



# Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

River Bank Primary School

2021

As a primary school we must provide relationships education to all children as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017 and the government's statutory requirements from September 2020.

### **Definition**

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. Through RSE children learn about healthy relationships, different families, respect, love and care, reproduction, puberty, hygiene, the body, sex, sexuality and sexual health.

### **Why we deliver RSE**

At River Bank we are building the foundations of skills and knowledge that will be developed further at secondary level. Our key aim in providing RSE throughout the school is to safeguard our pupils. During their time at this school, children will learn key knowledge and skills to help keep them safe and prepare them for adult life.

### **Aims**

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare children for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help children develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach children the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

### **Policy development**

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, the governing body and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps.

1. Review – the RSE lead teacher will pull together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties are invited to give their views about the policy (May 2021).
5. Ratification – once amendments are made, the policy will be shared again with governors and ratified.

### **Curriculum**

Our curriculum is set on our school website, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, children and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of children. Teachers will do their best to answer all questions with sensitivity and care.

By the end of Key Stage 2, we ensure that both boys and girls know how their bodies change during puberty, what menstruation is and how it affects women. We always teach this with due regard for the emotional development of the children.

If children ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so pupils are fully informed and do not seek answers online. Children will be encouraged to discuss any unanswered questions at home with parents/carers.

River Bank Primary sex education will focus on:

- How a baby is conceived and born.

### **Delivery of RSE**

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in the computing and physical education (PE) curriculum. Girl's in year 5 receive a standalone curriculum session which focuses on menstruation. Children in Year 6 receive standalone curriculum sessions which focus on sexual education.

Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe
- Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings
- How a baby is conceived and born
- Sexual education in year 5 and 6 will be taught in gender groups.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **The governing body**

The governing body will approve the RSE policy, and hold the head teacher to account for its implementation.

#### **The head teacher**

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw children from non-statutory components of RSE.

## **Staff**

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual children
- Responding appropriately to children 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 head teacher. Class teachers are responsible for teaching RSE at River Bank Primary School. Class teachers are responsible for the delivery of sex education lessons.

## **Confidentiality**


Teachers conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. 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 a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. In these circumstances the teacher will talk to the child as a matter of urgency following protocols laid down in the safeguarding policy. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw their concerns to the attention of the Head teacher. The Head teacher will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals. (See also Safeguarding Policy.)

## **Children**

Children are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

## **Parents**

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's sex education lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective, we:

- Inform parents about the school's sex education policy and practice
  - Answer any questions that parents may have about the sex education of their child
  - Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for sex education in the school.
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## **Parents' right to withdraw**

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE. As a school we classify sexual intercourse as the act in which a baby could be conceived. If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from this part of the programme, they should discuss this with the Head teacher, and make it clear which aspects they do not wish their child to participate in. The school always complies with the wishes of parents in this regard. Parents are required to confirm this in writing. Alternative work will be given to children who are withdrawn from sex education. It will then be the responsibility of the parent to deliver this learning to their child before they begin secondary education.

## **Training**

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. The head teacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE where required.

## **Monitoring arrangements**

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Oli Cresswell, PSHE lead, through a range of methods including learning walks and pupil perceptions. Children's development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. This policy will be reviewed by Governing Body annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Body.

### **1. What is the difference between relationships education and sex education?**

*Relationships education is teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.*

*This starts with children being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. From the beginning of primary school, building on early education, children are taught how to take turns; how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect; the importance of honesty and truthfulness; permission seeking and giving; and the concept of personal privacy. Establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical contact – these are the forerunners of teaching about consent. The principles of positive relationships also apply online especially as, by the end of primary school, many children will already be using the internet.*

*Sex education ensures that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science – how a baby is conceived and born.*

### **2. Does school encourage marriage? I believe this is the most stable way to live.**

*Marriage between two loving adults is very much recognised within relationships education along with other relationships which people decide upon. Relationship education does not focus on one particular narrative but gives factual unbiased information which allows for children to make their own informed choices in adulthood.*

### **3. When will my child be taught pornography?**

*Pornography is not mentioned during the primary stage as it is not age appropriate. When discussed, not taught, with young adults the focus is on the dangers of addiction, the harmful effects pornography can have on future adult relationships in terms of expectations versus reality and the negative portrayal of women.*

### **3. Can I withdraw my child from lessons?**

*The new legislation brought in through the Children and Social Work Act 2017 will bring about some important changes in relation to parental rights to withdraw children from school RSE:*

- *Parents will not be able to withdraw their child from relationships education in primary school or secondary school.*
- *Parents will be able to withdraw their child from primary school classes which address sex education - i.e. those that do not sit within the Relationships Education curriculum.*
- *Maintained primary schools are required to teach National Curriculum science, which includes some elements of sex education. Parents do not have a right to withdraw from this.*
- *If you wish to withdraw your child from the non-statutory elements you can arrange an appointment with your school to discuss this.*

### **4. Don't children learn anything else in PSHE other than sex?**

*The PSHE curriculum is extremely broad and covers many other topics such as:*

- *Financial capabilities*
- *Emotional and mental wellbeing*
- *Health eating*
- *Physical activity*
- *Gangs and knife crime*
- *Citizenship*
- *The Law*

*Relationships and sex education consists of approximately 3 lessons per year.*

### **5. I believe that a family should be a man and a woman. How does this match up with what is taught in schools?**

*In schools we teach that families are made up in many different forms and can include, for example: single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, and foster parents/carers amongst other structures. The most important element of any family group is that it provides a nurturing environment for children.*



**6. Everyone in my child's class is Muslim and feels the same as me. Shouldn't this be reflected in what is taught?**

*The RSE curriculum fully supports the Luton Council values of embracing equality and diversity, cohesion and inclusion whilst showing respect for others. The guiding principles being that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents while always with the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law.*

**7. My child is too young to learn about sex - I believe that RSE will sexualise my child – how can school prevent this?**

*There is a myth that talking or learning about sex and relationships sexualises children and young people. There is strong evidence (Kirby 2007, UNESCO 2009, NICE 2010) that comprehensive relationships and sex education actually delays the initiation of sex, reduces the number of sexual partners and increases the use of condoms and contraception in adulthood. There is no evidence that RSE hastens the first experience of sex.*

**8. I teach my child that being gay is wrong in our culture. Surely school should respect this?**

*Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against people 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). To undermine the rights of one of the protective characteristics is to undermine the rights of them all. Relationship education nurtures tolerance allowing children to grow up to be respectful of people who are different.*

**9. It is my job to teach my child about sex and relationships – you are taking away my right to bring up my child within my values.**

*The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.*

*All schools will work closely with parents when planning and delivering these subjects. Schools will ensure that parents know what will be taught and when, for example, by inviting parents into school to discuss what will be taught, address any concerns and help support parents in managing conversations with their children on these issues and keeping children safe.*

**10. Teaching children about sex just encourages it – I don't want my child to know about adult matters so young.**

*Primary RSE does not teach children about sex. It educates children on the importance of loving respectful relationships along with biological information regarding how the body changes during puberty and conception.*

**11. Why does my child have to know about homosexuality?**

*Everyone in Britain is protected by the Equality Act 2010. This act protects people against discrimination because of the protected characteristics.*

*Relationship education prepares children for adulthood in modern Britain, teaching respect for other people's human rights and tolerance of those that are different from themselves. This includes respecting people from different religions, different ethnic backgrounds as well as people of different sexuality.*

**12. How will teaching about RSE keep my child safe on the internet?**

*Children are taught the rules and principles for keeping safe online. This includes how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues. Some children are exposed to harmful behaviours online, and via other forms of media, which may normalise violent sexual behaviours. A focus on healthy relationships and broader Relationships Education can help young people understand acceptable behaviours in relationships.*

**13. Surely learning about homosexuality and transgender issues is going to encourage my child to consider this as an option for themselves.**

*Raising awareness around LGBT issues does not encourage or teach children to become homosexual or transgender. It does however teach tolerance and respect for others. It can also provide support and comfort to those who may be homosexual or transgender or have family members or friends that belong to this group.*