

Whitnash Primary School
'Learning, growing and succeeding together'

Relationship and Sex Education Policy



Schools are awaiting a government review of the current RSHE statutory requirements, made statutory in September 2020. In the absence of the review, we have been advised to continue to follow the current guidance.

Introduction:

1. This policy covers our school's approach to Relationship and Sex education, not only in lessons but through the attitude of our staff and pupils alike, our ethos and approach and commitment to equality both within and outside of the classroom.
2. It will be reviewed annually to ensure that it reflects the attitudes and belief of the school population and remains up to date with both current guidance from Government and the DfES but also remains relevant to the experiences of our pupils.
3. To ensure its use, this policy will be available for staff and to Parents on our website. Staff will also be given a guidance document with relevant detail for the teaching and learning aspects of this subject.
4. This policy reflects our schools overarching aims and objectives for our pupils as set out in our vision statement

'In partnership with our families and the wider community we are committed to ensuring that all members of our school feel safe, included and valued. With a strong school ethos focused on the promotion of positive values, high academic expectations and robust provision for social and emotional aspects of learning we aim to foster and nurture personal resilience to enable all members of our school to thrive and achieve.

Through the provision of an enriched and relevant curriculum we aim to inspire and motivate all members of our school to learn, grow and succeed as reflective, resilient, curious confident and resourceful members of society.'

5. We recognise that as a school we have a legal responsibility under The Relationships Education, Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 & 35 of the Children & Social Work Act 2017, to provide comprehensive Relationship Education and Health Education for all pupils receiving primary education.
6. We acknowledge that in order for children to embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. We understand that high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help.
7. As part of the Education Act 2002/Academies Act 2010 all schools must provide a balanced and broad-based curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, whilst also preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.
8. We recognise that we have a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure the best for all pupils irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, maternity, religion, sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children. As a result RSE needs to be sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and may need to adapt and change as the pupils of the school change. Not only does the teaching need to be sensitive of these needs, but also to help the pupils realise the nature and consequences of

discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours or prejudice-based language.

9. Whilst as a school we are aware we need to be mindful of and respectful to a wide variety of faith and cultural beliefs, and we will make every attempt to be appropriately sensitive; equally it is essential that young people still have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. This must include clear, impartial scientific and factual information on matters such as naming their body parts, puberty, menstruation, the variety of family structures, gender identity, and gender equality. Furthermore, all teaching should reflect the law as it applies to relationships, marriage, adoption and care.
10. We acknowledge that all young people deserve the right to honest, open and factual information to help better form their own beliefs and values, free from bias, judgement or subjective personal beliefs of those who teach them.

Defining Comprehensive Relationship Education:

11. The Department for Education defines relationship education as, teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships and relationships with other peers and adults. However, we believe comprehensive relationship education is designed to help children to develop the skills to recognise and manage healthy relationships both online and in the real world. It is designed to build self-esteem and to explore personal identity. It is about helping children understand and make sense of the world they are growing up in; to recognise the differences and similarities between their peers and their families; to understand the fact every human being is unique and has the right to be respected. There are many different family structures and **all children have the right to feel safe.**
12. Comprehensive relationship education has been shown to help keep children safe by allowing them to understand appropriate and inappropriate touching, and to realise that their body belongs to them. It is about building the foundations of an understanding of consent and personal boundaries; in that no one has the right to touch you in a way you don't like but also the difference between public and private behaviours.
13. It is important for children to know the names and functions of their body and to be reassured it is natural to be curious about them. Indeed, by teaching children the correct terms for their private parts, children are proven to be safer from abuse.
14. In addition we believe comprehensive relationship education helps children to develop their vocabulary and emotional literacy to enable them to talk about and manage their feelings. It helps children build their own support networks and the confidence to ask for help when they feel unsafe. This is a required element of the Health Education Guidance.

Defining Sex Education at Primary School:

15. Although The Relationships Education, Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made Relationship Education compulsory in all primary schools, Sex education is currently **not** compulsory. However, the Department for Education continues to recommend that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and maturity of the pupils. As set out in the guidance it is up to individual schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. We like many other schools already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so.
16. We recognise that some parents may be uncomfortable with the thought of their children receiving sex education in primary school. Equally, we recognise it is completely natural for children to have questions about sex, their bodies and to be curious about where they came from. In the age of information where children in primary school have access to the internet through mobile technology, we believe it is better that children receive age-appropriate answers from us than it being left to their peers or the internet.
17. In our school sex education is an opportunity to answer children's healthy questions about where they came from, an opportunity to explore their own stories and to be clear about how a baby is conceived and formed as set out in human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science. Furthermore, it should ensure that all children are prepared for both the physical and emotional changes of puberty including menstruation. Children need to understand how both girls and boy's bodies function and change as they grow into adults.
18. We believe that Sex education should allow children a safe space to ask the questions they may have without shame or judgement. Evidence states that a graduated age-appropriate spiral curriculum is the best way of preventing the topic of sex, reproduction and private body parts of becoming taboo and children from becoming embarrassed by the topic.
19. We believe it is the duty of our school to give our young people the learning that will enable them to live safe, fulfilled and healthy lives. This includes ensuring that they have the skills to keep themselves safe from harm and develop positive and healthy relationships - free from exploitation pressure or abuse.

Subject Content:

20. In school we meet the learning objectives as set out in the Relationships Education, Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 for primary schools with a whole school approach. Across all year groups we deliver a comprehensive PSHE scheme of work and the My Feelings, Friends and Family materials (described in more detail later in this policy). To supplement this we also hold an annual 'Well-being month' which focusses on areas such as anti-bullying, Protective behaviours, Mental Health and personal safety (e.g. road safety, fire safety etc.) We also have an annual e-safety week.
21. We believe it is important that this material is delivered by the classroom teacher as it highlight to the children that relationship and sex education is something we can all talk about. Our classroom teachers cover all other aspects of the curriculum, we believe it is important that all staff are able to deliver this material to their class also. Furthermore, our classroom teachers know our children. This means they are more likely to be aware of any additional needs, support or particularly sensitive topics that may make a child in their form vulnerable due to some of the sensitive nature of the topic. We believe this makes them ideally placed to deliver the material sensitively to all children in their class.

22. Protective Behaviours:

Protective Behaviours is a practical and down to earth approach to personal safety. It is a process which encourages self-empowerment and brings with it the skills to avoid being victimised. This is achieved by helping children recognise and trust their intuitive feelings (Early Warning Signs) and to develop strategies for self-protection. The protective Behaviours Process encourages an adventurous approach to life which satisfies the need for fun and excitement without violence and fear.

Theme 1: We all have the right to feel safe all the time.

Theme 2: we can talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small.

Protective Behaviours using a Rights and Responsibility approach, and encourages children to recognise their Early Warning Signs (EWS) and develop their own support networks of safe adults who they can share their worries with. It is delivered across the entire school from Reception to year 6 in the autumn term. There are four lessons in each year group. Lessons are delivered over 2-4 weeks. (See guidance document for further detail)

23. My feelings, friends and Family

The My Feelings, Friends and Family (MFFF) is programme of resources designed by Going off the Rails: GOTR SRE Consultancy Limited. It is an evidence based programme of Comprehensive Relationship & Sex Education based on good practice.

MFFF is designed on a spiral curriculum and based on a values and human rights approach. It is built on the premise that it is much better to drip feed positive messages and have little conversations, to ensure that children will feel prepared for the changes of puberty and for the challenges of moving on to high school.

We deliver the programme through a series of lessons in the Summer Term. MFFF is designed to review and reinforce all of the key messages from Protective Behaviours, allowing children to refresh their support networks and build on previous learning. We deliver Protective Behaviours in the Autumn term and MFFF in the Summer Term, allowing us to book-end the year, giving out key messages designed to keep children safe.

MFFF is evidence based using the latest research and guidance including UNESCO *“International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach”* (2018) and the Sex Education Forums: *12 Key Points for Good Quality RSE* (2018). As well as incorporating the NSPCC Pants rule and learning from Running Rutgers Spring Fever programme and the AIM Programme around working with children who display Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB).

The lesson ‘Mummy’s Bump’ in year one is the only ‘sex education lesson’ in the KS1 programme. Whilst it is not a core requirement of the statutory guidance for Relationship Education, we believe it is an essential lesson. This lesson is designed in a specific way which means that it is pupil-led and we shape the lesson to fit what the class is ready for.

In the KS2 section of the programme there are only two lessons highlighted ‘*Where do I come from?*’ in year 3 and ‘*Puberty: What I have heard about Sex*’ in year 6; as with the Ks1 programme, these lessons are designed in a specific way which means that they are pupil-led and shaped to fit what the class is ready for.

The lessons described above help to support the requirements for Maintained schools to teach about the main external body parts and changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age as part of the National Curriculum for science. However, under the current guidance these two lessons are not statutory. However, we would still recommend that children take part as we believe they are essential lessons.

We believe that by tackling children’s questions around sex as part of a wider programme focused around relationships, family, self-awareness, emotional literacy, consent and personal boundaries, children will feel better able to engage in discussion and ask questions without embarrassment. Equally, tackling sex and reproduction in this way helps to promote positive messages and values around sex as well as children’s relationship with their own bodies without shame or guilt and will develop respect for other people’s body autonomy.

We do not separate our classes into girls and boys for any part of the programme, including lessons around puberty. We believe it is important for both girls and boys to learn about each other’s bodies, changes and experiences. That by keeping children together in mixed groups, children will learn to talk openly without embarrassment in front of each other and we can foster better understanding, break down gender stereotypes and build positive relationships and respect for each other, regardless of gender. This ensures that any non-binary or transgender children are not forced to ‘pick-a-side’ and have equal access and can feel included without feeling vulnerable.

24. Answering Children's Questions:

We are aware that children are likely to have many questions that may pop out at any time. Children tend to ask whatever is on their mind. We see this as a positive point and a sign that we have created a safe environment where children feel empowered to feed their natural curiosity and learn about themselves, their bodies and the world around them. However, we acknowledge that some parents may feel uncomfortable about how particular questions may be dealt with in class.

We believe children are better off receiving honest, open answers from safe adults in their lives, rather than it being left to the internet or older children with a smart phone. In the age of information, where children in primary have access to tablets, smart phones and the internet (often unsupervised) it is essential that we help children to recognise they are able to ask questions without judgement rather than searching for answers on the internet.

By tackling the topic in a matter of fact manner, without embarrassment means that we take the mystic allure out of the topic - making sex no longer the secret taboo, you have to sneak around trying to find out about - and instead something we can talk about at the dinner table. However uncomfortable a proposition that may be it is far better than the alternative. For children these questions are not rude, they are simply signs of a healthy and natural curiosity. We can stop the topic becoming taboo and embarrassing and removing the stigma before it has had chance to form.

We believe that if children ask a question they deserve an answer. The replies: *"you are too young to know"*, or *"I think you would be better off asking your parent"* are not sufficient; instead they merely build unnecessary barriers, making children think they have done something wrong. They are unlikely to ask again, and are instead left to seek their answers from less reliable or child friendly sources, due to shame. However, uncomfortable the question may be, the thought is already in their head - it is much better us as safe adults take responsibility and tackle the question safely and age appropriately.

Answering questions will be done consistently across the school and is set out in the guidance document.

25. Parents and parental rights to withdraw:

We believe that successful teaching around RSE can only take place when parents and school work together. Especially, considering we both want children to grow up safe and happy in healthy relationships, with the ability to manage their emotions and speak up when they feel unsafe. Therefore, we are committed to working together with parents.

We endeavour to be transparent and give parents information about all the programmes and lessons we deliver around RSE as we recognise it can be a sensitive subject for some families for a number of reasons.

Before, any lessons that could be described as sex education are delivered we will send home a letter to parents to inform them of the dates the lessons will be delivered, If parents have any concerns, special circumstances we should be aware of, or would like any further information we will encourage them to make an appointment to speak to Mrs. Ellison and/or the class teacher as appropriate.

We recognise under the new DfE guidance for Relationship Education, Relationship & Sex education and Health Education (DfE 2019), parents retain the right to request their child is removed from some or all of the elements of sex education which go beyond the national curriculum for science. Maintained schools are required to teach about the main external body parts and changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age, including puberty. **There is no right to withdraw from the national curriculum.**

In the KS1 programme parents can choose to opt their child out of only the lesson *Mummy's Bump*, which sits in the year one programme under the My Relationships subject heading. All other lessons in the KS1 programme are statutory under the new guidance.

In the KS2 programme, parents can choose to opt out of two lessons, one in the year three programme: *"Where did I come from"* and one in the year six programme: *"Puberty: What I've heard about Sex"*. All other lessons are mandatory.

Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these three lessons, we would ask that they first speak to their classroom teacher to discuss their concerns. Our teachers will happily show parents all the teaching material and context of any of our lessons and explain the reasons why any material is included in the programme. This will also highlight that whilst parents have the right to withdraw their child from these lessons, they do not have the right to withdraw other children from receiving these lessons. We believe it is better for children to hear from safe adults than to hear second hand from their class-mates at break-time.

If parents do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the head who will find other provision for the child to engage in during the lesson. Currently, head teachers must comply with requests to withdraw from any non-statutory lessons in the programme.

For further information regarding menstruation, please see the guidance document.

26. Monitoring & Evaluation:

We monitor the children's work through evidence of learning uploaded onto the PHSE Padlet. In addition, as a school, we ensure staff feel confident to deliver relationship and sex education by providing opportunities for discussion with the PSHE lead (E.Brown) before the content is taught.

27. Safeguarding Children:

When teaching any sensitive topic, such as RSE which deals with family life, safe and appropriate touching, personal body parts and healthy relationships, we recognise the potential to uncover incidents of abuse through children's disclosures.

All members of staff who deliver any of our Relationship or Sex Education Programme, have statutory training around safeguarding children and are all aware of our school's safeguarding policy and procedures in the case of a disclosure or suspicion of a safeguarding concern.

We recognise that for children who may be vulnerable due to past, or present abuse, or changes in family situations this type of work, whilst it may be sensitive, and there may be needs to adapt the programme or offer additional support, it is also a protective factor in preventing further abuse, to help them make sense of their experiences and essential to help them develop skills and resilience to keep them safe in future.

For further detail regarding content and approaches, please see the guidance document.

Date: March 2026

Review date: March 2027

Further national guidance expected in this academic year.