



RIPPLEVALE
SCHOOL

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Date of issue: 15.06.2023

Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review Date: June 2024

Ripplevale School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In

particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values:

Ripplevale School provides a caring learning environment where our students make meaningful progress, relative to their individual starting points. Our aim is to encourage them to develop appropriate personal, social and employable skills enabling them to become confident, independent and aspiring young people

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Ripplevale School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

The school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR
- Peninsula BusinessSafe (Health and Safety)
- Atlantic Data (DBS)
- Educare (online CPD)

Ripplevale School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Ripplevale School.

The policy documents of Ripplevale School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

This policy was rewritten in June 2023. It replaces the previous Relationships and Sex Education Policy (15/3/22). Changes/additions are highlighted in grey font.

1 Purpose and policy scope

Relationships and Sex Education is a statutory provision as set out in the Department for Education (DfE) document *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers* (2019). This provision made RSE compulsory in all secondary schools from 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic caused some interruption or delay to the implementation of RSE in some settings. Since 2020, there have been regular updates from DfE regarding RSE and the changing landscape of modern society. New guidance has been introduced around sexting, up skirting, changes to the marriage laws, and the provision of content within RSE (particularly regarding the sharing of syllabus documents and lesson materials with parents).

This policy sets out the School's philosophy and approach to delivering RSE within the context of a special school for pupils with ASD and other associated diagnoses. The policy considers the regulations and guidance contained within the DfE document referenced above.

1.1 Background

In 2021 Dave Parsons was given the role of PSHE/RSE Lead and given the task of ensuring that the provision of these two inter-linked subjects was delivered in line with guidance and also in the most effective manner within the special school setting. Having consulted the available government guidance, summarised and cross-checked it against current practice, and having joined the PSHE Association and consulted their guidance and followed similar processes of summarising and cross-checking, a meeting between the PSHE/RSE Lead and SLT took the decision to move PSHE/RSE away from being a tutor-led subject delivered in morning tutor periods to become a fully-timetabled provision delivered by specified members of staff using a widely-used and respected commercial PSHE/RSE resource: Jigsaw PSHE. PSHE was timetabled for 90-minutes per week for all School students – primary and secondary – which exceeds the minimum provision stated in the guidance. RSE is included within the secondary provision of PSHE and is built into the Jigsaw PSHE programme of study. RSE is not included in the primary provision. In primary students receive Relationships Education (RE). (There is occasionally confusion with the term “RE”, as this has traditionally been the abbreviation of Religious Education. Throughout this document RE refers to Relationships Education, unless otherwise explicitly stated.)

All parents were included in the decision to change the way in which PSHE and RSE are delivered and their opinions were canvassed, in line with statutory requirements. Parents are kept “in the

loop” via bi-annual PSHE newsletters, and other all-parent/carer communications as and when the need arises. In June 2023, Jigsaw PSHE – the school’s chosen platform for one-stop PSHE schemes of work and materials – launched their parent portal, in response to the government’s call for greater access for parents to RSE materials – to ensure full transparency about what is included in the teaching within specific schools.

PSHE and RSE are under constant review and the subject lead and teachers consult regularly and adapt the provision accordingly.

2 Responsibilities

The RSE Lead (within the role of PSHE Lead) is Dave Parsons.

The School’s SMSC provision is overseen by Jamie Lovett (SLT).

PSHE/RSE/RE is currently delivered by four teaching staff from primary to post-16.

2.1 Key responsibilities - people

2.1.1 RSE lead

1. Overseeing the implementation of RSE in accordance with government guidance.
2. Keeping abreast of updates and current best practice with regard to government guidance on RSE and of best practice and advice issued by industry bodies such as the PSHE Association.
3. Supporting the RSE teaching staff and helping to formulate the programmes of study by adapting and adding to those included in the bought-in Jigsaw PSHE package.
4. Ensuring there are appropriate and up-to-date policies and procedures regarding RSE.
5. Ensuring that provision includes appropriate assessment.
6. Observing lessons.
7. Conducting meetings with staff to ensure continuous review and best practice.
8. Assessing CPD needs with regard to RSE and arranging training as necessary.
9. Liaising with other staff to ensure appropriate cross-curricular provision, particularly tying in opportunities for further discussion of RSE within other lesson contexts, as SMSC exemplars and within the science curriculum (for the biological aspects of sex education).
10. Liaising with parents and carers to ensure that parental views are considered, including producing a PSHE/RSE newsletter for parents and carers at least twice a year.
11. Ensuring that procedures and controls for opting out of RSE are understood and followed by all parties involved in that process.
12. Auditing and evaluating current RSE practice to identify strengths and areas for improvement as part of a continuous review cycle.

2.1.2 RSE teachers

1. Delivering the agreed programmes of study across the School from year 7 to Post-16.
2. Keeping up-to-date with current research, legislation and trends regarding RSE.
3. Working with the School RSE lead to ensure that practice is in line with current legislation.
4. Assessing pupil progress in RSE through agreed formative and summative assessment strategies.

5. Formulating the School approach to RSE through dialogue with all stakeholders and implementing adaptations and improvements as agreed in a continuous review cycle.

2.1.3 Other staff

1. Contributing to the development of RSE policies, curriculum and resources as appropriate and when required.
2. Being aware of RSE and its importance as part of the School curriculum.

2.1.4 Parents and carers

1. Contributing to the provision of RSE through consultation.
2. Contributing to the provision of RSE at home and through engagement with the School.
3. Receiving and responding to the PSHE/RSE newsletters when and if necessary.
4. Being aware of the procedure for opting out of RSE in secondary provision (see below).

2.2 Key responsibilities - systems

2.2.1 Compliance

1. The School will ensure that the provision of RSE for secondary school pupils is in line with the statutory guidance currently set out in *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers* (DfE: 2019).
2. The School will ensure that any changes or updates to this guidance are followed and built into the provision of RSE.
3. There is a continuous review cycle in operation for RSE to ensure that all stakeholders can contribute to providing the best possible provision.
4. Part of the continuous review cycle incorporates the consultation of parents, carers and students to ensure that all voices are included in this process in line with guidance for schools about parental engagement in *Parental Engagement on Relationships Education* (GovUK:2019)
5. Within the statutory guidance, the School will ensure that specific duties such as posting this policy on the School website, making copies available on request, making clear procedures for opting out are all carried out in a timely fashion and appropriately maintained.

2.2.2 Key points from DfE guidance 2019

1. RSE is compulsory for all students in secondary provision with the possibility of opting out under specific circumstances (see below).
2. Content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate (DfE, 2019:4)
3. One of the main aims of the RSE curriculum is to provide pupils with the knowledge they need of the law (in this area) (Ibid.)
4. Wellbeing is a central strand (Ibid.). The School provides wellbeing support to all students and staff on request but also has wellbeing as part of its timetabled interventions for those who have had a need identified.
5. RSE programmes complement, and do not duplicate, content covered in national curriculum subjects such as citizenship, science, computing and PE (DfE, 2019:9) – cross-curricular provision is encouraged but should not duplicate, communication is the key.
6. A written policy for Relationships Education (RE) (separate policy) and RSE (this policy) must be produced with parent consultation (DfE, 2019:11).

7. The policy must be made available to parents and on the school website (Ibid.).
8. That RSE allows young people to clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they make (DfE, 2019:13) The DfE have highlighted the need for clear understanding of the Equalities Act, Protected Characteristics and core British Values.
9. Schools should provide parents with examples of the resources they plan to use (Ibid.). The government recently issued a directive requiring schools to allow parents/carers access to their syllabus, schemes of work and materials for RSE. In our case, this is facilitated through the recent (June 2023) launch of Jigsaw PSHE's "parent portal". In addition to the parent portal, the RSE lead published a "special newsletter" to clearly demonstrate to parents how the RSE syllabus is arrived at and how they can access the parent portal and to give an understanding of the fact that even though materials may be provided through Jigsaw PSHE, this does not mean that they are not adapted or replaced by other materials that the RSE(PSHE) teaching staff and lead feel are more relevant or suitable to the Ripplevale students. These adapted or non-Jigsaw PSHE materials are also available to parents on request.
10. In special schools there may be a need to tailor content to met the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages (DfE, 2019:15). We are currently using the nationally recognised Jigsaw PSHE programmes of study but are adapting and adding to these using bespoke materials and other resources from sources such as the PSHE Association, National Online Safety and NSPCC, for example. See 9 above.
11. At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT+, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson (Ibid.). In other words, the curriculum should be mindful of protected characteristics as specified in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010. LGBT+ should be part and parcel of a variety of lessons that centre around relationship choices, British Values and interacting with society in general.
12. Alongside understanding the importance of self-respect and self-worth, pupils should develop personal attributes including honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice (DfE, 2019:20).
13. Students should know what a healthy relationship looks like, what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage within the multiple range of contexts available; about contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (DfE, 2019:25). See 11 above.
14. RSE should provide clear progression from what is taught in primary school in Relationships Education, at the appropriate time extending teaching to include intimate relationships (Ibid.). Jigsaw PSHE provides programmes of study at primary level (RE) and secondary level (RSE) using a spiral curriculum model to ensure revisiting topics at more detail as students progress through the School.
15. RSE must provide the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way (DfE, 2019:26).
16. Opportunities to explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships should be integrated rather than addressed separately or in only one lesson (Ibid.) C.f. 11 above re. the Equality Act 2010.
17. RSE should include information on the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy (Ibid.).

2.2.3 What a student should know by the end of secondary with regard to RSE

1. Pupils should know and continue to develop knowledge on topic specified for primary (DfE, 2019:27). In addition, pupils should know about:
2. Different types of relationships.
3. How relationships contribute to human happiness.
4. What marriage is and the legal rights that accompany marriage. Including the recent change to the law that changed the age of consent to 18 for all marriages – taking away the option of marrying at 16 with parental permission.
5. Why marriage is an important relationship choice.
6. The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
7. The roles and responsibilities of parents and the characteristics of successful parenting.
8. How to determine whether a person is trustworthy; to judge when a relationship is unsafe; how to seek help and how to report concerns.
9. The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships.
10. Practical steps to improve or support respectful relationships.
11. How stereotypes can cause damage.
12. How and why to expect to treat and be treated with respect.
13. Bullying. See 18 below.
14. Behaviour within relationships that is criminal, violent and/or coercive.
15. Sexual harassment and sexual violence.
16. Equality.
17. Responsibilities and opportunities online.
18. Online risks. The digital landscape changes very rapidly and RSE (PSHE) – in combination with other subjects, particularly ICT – have a duty to ensure that pupils are aware of the risks associated with the use of technology: including current debates around AI and the positive and negative impacts that this technology may have.
19. Sharing (or not) personal material.
20. Where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
21. Harmful content. See 18 above.
22. Explicit material.
23. Indecent images and criminal offences related to them.
24. How information and data is generated.
25. Concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, honour-based violence. FGM.
26. Consent.
27. Characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships.
28. How health can be affected by choices.
29. Reproductive health.
30. Identifying and managing sexual pressure.
31. The choice to delay sex.
32. Contraceptive choices.
33. Facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.
34. Choices in relation to pregnancy.
35. Sexually transmitted infections.
36. Alcohol and drugs.
37. Confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment (DfE, 2019:27-29)
38. Some of these aspects will be covered in other subjects such as IT and Science (see 2.2.2.5 above). Some of them will be adapted for the particular context of a school for students with ASD and associated diagnoses (see 2.2.2.2 and 2.2.2.10 above).

2.3 Opting out

1. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request it would be good practice for the head teacher to discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Schools will want to document this process to ensure a record is kept (DfE, 2019:17-45). The steps to introduce resources like the parent portal are designed to make informed decisions regarding the content of RSE (PSHE) lessons.
2. Good practice is also likely to include the head teacher discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. (ibid.,46).
3. Except in exceptional circumstances (sic.), the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms (DfE, 2019:18-47).
4. The process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account (Ibid., 48).
5. A pupil cannot be withdrawn from sex education that is part of the science curriculum.
6. 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 (Ibid., 50).

3 Summary

RSE is an important statutory provision. The School:

1. Uses the Jigsaw PSHE programme of study as a basic resource and adapts these resources to fit the specific context of a school for students with ASD and associated diagnoses. Materials are available for parents/carers to access.
2. The School follows the DfE guidance on what to provide within the RSE curriculum and follows the suggested best practice for decision making and curriculum design and delivery.
3. All stakeholders are involved in consultation and review processes.
4. There is a continuous review process for RSE.
5. There is a procedure for parents to request withdrawal of their child from RSE.
6. There is an expectation that progress in RSE is tracked and transmitted to students. A bespoke lesson tracking form is used which incorporates Bloom's Cognitive and Affective Domains to assess lessons and pupil engagement, achievement and progress.