

COGNITA



Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Updated September 2024

Introduction

We aim to provide children with the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active and responsible citizens. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a core part of this development and forms a part of our wider Curriculum provision. By providing children with an understanding of healthy and respectful relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider effective RSE to be a fundamental part of our approach to supporting pupils to grow into confident, caring, responsible and respectful young citizens.

RSE is taught alongside the PSHE area of learning. In addition, some aspects of the RSE programme will be covered through:

- Science curriculum
- Computing
- Circle times
- Assemblies
- Class Stories
- PE in the context of health and hygiene

RSE is lifelong learning about personal, physical, moral and emotional development. It should teach children and young people to develop and form positive values, attitudes, personal and social skills, and increase their knowledge and understanding of how to make informed decisions and life choices.

Statutory requirements

Our policy follows the statutory guidance given by the Welsh government and meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards/BSO Standards/Estyn Standards. Aspects of RSE are infused within the day to day operation of our school; incorporated through the curriculum, both in content included in subject schemes of work and through other planned learning opportunities in the school. They are captured in our written aims and expressed in the ethos and behaviours of everyone.

In Wales we follow the Relationships and Sex Education Code. At Oakleigh House School, Swansea, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

Aims of our RSE Curriculum

Our RSE curriculum is part of our PSHE area of the curriculum and as a mandatory subject has a stand alone overview and is set out as per Appendix 1, however, this will be adapted when necessary. We have developed the curriculum taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an age appropriate manner so they are fully informed and do not seek answers online. There are 3 National elements that the RSE curriculum is based on. These are;

- Relationships and identity
- Sexual health and wellbeing (*at a developmentally appropriate level*)
- Empowerment, safety and respect

Vision for our RSE Curriculum

The vision for Relationships, Sexuality Education at our school consists of 10 key aspects that we aim to promote and develop with our pupils. This is to:

- Provide a consistent standard of relationships, sexuality and health education across the school
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Promote responsible behaviour; including both online and offline behaviours
- Create a positive culture of communication around issues of relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Give pupils an understanding of reproduction and sexual development
- To provide all pupils with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to make positive and healthy choices concerning relationships as they grow up and deal with risk.
- Combat exploitation and violence/abuse against Women and Men alike

Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

- Review – The PSHE Lead reviewed all relevant information, including but not limited to, relevant national and local guidance.
- The policy was drafted in accordance with statutory guidance and aligned with the Independent School Regulations.
- Staff consultation – school staff were given the opportunity to review the policy and make recommendations.
- Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was published.
- Policy review – This policy will be reviewed in July 2025.

Roles & Responsibilities

PSHE Lead Teacher

The person with responsibility for the overview and yearly evaluation of this policy is Cheryl Wanless. However, all staff are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and acted on.

When evaluating the use and impact of this policy, our school leaders will evaluate the extent to which there is evidence of a curriculum which:

- Fulfils the aims of the school;
- Embeds aspiration, attributes and the expectation to achieve high standards and high rates of progress; and
- Provides engagement and excitement for learning.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory components of RSE (see section 8).

The Chair of Governors

The Chair of Governors (Director of Education) will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Chair of Governors will ensure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes;
- the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned;
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with ALN;
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn; and,
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way;
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE;
- Monitoring progress;
- Responding to the needs of individual students; and
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher.

The PSHE lead will be responsible for ensuring range of coverage across the classes. Class teachers will be responsible for the delivery of the PSHE and RSE curriculum.

Staff are responsible for teaching RSE.

Developmentally Appropriate Teaching

Welsh Government requires that the RSE provided must be 'developmentally appropriate' for learners. Therefore, within our school, we will always take account of a range of factors such as the learner's age, knowledge and maturity and any additional learning needs. RSE needs to be developmentally appropriate for each learner. The age of learners should be one of the criteria by which teachers decide upon the appropriateness of content; however, there will be other factors they will need to consider when planning for this element of the Curriculum.

Factors such as the physical and mental and emotional development of learners should also be taken into account. This is essential to ensuring learners are kept safe from information for which they are not sufficiently mature to process. This, however, should not be a reason for not providing children with the essential information they need as they develop physically, mentally and emotionally; developmentally appropriate RSE requires the coverage of subjects that are integral to learners' development.

Planning and resources are adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, this can involve one to one sessions with vulnerable pupils or those with ALN.

Delivery of RSE Curriculum

Our Relationships and Sexuality Education programme will be delivered in a sensitive manner by class teachers. Teaching is normally taught in mixed gender groups, though some content is covered in single sex groups e.g. menstrual hygiene, single sex question sessions, etc.

We aim to provide a learning atmosphere where children feel safe and relaxed, and where they feel confident to engage in discussions around potentially sensitive subjects and themes. Ground rules in class and across the school are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter and teaching RSE. Clear ground rules are established in partnership with the class, then reinforced at the start of each relevant lesson.

As a minimum, ground rules are likely to include the following basic guidelines:

- Listen politely to each other
- Everyone gets a turn to speak, if they want to
- Everyone has a right not to speak
- Everyone's contribution is respected
- We don't ask or have to answer any personal questions
- We use anatomically correct language when we have learnt it

Pupil's questions will be dealt with honestly and sensitively and in an age appropriate way. In KS2 classes, a question box will be available for pupils to ask anonymous questions. If staff are faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, techniques such as distancing, the use of a question box, or creating a time to talk to a child individually will be used. Children may also be signposted back to parents/carers and the teacher will contact the parents/carers to give a context to the conversations that have been held in class. If needed the school can provide additional support links to external agencies or resources that can better support Pupils and their families.

The monitoring and evaluation of delivery of RSE within our school is overseen by the PSHE lead overseen by the headteacher.

If any questions raise safeguarding concerns, teachers will refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Since RSE 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 including the playground. It is important then that all staff understand they have a responsibility to implement this policy and promote the aims of the school at any time they are dealing with children.

Whole School Organisation of RSE within our School

Our RSE curriculum will support and build on each learner's knowledge, skills and values in appropriate ways throughout their development and create safe and empowering environments which build on learners' experiences both within and beyond the educational setting providing positive alternatives to some learners' experiences.

Set out below are the key principles regarding how RSE is organised and embedded at our School:

- RSE is part of a whole-school approach and effectively integrated and coordinated across the curriculum.
- RSE will be interdisciplinary and cross-curricular in its approach to content, knowledge and understanding and in the way it is explored. RSE is a broad and complex area that includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions that evolve over the lifespan.
- All practitioners contribute to the school's RSE priorities and professional learning is a key requirement for delivery of high quality RSE.
- RSE will always be delivered in a way that is inclusive. This helps ensure that all learners can see themselves, their families, their communities and each other reflected across the curriculum and can learn to value difference and diversity as a source of strength. This contributes to a cohesive, fair and equitable society that equips learners with skills for life.
- Provision draws on specialist services and expertise, and we engage with local communities. Our curriculum will always be mindful of the different perspectives and backgrounds within our local community.
- Our approach to RSE will be protective and preventative, considering how learners might need to be supported to:
 - understand and cope with change, conflicts and pressure;
 - have the knowledge to recognise discrimination and violence, including Violence against Women and Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence;
 - seek help and advice where appropriate.
- The teaching of RSE will respond to and be respectful of the lived experiences of learners. The approach to RSE involves recurring themes and topics which reinforce and build on the learners' developing understanding and changing needs and encourages learners to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Practitioners recognise learners' social, physical, emotional and cognitive development and needs, as well as their evolving knowledge and experience.
- Progression in RSE is a continuous process aiming to improve overall learner well-being and safety. As learners progress, they will build on previous learning: consolidating and strengthening the same dispositions; knowledge and skills and applying them in new, relevant contexts.

Confidentiality

Teachers conduct RSE lessons (or lessons that incorporate RSE principles) in a sensitive manner. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse or exploitation. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw these to the attention of the designated person responsible for child protection as a matter of urgency. Disclosure of female genital mutilation must be reported to the police (either by the teacher to whom it is disclosed or by the DSL). Legally, the school cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. We aim to ensure that pupils' best interests are maintained and try to encourage pupils to talk to their parents or carers to provide support. If confidentiality has to be broken, pupils are informed first and then supported by the designated teacher throughout the whole process.

Equality and Diversity

Schools, like all public institutions, have specific responsibilities in relation to equality and protected characteristics. Planning and resources are reviewed to ensure they comply with equalities legislation and the school's equal opportunities policy. All RSE is taught without bias and in line with legal responsibilities such as those contained within the Equality Act (2010). Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect others that may have different opinions.

The personal beliefs and attitudes of staff delivering RSE will not influence the teaching of the subject in school. In our school we seek to recognise and embrace the diverse nature of our community. We aim to value and celebrate religious, ethnic and cultural diversity as part of modern Britain. We will explore different cultural beliefs and values and encourage activities that challenge stereotypes and discrimination and present children with accurate information based on the law. We will use a range of teaching materials and resources that reflect the diversity of our community and encourage a sense of inclusiveness. We do not use RSE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation.

Monitoring & Review

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Senior Management Team through, for example, planning scrutinies, learning walks and lesson observations. Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

RSE will be monitored and evaluated, in line with all AoLE areas within the school, as part of our annual MER cycle. This policy will be reviewed on a 2 year cycle and approved by the Governing body in line with statutory guidance.

Parents' right to withdraw

If parents require more information on RSE for primary aged children, this is a useful information source of information for them:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907638/RSE_primary_schools_guide_for_parents.pdf

As an independent school, parents do have the right to withdraw their child from all or some aspects of RSE. However since this is an extremely important part of the curriculum, we would ask parents to have a discussion with us to clarify any concerns they may have and discuss how this can be addressed in a way best suited for their child.

Appendix 1 - Content of RSE at our School

Our Curriculum for RSE develops progressively as Pupils move from Nursery to Year 6. Our aim is to promote and deliver an RSE curriculum that is developmentally appropriate to the Pupils within the class. The table below highlights the concepts and topics that are covered within the various Year groups across the school;

Year Group	Topics Covered
<p>Nursery And Preschool</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Their own self-identify including goals and dreams ● Understanding feelings including those of others ● Being part of a community (incl. Class Community) and the area they live in, celebrating the diversity that is found there. ● Relationships – including families and friends and dealing with bullying; and the importance of personal safety. ● The importance of keeping a healthy body and the importance that healthy food, sleep and exercise can have on maintaining a healthy lifestyle. ● Growing and changing and how this affects them at a personal level.
<p>Reception</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Their own self-identify including goals and dreams and an early understanding of their rights and responsibilities ● Understanding feelings including those of others ● Being part of a community (incl. Class Community) and the area they live in, celebrating the diversity that is found there. ● Relationships – including families and friends and dealing with bullying; and the importance of personal safety. ● The importance of keeping a healthy body and the importance that healthy food, sleep and exercise can have on maintaining a healthy lifestyle. ● Growing and changing and how this affects them at a personal level.
<p>Year 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Being part of a community (both local and school) and understanding the importance of rules. ● Developing an understanding of feeling special and safe; incl. rights and responsibilities. ● Consequences for actions, as well as rewards ● Similarities and differences between people and celebrating this diversity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive Relationships – including friendships, family, working with others and people who help us ● Setting goals and taking on new challenges, including overcoming obstacles ● Healthy lifestyle choices and the importance of keeping safe and clean. ● Linking growing and learning and the changes associated with this
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploring rights and responsibilities and how these affect the choices that we make ● Family, relationships and feelings, identifying how these are different or similar to their own ● Assumptions and stereotypes (incl. Gender) and standing up for others; including dealing with bullying. ● Team work and group co-operation ● Making healthier choices in life and how this includes healthy eating & snacks, including balanced diets. ● Beginning to understand in basic terms the changes that occur within their own bodies (growing), and recognising that these are different for different genders.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rules, Rights and responsibilities; including rewards and consequences where these are not followed ● Families and how these differ for everyone; including family conflict (tackling stereotypes) ● Friendships and bullying; understanding how to solve it ● Managing feelings, including understanding how words can be hurtful, as well as giving and receiving compliments. ● The importance of healthy living, including exercise and healthy eating. ● Understanding dangerous substances to our bodies, making safe choices. ● Changes to their bodies.
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Their own hopes and dreams and holding a positive attitude ● Being part of a wider community; school, community, class team ● Rights, responsibilities and democracy (having a voice) and how this impacts on our everyday life. ● Importance of making decisions and choices, and the rewards and consequences of doing this. ● Accepting self and others; challenging assumptions and judging by appearance. ● Understanding bullying and how this impacts on a person. ● Healthy relationships and importance of values/resisting peer pressure; including love and loss, memories of loved ones ● Identifying what impacts on a healthy lifestyle; including the effects of alcohol and smoking ● The ongoing changes in their bodies including early puberty and accepting change
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Importance of being a citizen; identifying rights and responsibilities and associated rewards and consequences. Also exploring democracy. ● Cultural differences, enjoying and respecting other cultures but also how this can be used to cause conflict; racism ● Effects of bullying and the various types of bullying that exist;

	<p>including rumours and name calling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goals and dreams and the importance of jobs and careers in supporting living. ● The factors that can impact on maintaining a healthy body/lifestyle; alcohol, antisocial behaviour, smoking (including vaping) ● Building their own self-esteem and self-worth, including the impact of social media and online screen time on body image and ● Understanding the impact of grooming online and the importance of staying SMART online ● The changes in their body as they get older including puberty and coping with change.
Year 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Global citizenship and the place of children’s universal rights including the Importance of democracy and having a voice. ● Choices, consequences and rewards; including feeling welcomed and valued. ● The importance of role modelling, and discouraging anti-social behaviour. ● What makes us unique including challenging perceptions of ‘normality’ and understanding disabilities. ● Understanding bullying and the importance of inclusion both in school and wider world. ● Making a difference in the world, and knowing how this is often achieved through voluntary work and charitable causes. ● How substances can affect the body and taking personal responsibility for actions that affect us. ● Exploitation of people. ● Promoting own mental health and managing stress; particularly around transition. ● Relationships that have an impact on us including; love and loss, power and control, assertiveness and identifying sources of support. ● Importance of staying safe online and taking responsibility when using technology; including the area of sexting. ● Aspects of maintaining a healthy body and changes that occur as you grow up; including puberty, conception to birth, Physical attraction, respect and consent.