

Relationship, Sex and Health Education Policy: St Nicolas and St Mary Church of England Primary School

Our school's approach to Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) follows that of the Church of England Education Office in that it seeks to be faith-sensitive and inclusive. It is underpinned by two key Biblical passages:

"So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them"

(Genesis 2:7)

"I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness"

(John 10:10)

At St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School, everyone will be treated with dignity as all people who are made in the image of God and are loved equally by God.

All pupils have a right to an education which enables them to flourish and is set in a learning community where differences of lifestyle and opinion (within that which is permissible under UK law) are treated with dignity and respect; where bullying of all kinds is eliminated; and where they are free to be themselves and fulfil their potential without fear.

Our school seeks to ensure that the RSHE curriculum protects, informs and nurtures all pupils. It clearly differentiates between factual teaching (biology, medicine, the law, marriage, different types of families and the composition of society) and moral teaching about relationships and values, recognising that the distinction can be easily blurred and that there needs to be discernment about the manner in which this is taught. We teach RSHE within a moral (but not moralistic) framework.

RSHE in St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School is about what constitutes wellbeing and loving care for ourselves (physical and mental health education), how we show loving care for others (relationships education) and, when at an appropriate age and stage in life, how we show loving care to those we choose to be intimate with, including within marriage (sex education).

It is also about the spiritual and moral aspects of healthy, loving and nurturing relationships within a context of a Christian vision for the purpose of life.

Pupils will consider how to ensure that they treat themselves and others, at all times and in all contexts, with dignity and respect.

For Primary Schools

Defining Relationships Education

Relationships Education is learning about how to:

- be appreciative of existing relationships;
- form new healthy friendships; and
- enjoy strong positive, caring, relationships with good boundaries, online and in person.

This will particularly refer to family relationships (including marriage), friendships and relationships with peers and adults.

Defining sex education

Sex education is about reproduction: learning how babies can be made and the emotions that people experience when they are ready for close intimacy.

The national curriculum for science includes content about human body parts, growth, puberty and gestation. Parents do not have the right to withdraw from this aspect of the curriculum.

In this school we have decided that it is important to teach some elements of RSE, as defined in the year group curriculum grid below, to educate the children in our community for adulthood (and for secondary school) in their last year(s) of primary school.

The right to withdrawal from sex education

Parents do have the right to excuse their children from this aspect of RSHE and can do so by making concerns known and applying in writing to the Headteacher. The school will invite any enquiring parents or legal guardians to talk through concerns. An explanation of the rationale for RSHE will be given; an opportunity will be offered to review the intended materials and to consider the impact of not receiving sex education with peers.

Withdrawing a child from sex education remains a statutory right as a parent or legal guardian. If a pupil is excused from sex education it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from relationships education or health education.

The school will document this process to ensure a record is kept.

For all schools

Defining health education

Health education is learning about physical health and mental wellbeing so that pupils can make wise choices to ensure their own flourishing and the flourishing of others.¹

The RSHE Curriculum

At St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School we teach all the statutory elements for Relationships and Health education as stated by the Department for Education [for more information on the objectives covered please click [here](#)]

The grid below contains an outline of lessons which are linked to and discrete to the RSE Curriculum:

Statutory science content is green

Statutory PSHE content is in blue

RSE content is in red.

Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boys and girls naming body parts (including the genitalia)• Use of the NSPCC Pants song.• In the Different families lesson, showing pictures of different types of families including some with two mums or two dads. LGBTQ is not specifically mentioned but these would just be pictorial representations of different families alongside many other pictures of the diverse range of families which make up our community.
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-capping on body parts and respecting privacy. Which parts of the body are private and why that is.

¹ See *Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach* (March 2018)

Year 3	<p>Recap lesson on different types of families (see Goodness and Mercy KS2 Suggested activities, Lesson 1) https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/teaching-resources/ Reference to the fact that same sex couples are part of the make-up of different families.</p>
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and External reproductive body parts and body changes in girls and boys during puberty including menstruation (separate classes for boys and girls). • Lesson on Anti-bullying provides the opportunity to address any homophobic language which the children may have heard eg 'gay' or 'lesbian' and what those terms really mean in a very simple way eg Being gay is a type of adult relationship where two men or two women love each other in a romantic way and if they choose they can get married.
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second puberty lesson (separate classes for boys and girls).
Year 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap on puberty • Teach 3 sex education lessons from the Goodness and Mercy resources see: https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/teaching-resources/
<p>Please note that the curriculum needs to be flexible, depending on the needs of each cohort, but parents would be informed before additional RSE lessons (outside this curriculum) are taught. It is also important to realise that children always ask questions and we never know what and when they will be asked! Teachers will always deal sensitively with such questions as they come up and let parents know if there is something we feel that we be good for them to discuss with their child. Please read more about this in the FAQ below.</p>	

How will RSHE be taught in our school?

RSHE will be delivered professionally and as an identifiable part of PSHE. It will be led, resourced and reported to parents in the same way as any other subject. There will be a planned programme delivered in a carefully sequenced way.

RSHE will be delivered in a way that affords dignity and shows respect to all who make up our diverse community. It will not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act and will be sensitive to the faith and beliefs of those in the wider school community. RSHE will seek to explain fairly the tenets and varying interpretations of religious communities on matters of sex and relationships and teach these viewpoints with respect. It will value the importance of faithfulness as the underpinning and backdrop for relationships. It will encourage pupils to develop the skills needed to disagree without being disagreeable, to appreciate the lived experience of other people and to live well together.

RSHE will seek to build resilience in our pupils to help them form healthy relationships, to keep themselves safe and resist the harmful influence of the excesses of media in all its forms.

RSHE will promote healthy resilient relationships set in the context of character and virtue development that sits within the schools Christian Vision and Values.

Values such as such as honesty, integrity, self-control, courage, humility, kindness, forgiveness, generosity and a sense of justice

All staff teaching this sensitive and important subject will have received training. This training will be regularly reviewed and revisited.

Pupils with SEND will have had the content made accessible to them by teachers or teaching assistants, or through consultation with parents/carers.

At St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School, RSHE is taught by confident trained staff and only some elements will be taught by outside agencies (such as First Aid or aspects about puberty). It is important that pupils have confidence in the teacher and that a 'safe space' is created where pupils feel confident and can ask age-appropriate questions.²

RSHE will be monitored and evaluated

This will follow the same monitoring and evaluation processes used throughout the school for other subjects i.e. pupil conferencing, work reviews, learning walks etc.

Policy Review

This policy has been produced by consultation with the Diocese of Bristol and through consultation with school staff and governors.

It has been produced in consultation with parents and will be reviewed in consultation with parents. It must, however, be recognised that the law specifies that what is taught and how it is taught is ultimately a decision for the school.

²It does not need to be the class teacher or tutor who teaches Relationships [and Sex] Education. It is best delivered by teachers who are skilled and confident at managing sensitive issues and are good at handling class discussion. See research from Bristol University about secondary RSE
<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/5/e014791>

This policy will be reviewed every: [year]

It is due to be reviewed again on: [May 2022]

It was approved by FGB on: [29th April 2021]

Date for review process to begin: [date]

Date for final review to FGB: [date]

This policy should be read in conjunction with The Equalities Act 2010

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

Appendix A

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should we teach RSE?

RSE is important because it enables young people to understand and respect their bodies and be able to cope with the changes puberty brings without fear or confusion.

RSE helps young people develop healthy relationships appropriate to their stage of development and to learn to respect others.

RSE helps young people to have a positive image of themselves and their bodies and to understand the influences and pressures around them.

RSE helps to protect your child and keep them safe. It also helps them to recognise when others are at risk and equips them with the skills they need to take appropriate action.

Does RSE contradict our school's Christian teaching and values?

The curriculum we will be teaching has been recommended by the Church of England and the Diocese and embraces the concept that each and every person should be loved and valued because they are made in God's image. Our Governors and Staff team have reviewed the curriculum content and are happy that it is in line with our Christian values.

Will teaching sex education take away my child's innocence?

No – the evidence suggest that high quality RSE teaching actually delays young people's first sexual experiences and helps them to make informed choices to ensure their safe guarding. High quality RSE takes away ignorance and not innocence.

Can I withdraw my child from RSE lessons?

Yes – you are able to withdraw your child from RSE specific lessons or part of a lesson where RSE content is taught. We will keep parents and carers informed about the content of such lessons in advance of it being taught. However you are unable to withdraw them from the statutory science and PSHE lessons.

If you are considering taking your child out of RSE lessons please consider the following:

Other pupils in the class may have been taught this information and may well talk to your child about it – perhaps in the playground. The information they may relay may be incorrect or misleading. They may also search independently for information online which could be unsafe or harmful. It is perhaps better to allow experienced teaching staff to inform your child in a safe and controlled environment.

Your child will be learning about reproduction in science lessons and the RSE/PSHE lessons echo this content and support them in forming healthy, appropriate relationships and developing self-esteem and confidence when dealing with different situations in future.

Before making a decision to withdraw, please do speak to your child's teacher or one of the leadership team, who are happy to discuss your concerns further.

Will support be provided for children who are fostered or adopted, or may have had difficult early experiences?

Where appropriate, we will ensure that parents/carers receive adequate time and materials to broach upcoming topics with their children in advance. Individual cases will also be discussed with the SEND team prior to teaching in case there is any specific advice. At this point, discussions with individual families may take place if necessary.

What happens if a child asks a question which is outside this curriculum (ie too grown up), inappropriate or sensitive?

As a school we have made a decision amongst our teaching team, that if this happens we will deal with it as follows:

Use the suggested script - 'That is a **deep question**. It is not something we will be discussing right now but I am making a note that you have asked it.'

In this way, we can decide to do one or more of the following:

Let the parent know that this is something which has been asked so that we can discuss together how to proceed.

Consult with class parents if it is something which could be relevant for discussion with the whole class that is outside the usual curriculum eg gender.

Speak individually with the child if this is something of a personal nature which is best discussed away from a whole class situation.