

Relationships and Sex Education Policy (RSE)

Birchwood Community Academy Trust

Policy owner (Name):	Samantha Rigby-White
Policy owner (Job Title):	Deputy Head teacher
Governing body oversight:	Policy Review Committee
Date of approval:	September 2024
Date of next review:	September 2026

Why Do We Teach Relationships and Sex Education?

This school policy is in line with current regulations from the Department of Education (DfE) on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (July 2019).

Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education are taught in this school as statutory subjects. Through an integrated PSHE programme of work.

Relationships and Sex Education make a significant contribution to the school's legal duties to

- prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life , and
- promote the spiritual, moral, social cultural mental and physical development of pupils

It is taught in the context of our school values: knowledge, aspiration and kindness.

Relationships and Sex Education is defined by the PSHE Association as 'learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health'. This content is delivered in an age-appropriate way in our school with regard to the age and stage of pupils.

The aim of Relationships and Sex Education in our school is to equip children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and take responsibility for their physical, sexual and emotional health and wellbeing.

We recognise the central importance of relationships in supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, academic achievement and future success.

Our programme also aims to support pupils in their personal development with regard to attributes such as kindness, integrity, generosity and honesty. These approaches support our wider work of building resilience and compassion in our pupils.

We focus on attitudes and values, skills and as well as knowledge and understanding. This will include developing clear expectations around how they wish to be treated and, in turn, how they treat others; the skills to manage and nurture healthy relationships and a developed understanding as to how to keep themselves safe in all their relationships.

Research has shown that young people who feel good about themselves and are knowledgeable and confident about relationships and sex, are more likely to be discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviours and to have fulfilling relationships.

As a school we recognise the impact of social media, the media and the digital world on our children and young people. We aim to deliver an RSE programme that recognises and addresses this to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves and their personal information safe.

Curriculum Content

The DfE recognises 5 elements to Relationships and Sex Education. These are

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

In key stage 3, students will learn about:

- Being respectful in relationships and what healthy relationships look like
- Being discerning online
- Understanding illegal substances
- First aid- foundation
- Gangs and extremism
- Body image
- Mental wellbeing
- Consent
- Foetal development

In Key Stage 4, students will learn about:

- Representation and body image
- Misogyny
- Contraception
- Online personas
- Consumerism online
- Respecting different points of views
- Trolling and online behaviours
- Online personas
- Consent
- First aid- developed

Some elements of sex education are statutory.

Learning about 'the changing adolescent body' is part of statutory Health Education.

National Curriculum Science is also statutory.

At key stage 3 and 4 this includes teaching about reproduction in humans, for example the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycles, gametes, fertilisation, gestation, birth and HIV/AIDS.

Equality

This school delivers RSE with regards to the Equality Act 2010 and observance of the protected characteristics of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership and sexual orientation. We recognise that children have varying needs regarding RSE depending on their circumstances and background. The school believes that all people should have access to RSE that is relevant to their particular needs. To achieve this, the school's approach to RSE will take account of:

- We shall also be proactive in combating sexism, misogyny, sexualised behaviour and sexist bullying. We will foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls.

- Some pupils may have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) that result in particular RSE needs at times which we will support. We will ensure that RSE is accessible to all pupils through high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised. We will also be mindful of preparing for adulthood outcomes as set out in the SEND code of practice when teaching these subjects to those with SEND.
- Different cultural and religious groups may have different attitudes and beliefs with regard to RSE. The school will consult pupils and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for and understanding of the views of different ethnic, cultural and religious groups in line with safeguarding and school's statutory duty to keep pupils safe and deliver certain elements of the statutory RSE curriculum.
- Some of our pupils will identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans (LGBT). Our approach to RSE will reflect this and teaching will be thoughtful in both content and approach. This content will be integrated into the programme rather than as a stand-alone lesson or unit. We actively tackle homophobic bullying.
- We recognise that our pupils may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. We will take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances and deliver the curriculum sensitively and inclusively.

Provision

1. This school has a caring ethos that models and supports positive relationships between all members of the school community.
2. Within the taught, age-appropriate, spiral RSE programme within Personal Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE).
3. Within Science as stipulated by the national curriculum and/or as negotiated with the PSHE lead.
4. Through other curriculum areas for example Drama, English etc.
5. Through assemblies.
6. Through pastoral support.
7. Through the dissemination of appropriate information sources.
8. Via targeted intervention, where appropriate, with vulnerable individuals.
9. Delivery in response to incidents.

Teaching Methods, Resources, Training and Monitoring

All the following elements of teaching methods, resources, training and monitoring are essential elements in providing quality RSE.

A Safe Learning Environment

In order for PSHE or RSE to be conducted safely the following will be in place:

- Group agreements or ground rules are negotiated, explained, displayed and referred to wherever appropriate. (When receiving external visitors, they will have sight of and understanding of the ground rules/group agreement.)
- No one in the classroom will be expected to answer a personal question.
- Distancing techniques such as the use of scenarios, will be used to help to keep pupils safe. There will be no need for anyone to discuss their own personal issues.
- Confidentiality will be clearly explained. Pupils will understand how disclosures will be handled.
- Pupils will be expected to engage and listen during lessons, however it is accepted that sometimes it is inappropriate for them to be expected to take part in the discussion.
- In most cases, the correct names for body parts will be used.
- The meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.
- Care will be taken not to use materials or approaches that may trigger trauma or distress. Pupils at risk will be identified and arrangements made for them to access the learning in a comfortable way.
- Signposting to sources of support when dealing with sensitive issues

Teaching and Learning Methods

PSHE lessons will be delivered through their Personal Development lessons (fortnightly) and via form time activities (known as our PEAK programme). These have all been designed specifically for our school and use a range of mediums to explore important and sensitive topics- all of these lessons include opportunities for discussion and interaction within form groups.

To ensure that students and staff feel comfortable, some, more sensitive topics, will be delivered in person by external speakers during designated deep learning days. These happen through careful planning: during these days, students do not have their normal lessons and instead have a day (or half a day) dedicated to exploring the more challenging areas of PSHE.

Asking and Answering Questions

We recognise that where young people's questions go unanswered, they may turn to inappropriate sources of information. Whilst every effort is taken to ensure that these questions are pre-empted within the recorded lessons, teachers are encouraged to answer pupil's questions and concerns in a sensitive, age and development appropriate manner.

Individual teachers will use their skill and discretion in these situations, and if necessary, refer to the Safeguarding team, if they have any concerns or are unsure.

Teachers will apply the following principles:

1. Clear guidance will be established about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting-group agreement/ground rules will help to achieve this.
2. If a pupil's question is inappropriate to address the whole class, the teacher will acknowledge the question and attend to it later on an individual basis.
3. Personal questions should be referred to the ground rules/group agreement.
4. Teachers will set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that pupil's discuss issues in a way which encourages thoughtful participation.
5. If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk in any way, including sexual abuse or exploitation, the usual safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Groupings

RSE takes place within form time and within the fortnightly PD lessons. They may also take place during deep learning activities (drop down sessions).

Visitors

Every care is taken to ensure that the visitor's contribution fits with our planned programme of work and policy, and that the content is age appropriate and accessible for the pupils. It is particularly useful when visitors have expertise and/or provide a service to pupils.

Resources

Teaching resources will be selected on the basis of their appropriateness to students and their impact. Care will be taken not to use materials or have discussions that could be 'instructional' e.g. regarding self-harm.

Continuity, Progression and Assessment

Our school has the same high standards of the quality of pupils learning in RSE as in other curriculum areas. RSE is delivered through a sequenced planned programme of work. Continuity and progression is generated through the adoption of a whole school approach to the planning and delivery of covering knowledge, skills and understanding. The curriculum is informed by needs assessment of pupils existing knowledge, experience and conduct.

The elements of RSE that form part of the Science curriculum are assessed in accordance with the requirements of the national curriculum. Learning from other elements of RSE is assessed as part of the PSHE/PD provision and builds on

existing school systems. Baseline, formative and summative assessments will contribute to the effective delivery of RSE.

Personnel and Training

RSE is planned centrally and then delivered via form tutors or PD teachers. The school is committed to ensuring that everyone involved with teaching or supporting the teaching of RSE receives appropriate and ongoing professional development in order to maintain a whole school consistency and high standards for the children/young people in our care.

All new staff will receive a copy of the RSE policy.

Parental engagement in RSE and right to withdrawal

We recognise the prime role of parents/carers in the development of their child's understanding about relationships and sex. We work in active partnership with parents/carers in the development and review of RSE.

The school ensure that parents/carers are: made aware of the school's approach and rationale for RSE through the policy; involved in the review of the RSE policy; made aware of the school's PSHE/PD curriculum; and encourage them to support their child is learning at home through shared learning activities, if appropriate.

Parents/carers have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated sex education lessons delivered outside the science curriculum. They do not have a right to withdraw their children from those aspects of RSE that are taught in national curriculum Science.

If a parent/carer has any concerns about the RSE provision, we will take time to address their concerns and allay any fears they may have. If parents/carers decide to withdraw their child, we shall work with them and their child to explore possible alternative provision. In the event of a request to withdraw we will document this process and ensure a record is kept.

Once a student is three terms away from their sixteenth birthday they have a right to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn. Where this is the case we will make arrangements to provide them with sex education during one of those terms.

Impact

Monitoring and Evaluation

The programme is regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure impact. This takes place through a variety of methods, including, staff and student feedback. The views of the pupils and teachers who deliver the programme, will be used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis. The needs assessment is built into the lessons and will also inform any changes to the curriculum.

Consultation, Policy Development and Review

In order for everyone to be consulted effectively, it may be necessary to ensure that governors and parents receive awareness training and/or information about RSE on occasions.

This policy document is open for consultation with the entire school community, including students, parents/carers, school staff, governors and any other appropriate stakeholders. This document is freely available to the entire school community. It has been made available on the school website.

It will be reviewed on a biannual basis.

Review date September 2026

