



North Cestrian School

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Nominated Staff
Status & review cycle Statutory –
Last review date
Next review date

Headmaster
Statutory Rec Yearly
Oct 2024
Oct 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy has been written with reference to the following documents:

- *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance*, DfEE, 0116/2000 May 2024 update
- *Sex and relationships education (SRE) for the 21st century* Brook, PD Association and Sex Education Forum, 2014
- *Policy Statement: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education*, DfE, 2017
- *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education*, DfE Draft for consultation, July 2018
- *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education in England, Government consultation response*, DfE, Feb 2019
- *Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education*. DfE, June 2019
- *Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum*, DfE, Sept 2020
- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*

☐ *Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy* The policy should be read alongside these documents, and also guidelines from the PD Association.

1.2 This policy, together with its accompanying procedures and guidance, covers the school's approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and applies to all the students, staff, health professionals, visiting speakers and support workers who are involved in the delivery of RSE within the school together with parents, governors and the school community.

2. What is relationships and sex education (RSE)?

Relationships and sex education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It is about understanding the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It involves acquiring knowledge and understanding, developing personal and social skills and forming positive and respectful beliefs, values and attitudes.

3. Statement of intent, principles and values framework of RSE

NCS believes that RSE should:

- adopt a whole-school approach;
- be both culturally appropriate and inclusive of all pupils;
- ensure that young people's views are actively sought and listened to;
- be made relevant to pupils at each stage in their development and maturity
 - ☐ DfE Guidance May 2024 suggests direct reference to suicide should not be taught before Year 8 and explicit discussion of sexual activity should not be taught before Year 9
- be inclusive of difference: gender identity; sexual orientation; disability; diversity; ethnicity; culture; age; religion or belief or other life experience;
- promote equality in relationships, recognise and challenge gender inequality and reflect the different needs and experiences of all students;
- help pupils understand a range of views and beliefs about relationships and sex in society including some of the mixed messages about gender, sex and sexuality from different sources including the media;

- encourage pupils and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation.
- recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about relationships, sex and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents and pupils, consulting them about the content of programmes of study.
- recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

RSE contributes to:

- a positive ethos and environment for learning;
- safeguarding pupils (*Keeping Children Safe in Education*, DfE, 2024) promoting their emotional wellbeing, and improving their ability to achieve in school;
- a better understanding of diversity and inclusion, a reduction in gender-based and homophobic prejudice, bullying and violence and an understanding of the difference between consenting and exploitative relationships;
- helping pupils keep themselves safe from harm, both on and offline, enjoy their relationships and build confidence in accessing services if they need help and advice;
- reducing early sexual activity, teenage conceptions, sexually transmitted infections, sexual exploitation and abuse.

Adapted from *Sex and relationships education (SRE) for the 21st century*, 2014

4. The main elements and intended outcomes of RSE

Relationships and Sex Education has three main elements and the intended outcomes of the SRE programme for our pupils are:

Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral considerations;
- learning the value and significance of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children;
- learning the value of respect, love and care;
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making;

Personal and Social Skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- managing conflict;
- learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and Understanding

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;

- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay;
- understanding how the law applies to sexual relationships;
- understanding the responsibilities of parenthood.

(Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfE, 0116/2000)

5. How is RSE taught at NCS?

5.1 Factual elements of RSE are taught as part of the Science National Curriculum and lessons are delivered by staff within the science department. At key stages 3 and 4 this includes teaching about reproduction in humans, the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycles, gametes, fertilisation, gestation, birth and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV/AIDS.

These factual elements are also revisited and addressed within RSE / Personal, social, health and economic education (PD) at KS3. In these sessions emphasis is placed upon addressing the pupils' questions and concerns raised by the biological and psychological facts and changes, for example exploring the effect of puberty upon friendships and managing feelings and emotions associated with those experiences.

Some issues relevant to RSE, and perspectives upon those issues, are also explored within the subject of Philosophy and Ethics (P & E). In P & E we look at gender stereotypes; challenging discrimination with regard to same sex relationships; homophobia; sexism and misogyny. P&E teaching is concerned with the development of critical thinking skills which are needed to make informed and rational decisions (see *Attitudes and Values* section 4).

5.2 Other aspects of RSE are embedded within the wider framework and context of PD at KS3 and KS4. RSE lessons are delivered as part of a planned PD programme of study in each year group and cover a wide range of topics such as healthy and unhealthy relationships; equality; respect; gender identity; rights; consent; sexting; grooming; responsibilities to others; male sexual / reproductive health e.g. testicular and prostate cancer; negotiation and communication skills; accessing services and support.

5.3 The Pastoral Team team deliver RSE lessons with support from the Head of PD, other specialists and/or professionals where appropriate. Some teachers may need support and/or training to overcome any anxieties or embarrassment to deliver the programme sensitively and effectively. The personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers should not influence the teaching of relationships and sex education within the PD framework. More experienced or specialist teachers will support staff who may be uncomfortable with, or lack confidence in, teaching certain aspects of the curriculum. The Head of PD will assist with the planning or delivery of lessons as required.

Staff are supported in their teaching by detailed schemes of work which are available on Office 365. The RSE programme is taught through a range of teaching methods and interactive activities. Teaching materials, images and resources used to support the teaching of RSE are designed to be appropriate and differentiated in order to take into account the needs, age, emotional maturity, religious and cultural backgrounds of the pupils. High quality resources (approved by the PD Association) are used to support the provision and are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Strategies are employed during lessons to allow time for review and reflection so that pupils are able to consolidate their own learning. Assessment is carried out at the end of selected modules and involves

teacher, pupil and peer assessment and evaluation of knowledge and understanding, personal and social skills and attitudes to demonstrate progress made.

5.4 Teachers and all those contributing to the teaching of RSE will be expected to work within the principles and values framework as set out in this policy.

“Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics).”

(Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, DfE, June 2019).

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some pupils may find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons, ground rules and clear parameters should be established for the group. When pupils ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly and factually, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development or maturity of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

5.5. Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which develops an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a student making a disclosure. If a pupil makes a personal disclosure it should be made clear to the student that the teacher cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. If a teacher has concerns about a pupil, or feels that the student is ‘vulnerable’ or ‘at risk’, then they should follow the school’s safeguarding procedures. (See *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, NCS).

5.6 The delivery of the RSE programme is monitored and evaluated by the teacher i/c of Personal Development. In order to maintain relevance and quality of the programme the i/c PD works closely with the Pastoral Heads of Key Stage and the senior management team to listen to, identify and respond to the student voice and the specific needs or requirements for each year group / key stage.

6. Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

We will ensure that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is inclusive and meets the needs of all our students to ensure accessibility. RSE aims to support all pupils in helping to understand their physical and emotional development and in enabling them to make positive choices and decisions about their lives. RSE teaching will ensure that lesson content is delivered to all pupils in a sensitive, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate manner. The PD teaching team delivering RSE work closely with the SEND team in order to ensure that all students can access the curriculum.

“Schools should be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education and RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some pupils; for example those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities.”

(Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, DfE, June 2019)

Some pupils may need support and guidance to develop skills to reduce the risks of possible exploitation and to develop an understanding of what sorts of behaviour are acceptable and appropriate. NCS aims

to “...welcome, nurture and empower pupils with SEND and to support them fully as they make the transition into adult life.” (*SEND Policy, NCS*)

7. Sexual orientation and gender identity

The RSE programme of study ensures that the needs of all pupils are met in a sensitive and respectful manner and that teaching (as with all RSE teaching) is delivered with reference to the law. “Pupils should be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way.” (*Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, DfE, June 2019*).

It is recognised that pupils may be at different stages in discovering and understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity, and therefore must feel that RSE is relevant to their needs. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) content will be integral to the programme. Teachers will endeavour to answer appropriate questions honestly and sensitively (see also section 5.4).

The policy sets out an expectation that staff will not promote, either directly or indirectly, any particular viewpoint of a standard or ‘norm’ concerning sexual orientation. There should be equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy relationships of all genders and sexualities.

May DfE 2024 Guidance on Gender Identity

School will follow this guidance:

The concept of gender identity should not be taught, but the facts about biological sex and gender reassignment will still be taught

8. Working with parents and the rights of parents

8.1 The teaching of certain aspects of relationships and sex education may be of concern to some parents. They may need to be made aware that the RSE education programme is intended to complement and support their role as parents/carers. Parents may need to be reassured that effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. The aim of RSE is to teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.

A letter is sent out to parents/carers from the i/c PD prior to the commencement of RSE lessons in years 7 and 8 detailing the purpose and proposed content of lessons; the approach used to deliver the programme; the possible concerns of parents and how to address those concerns and the right of withdrawal from lessons. In addition there is an opportunity for parents to view the materials and resources used in the teaching of RSE and PD during Open Evening.

8.2 Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE, up to and until three terms before the child turns sixteen. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents are required to outline their reasons for withdrawal in a written request as such applications have to be formally recorded by the Head teacher. Before granting any such request the Head teacher or i/c PD will discuss the request with the parent and, as appropriate, with the pupil, to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed and updated every twelve months to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of students, staff and parents and that it is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance. The next review date will be Oct. 2024.