is a fundamental part of our Personal Development Curriculum and aims to promote self-respect, confidence, responsibility and respect towards others as well as resilience, safety, empathy, love and care.

1. What is Relationships and Sex Education

Relationships and Sex Education relates to learning about physical, moral and emotional development, understanding the importance of family life as well as of stable and loving relationships, and promoting British values such as tolerance. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes and supports young people in developing self-confidence in preparing for physical and emotional changes into adulthood. RSE has an integral part to play in building pupils' mental wellbeing and their understanding of themselves as part of a family, community and wider society. As our pupils grow, they will understand their rights as global citizens but also the responsibility that this brings.

Research demonstrates that good, comprehensive RSE does not make young people more likely to become sexually active at a younger age and in fact knowledge can help prevent this as well as help to identify child protection issues in young children.

Relationships education is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity as this would be inappropriate teaching. Young people's entitlement to RSE is enshrined in the terms of the Education Act (1996).

2. Aims and Objectives

The policy has been developed to ensure that staff and parents or carers are clear about the statutory requirements regarding Relationships and Sex Education including its content, progression and delivery, and that the pupils receive their educational entitlement. It is our intention that all children can experience a bespoke and relevant programme of Relationships and Sex Education at a level which is appropriate for their age, cognitive and physical development with differentiated provision as required. Taking account of the age, maturity and needs of the pupils, Relationships and Sex Education aims to:

- provide the knowledge and information to which all pupils are entitled;
- help pupils recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, including self- respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent, and how to manage conflict, and also how to recognise unhealthy relationships;
- ensure pupils learn about how relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health;
- provide the confidence for pupils to be active participating members of society and to value themselves and others;
- prepare pupils for puberty and encourage them to take responsibility for their own actions;
- equip pupils with the knowledge and understanding of how to respect and care for their bodies;
- enable pupils to develop the skills and understanding needed to make healthy, responsible choices about their health and wellbeing including personal hygiene;
- help pupils understand the significance of stable relationships and its importance for family life. Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is no discrimination or embarrassment for children based on their home circumstances.
- promote pupil understanding of reproduction and sexual development;
- develop and use communication skills and assertiveness skills to cope with the influences of their peers and the media;
- answer pupils' questions honestly and sensitively referring the children to parents where appropriate;
- give pupils information on where individuals and families can get help and support;
- help pupils to understand issues of media influence and mixed messages that may contradict and conflict with own beliefs.

3. Statutory Guidance

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. The regulations also make Health Education compulsory in all state funded schools.

This policy was developed in response to:

- Statutory guidance on RSE and health education
- Keeping children safe in education: for schools and colleges
- Behaviour and discipline in schools: guidance for Headteacher and staff
- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools

- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- Alternative provision
- Mental health and behaviour in schools
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- Cyber bullying: advice for Headteacher and school staff
- Advice for parents and carers on cyber bullying
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools
- National Citizen Service: guidance for schools and colleges

4. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Anti-bullying & cyber bullying policy
- E-Safety and acceptable use policy
- Equal opportunities policy
- Behaviour and sanctions policy

5. RSE Curriculum Planning

Relationships and Sex Education is the multi layered acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding of ourselves, our bodies and our relationships. It is taught using content and materials that consider the developmental, cognitive and chronological age of the pupils. Pivot Academy delivers the RSE offer as informed by statutory content set out in the RSE and Health Education Guidance 2019, however in the context of a broad, differentiated, balanced and sequential curriculum is tailored to the needs of the school population. Effective teaching will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to pupils, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme of lessons.

Teaching will include sufficient well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to practise applying and embedding new knowledge so that it can be used skilfully and confidently in real life situations. When appropriate some pupils will follow a structured, graduated and age-appropriate programme to increase their understanding of aspects of puberty, health and sexual relationships. Although identified progressive curriculum maps are in place, yet the sequence in which learning units are being taught may be changed to reflect the specific needs of pupil cohorts or individual pupil needs.

As part of the PSHE Curriculum -which incorporates our RSE offer- we focus on helping pupils develop an understanding of themselves, form good relationships and respect the differences between people. We also aim to prepare pupils for any physical and emotional changes during puberty, which some will begin to experience before they reach secondary age. Further curriculum content includes learning units on online relationships and internet safety, mental wellbeing, physical health and fitness, healthy eating as well as substance misuse.

At later stages of the curriculum offer we aim to inform our pupils on the influence of social media on mental health, the ability to deal with emotions and stay safe, intimate relationships, personal space and physical contact, consent etc. Pupils with an appropriate

level of understanding follow learning units that focus more specifically on relationships, sexuality and reproduction, including sexual health and STDs. Whilst we may cover Secondary Specific RSE content, we continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as and when required.

6. RSE Delivery

We teach RSE in the context of the school's aims, ethos and values framework promoting respect for self and others, responsibility for own actions as well as for family, friends, school and community. Whilst RSE in our school means that we give children information about the way relationships develop and grow over time from childhood through to adult relationships, we do this with an awareness of the moral code and values which underpin all work in school. Pivot Academy is also aware of the preparing for adulthood outcomes as set out in the SEND Code of Practice and ensures that RSE teaching is differentiated, personalised and delivered in an accessible way.

RSE content is taught by school teachers across identified curriculum strands (i.e. Physical Development and Wellbeing, Social and Emotional Development and Wellbeing, as well as Communication) and through a sequence of identified milestones. Since Relationships and Sex Education incorporates the development of self-esteem and relationships, pupils' learning does not just take place through the taught curriculum, but through all aspects of school life. Where appropriate, outside visitors and professionals may be invited to further enrich the RSE curriculum through direct classroom input.

RSE is set in the context of a wider whole-school approach to supporting pupils to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school. RSE also sits within the context of the School's broader philosophy and approach to developing pupils socially, morally, spiritually and culturally and its pastoral care system. Relationship and Sex education is usually delivered in mixed gender groups, however there may be occasions where single gender groups are more appropriate and relevant. Teachers will set a group agreement with pupils to ensure that an atmosphere is created where pupils feel able to discuss concerns, feelings and relationships. It should be recognised that questions from pupils will be addressed and dealt with in the most appropriate manner and not disregarded.

To support the delivery of RSE related outcomes a variety of teaching and learning styles may be used including videos, information sheets, pamphlets, textbooks, visual aids and models, games, role-play, accessing appropriate material on the internet and visits. Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils can form their own informed opinions but also respect others that may have different opinions. It is important that all staff understand that they have a responsibility to implement this policy and promote the aims of the school at any time they are working with children.

7. Answering Difficult Questions

- If a pupil asks a difficult question during a whole or small group class session, staff will be expected to answer honestly and factually
- Where possible pupils will be encouraged to use the question box approach
- Pupils' questions will be answered according to their maturity and understanding with support from parents
- The programme will be designed to focus on boys as much as girls, and activities will be planned to ensure both are actively involved, matching their different learning styles
- Teachers will focus heavily on the importance of healthy relationships

- The question box may be used as a distancing technique to prevent over exposure of concepts outside of learning objectives
- Questions answered need to follow school policy. Where curriculum queries are raised, these need to be discussed with the Senior Leadership Team and/or Designated Safeguarding Leads

8. Terminology

It is recommended that children learn the language associated with body parts so that children can talk to health professionals. Therefore, teachers will use the anatomically correct language for body parts, while acknowledging common terms used by some people. Correct language for body parts will have been gradually introduced from

9. Areas of Responsibility

The Board

The board will approve the RSE policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher with the support of the Subject Lead and The Board to ensure that:

- all staff are informed of the policy and the responsibilities included within the policy;
- all teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support subjects;
- the subjects are timetabled in a way to ensure that the school fulfils its legal obligations
- the teaching of RSE is monitored to ensure that it is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils;
- the school consults with parents when planning and delivering RSE to pupils;
- clear information is provided to parents/carers on subject content, progression and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.

Teaching Staff

All Staff will ensure that:

- ground rules are negotiated with the group before embarking on lessons of a sensitive nature, so that both the staff and pupils can work together in a supportive atmosphere in which all members can speak with confidence and without fear and embarrassment, anxiety, or breach of confidentiality;
- all pupils are offered the opportunity to explore ideas, situations, and feelings in an atmosphere of confidence and support;
- at all times teaching will take place in the context of an explicit moral framework
- the teaching of RSE is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND; and plan suitable lessons and to ensure that they are personalised and differentiated to meet the pupil's individual needs;
- the emphasis of teaching RSE will always be the importance and understanding of personal relationships and the right of the individual to make informed choices;
- issues of stereotyping, sexual equality, harassment, rights and legislation underpin the teaching of RSE.

Parents

The school understands the primary role in children's Relationships and Sex Education lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the carers and parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective all carers and parents will be:

- given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education;
- consulted and encouraged to participate in the development of Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education;
- able to discuss any questions or curriculum queries directly with the school.

Parents as well as any relevant stakeholders should be reassured that the personal beliefs and attitudes of a teacher should not influence the teaching of RSE.

10. Sensitive Issues

From time to time, sensitive issues will be raised by pupils. It is important that all individuals concerned with the delivery of RSE in school are aware of the agreed values framework. The issues concerned may include contraception, abortion, safe sex, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, sexual identity or orientation, homophobic bullying and different families. It is important to acknowledge that pupils may hear these terms through different sources such as the media and need to feel able to ask for further information. The response from the member of staff will be appropriate to the child's age and maturity, and thought will be given to whether the response is appropriate in the context of a small class group or individual situation. Questions will always be treated with respect and with a caring response and staff will always be sensitive to underlying problems which may be worrying a child.

11. Child Protection and Confidentiality

When teaching any sensitive topic, such as RSE which deals with family life, safe and appropriate touching, personal body parts and healthy relationships, we recognise the potential to uncover incidents of abuse through children's disclosures. All members of staff who deliver any of our Relationship or Sex Education Programme, have statutory training around safeguarding children and are all aware of our school's safeguarding policy and procedures in the case of a disclosure or suspicion of a safeguarding concern. All staff involved in delivering and supporting RSE should be alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and are aware that they cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality to the child. If there is a concern about the child's safety, staff should follow the guidelines in the Safeguarding Policy adopted by the school.

We recognise that for children who may be vulnerable due to past or present abuse or changes in family situations, some learning units may need to be adapted due to the sensitive nature of the topics covered. Providing RSE Education is deemed to be a protective factor in preventing further abuse, as it may help children make sense of their experiences and help them develop the skills and resilience needed to keep them safe in future. The School will ensure that Schemes of Work may be adapted as appropriate to meet individual pupil needs in relation to their contextual circumstances.

12. Equal Opportunities

The Equality Act 2010 covers the way the curriculum is delivered, as schools and other education providers must ensure that issues are taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Schools have a duty under the Equality Act to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). Inclusive RSE will foster good relations between pupils, tackle all

types of prejudice –including homophobia –and will promote understanding and respect. The Department for Education has produced advice on The Equality Act 2010 and schools (DfE,2014b). Schools have a legal duty to promote equality (Equality Act,2010) and to combat bullying (Education Act, 2006) (which includes homophobic, sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying) and Section 4.2 of the national curriculum (2014) states “Teachers should take account of their duties under equal opportunities legislation that covers race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment”.

13. Parental Right to Withdraw

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from some or all elements of sex education delivered as part of the RSE lessons which do not form part of the National Curriculum up to and until three terms before the age of 16. Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from the RSE curriculum and/or to further discuss any aspect of the curriculum in more detail should put their request in writing and address this to the Headteacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil’s educational record and the Headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. If queries are not resolved then parents/carers may contact the Lead for Quality of Education for a final decision.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from Sex Education, the class teacher will ensure that the pupil receives alternative appropriate and purposeful education which may include the child working on an alternative chosen project. If the request for withdrawal is granted and supervision cannot be arranged; parents may be asked to come into school and supervise their child on an alternative project.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

14. Working with External Agencies

Pivot Academy is aware that working with external partners will enhance the delivery of RSE and will support the school to bring in specialist knowledge and implement different ways of engaging with young people. Where Pivot Academy uses external agencies, the credentials of the visiting organisations or parties will be checked. Pivot Academy will also ensure that the teaching delivered by the visitor fits within the planned programme and the published policy. Schools will work with external agencies to ensure that the content delivered is age and developmentally appropriate and accessible for all pupils. Any materials that are used as part of the delivery must be approved by the school in advance of the session. Pivot Academy will ensure that the visitor is aware of aspects of confidentiality and understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with.

15. Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy

- The Headteacher and The Board will ensure that staff and parents are informed about the content, progression and delivery of the curriculum through relevant policy information.
- The Lead for Quality of Education will monitor, and quality assure the delivery of RSE across the Academy.
- Pivot Academy will assess the effectiveness of the aims, content and methods in promoting pupils’ learning by lesson observation, sampling teachers planning, questionnaires to teachers and children and feedback from parents.

The policy will be reviewed every two years, unless a more immediate review is needed in response to new guidance.