Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

And Health Education



This policy was adopted in: ……………………………………….….. September 2020

This policy was reviewed in consultation with parents in:………….. November 2023

This policy is due for review in ………………………………………. .November 2024

Signed: …………………………………………………………………………………..

This RSE policy should be read in conjunction with (but not limited to) PSHE and Citizenship Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Inclusion Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Equality Policy

This Policy has been written following the introduction of statutory Relationships Education in primary schools and RSE in all secondary schools (along with statutory Health Education at all key stages)

Introduction

This policy covers our school’s approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). It was produced by the PSHE lead in consultation with teaching staff and a final consultation with a federation school. The policy will be available to parents through the schools website and paper copy can be made available by written request. Revised statutory guidance from the Department of Education states, as from September 2020 all schools must deliver relationship education.

Definition

Relationships Education at Thingwall Primary School aims to teach about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, including relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Some aspects are taught through the science curriculum and others through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). We recognise and celebrate the many different families at Thingwall, we aim to educate our children to recognise loving and caring relationships.

The Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DFEE 2000) states RSE is: ‘lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity.’

RSE at Thingwall

We are committed to promoting a safe and healthy lifestyle. Relationships and Sex Education is not regarded as a subject in its own right, but it is part of a carefully planned element in PSHE and Citizenship education. Effective Relationships and Sex Education needs to be taught in an atmosphere of trust, responsibility and respect where sensitive issues can be discussed without embarrassment or threat.

In teaching Relationships Education and RSE, the school ensures that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Our RSE policy is an integral part of our whole school PSHE education provision. It is delivered through the Jigsaw scheme of work. Please see the published curriculum map Appendix 1.

Curriculum and Subject Content: Jigsaw

There are four main aims for teaching RSE within the context of the primary School PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education):

* To enable young people to understand and respect their bodies, and be able to cope with the changes puberty brings, without fear or confusion
* To help young people develop positive and healthy relationships appropriate to their age, development etc. (respect for self and others)
* To support young people to have positive self-esteem and body image, and to understand the influence and pressures around them
* To empower them to be safe and safeguarded

The ‘Changing Me’ unit is taught over a period of 6 weeks in the second half of the summer term. Each year group will be taught appropriate to their age and developmental stage. All lessons are taught using simple child friendly language and pictures, which help children understand changes more effectively.

The relationship aspect of RSE is developed through our Religious Education Curriculum where the themes Ourselves, All About Me and I’m Special are explored throughout the Key Stages. RSE is also taught through the science curriculum as standalone lessons, or integrated into other topics such as animals including humans at a level appropriate to the need and maturity of the pupils. Discrete topics including puberty and reproduction are explicitly timetabled. Year 5 and Year 6 are supported by delivering puberty talks to same sex groups.

Teachers are sensitive to the issues of different types of relationships; promoting inclusion and challenging discrimination are part of RSE throughout the school and reflect our equality policy. When teaching about relationships and families we also include same sex relationships. Homophobic and transphobic references and homophobic and transphobic actions and bullying are not tolerated in school and are challenged and dealt with as part of our commitment to promoting inclusion, gender equality and preventing bullying.

Teaching about different families is part of RSE. At Thingwall Primary we aim to reflect the broad range of experiences amongst pupils and ensure all pupils feel their family is valued. This includes single parent families; divorced parents; parents who are married, parents who are not married, lesbian, gay, gender fluid, gender neutral, transgender or bisexual parents; children living between two homes; in foster homes; in residential homes and living with relations other than biological parents. We will emphasise the importance of strong and supportive relationships, including marriage (both heterosexual and gay) and civil partnerships, for family life and bringing up children.Teachers do not discuss details of their personal relationships with pupils.

RSE in practice

* We take into account different learning styles in line with our Teaching and Learning Policy and tailor our learning programme accordingly.
* Active learning is most effective when pupils are working in groups. Methods include circle time, case studies and discussion groups.
* The programme is taught through a range of teaching methods, including poems, posters, stories, assemblies and visitors.
* We follow the guidelines for Equal Opportunities as stated in the PSHE policy.
* We set ground rules at the start of a lesson to reduce anxieties and embarrassment when discussing such issues as puberty. For example “No one (teacher or pupil) will have to answer a personal or embarrassing question. Only the correct names for body parts will be used. Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.
* We can use distancing techniques with role play to help pupils act out situations with invented characters to help pupils discuss sensitive issues and develop their decision-making skills in a safe environment.
* If necessary teachers also need to feel able to ask the child to wait for an answer to give them time to consult with the school’s leadership team. (For instance: ‘That is a really interesting question and I need a little time to think because I want to give you a really good answer.’)
* It is important that children feel able to ask any questions that they wish and that their questions are valued. We will allow children to raise questions and will use an “Ask It Basket” system in each class. Children can ask questions by writing questions and posting them in the box. This gives the teacher time to prepare for what the children want to know about mostly.
* Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting;
* If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupils of the ground rules and /or refer her or him to the appropriate person.
* If a question is too explicit, is inappropriate for the whole class or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In some cases this may result in talking to the parents of the child.
* If a teacher is concerned about sexual abuse, they should follow the school’s safeguarding procedures.

Who teaches RSE?

RSE is taught by the class teacher. Health professionals including the school nurse and other visitors may help deliver aspects of RSE. The class teacher will remain present and a copy of the RSE policy provided.

Why teach RSE at primary school?

* High quality RSE helps create safe school communities in which pupils can grow, learn, and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life.
* Children and young people want to be prepared for the physical and emotional changes they undergo at puberty, and young people want to learn about relationships.
* RSE plays a vital part in meeting schools’ safeguarding obligations.
* Ofsted is clear that schools must have a preventative programme that enables pupils to learn about safety and risks in relationships.
* Schools maintain a statutory obligation under the Children Act (2004) to promote their pupils’ wellbeing, and under the Education Act (1996) to prepare children and young people for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

A comprehensive RSE programme can have a positive impact on pupils’ health and wellbeing and their ability to achieve, and can play a crucial part in meeting these obligations.

Accessibility

We recognise and respect pupils’ different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example their own sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture, (which may depending on their age and maturity not be something they have yet considered) the sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture of their immediate family, close friends and wider community. We ensure that all young people have equal access to our PSHE curriculum. At Thingwall, as is expected in all schools our teaching reflects the law including the Equality Act 2010 as it applies to relationships.

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all pupils. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupil because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief. Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practise when planning for these subjects. When needed RSE is differentiated through resources, individual support or small group work. (See SEN policy)

Working with 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 RSE policy and practice via our school website.
* 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 RSE in the school;
* Inform parents about the best practice known with regard to RSE, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home.
* By providing materials from the scheme of work for parents when discussing RSE with their children.

We believe that through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing responsibilities.

Whenever more sensitive or specific aspects of this work are covered it is important to notify parents and carers. Many are comfortable with the school taking the lead on planned learning, but want to be prepared to answer their children’s subsequent questions or simply talk together about their children’s learning. We will notify parents when particular aspects of sex and relationships education will be taught.

Lessons are sensitive to a range of views but ensure pupils have access to the learning needed to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. This includes clear, impartial scientific information as well as covering the law. It also covers the concept of, and legislation relating to equality.

Rights of parents clarified and explanation of the right to withdraw

Thingwall Primary School works closely with parents when planning and delivering PSHE and RSE, the school ensures parents are aware of what will be taught and when, and clearly communicates the fact that parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education that go beyond the statutory curriculum for Science.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education programme that we teach in our school. If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from sex education lessons, they should discuss this with the head teacher. The head teacher will discuss the request with the parent and as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. School will document this process to ensure a record is kept. The head teacher will also discuss with the parents the benefits of receiving this important education:

* RSE in PSHE will echo the statutory learning about reproduction in science. It will concentrate on teaching children how to enjoy healthy, appropriate relationships, improve self-esteem and self-confidence and make healthy informed choices.
* Experienced and sensitive teaching staff will teach your child in a progressive and developmental way that is grounded in research- this avoids any confusing or mislead information shared by peers later on.

Including the schools statutory duty to:

•  Safeguard and promote the welfare of children

•  Advance the 2010 Equality Act

•  Encourage the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

•  Foster British values and prepare children and young people for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

After these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances the school will respect the parents request to withdraw. This process is the same for children with SEND, however the head may want to take a pupils specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. The head teacher will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered other than as part of the science curriculum. If a pupil is excused from sex education the child will receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

Materials and Resources (Scheme provides)

Resources and materials are assessed to ensure that they are appropriate for the age and maturity of the pupils. When consulting with parents, examples of resources can be provided to reassure and enable parents to continue conversations started in the classroom at home. Supportive materials are available on the school website published by the ‘jigsaw’ scheme.

Governors

Governing boards have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and should ensure that their school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children. As well as fulfilling their legal obligations the governing body also ensures that all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes. That subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned, teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND and the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation. Governors make sure that clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to withdraw and that subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

The role of the Head teacher

It is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our sex education policy and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the head teacher’s responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity. Staff are informed of any developments in key aspects of RSE, including links with safeguarding, inclusion, equality and child protection through weekly briefing, regular training, staff meetings and INSET days. The head teacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school’s RSE programme, and ensures that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy and that they work within this framework. The head teacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

The role of other members of the community

We encourage other valued members of the community to work with us to provide advice and support to the children with regard to health education. In particular, members of the Local Health Authority such as the school nurse and other health professionals, who give us valuable support with our sex education programme.

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 and concerns reported to the attention of the head teacher, DSL. The head teacher will then deal with the matter in consultation with other professionals. (See also Child Protection Policy.)

Monitoring and Assessment

Pupil understanding and progress is assessed through a variety of methods, including formative and summative processes. These include pre- and post-topic mind maps, floor books, drawings, task outcomes, questioning and observations. Teachers liaise with staff during transition meetings to reflect on topics covered throughout the academic year, they discuss/share comments with the teaching team and PSHE lead as part of the monitoring cycle. The RSE policy is reviewed taking into account feedback from teaching staff, pupils and parents.

Pupils’ progress in RSE is assessed within the science curriculum, PE curriculum and PSHE. We monitor regularly considering individual needs, maturity, age, ability and personal circumstances using pupil, staff and parent voice, learning walks and displays.

How the policy has been produced and how is it kept under review

This policy has been written using the statutory guidance from the Department for Education issued under Section 80A of the Education Act 2002.

The ‘Jigsaw; PSHE scheme of work has been referenced and supporting materials included as appendices/available via the school website.

The policy will be reviewed in light of any imminent changes to curriculum delivery, and every 2 years. The policy will be reviewed by the PSHE lead and approved by the governing body.