



**INSPIRE**

Connected Communities Trust

# **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy**



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## 1. Introduction

Relationships and Sex Education plays a vital role in the education of our learners and preparation for future life. The teaching of RSE is at the forefront of our daily practice, with precedence given to ensuring that our learners develop the skills to be able to manage their personal safety and the safety of others. We want our learners to feel happy and confident about themselves, their own bodies and their sexual nature as they progress through childhood, adolescence and towards adulthood. We promote a culture where RSE is discussed and celebrated, as it plays a central role in the preparation of our learners for life.

Our RSE programme is delivered as part of the Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education (PSHE) curriculum and is embedded in our broader commitment to promoting students' holistic development. The wider curriculum promotes emotional intelligence, respect for others, resilience, and empathy, while ensuring that all students feel a strong sense of belonging within our school community.

The curriculum is designed to meet statutory requirements set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, Education Act 1996, and other relevant legislation.

## 2. Aims

The aims of our RSE curriculum are to:

- Promote students' emotional, physical, and social well-being.
- Equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to make positive, healthy decisions regarding relationships, sexuality, and emotional well-being.
- Develop self-esteem, empathy, and respect for others, including understanding different family structures, relationships, and identities.
- Help students understand the emotional and physical changes they will experience during puberty and how to manage these changes in a healthy and responsible way.
- Enable students to understand their rights and responsibilities in relationships, including concepts like appropriate touch, boundaries, and consent.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

This policy has been produced in consultation with parents/carers, staff (including DSLs), governors and external professional support. The policy covers our approach to Relationships and Sex Education.

The Director of Education is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy. Where policy updates/amendments are required, they will collaborate with school leaders across Inspire Connected Communities Trust to ensure that best practice is consistently maintained in all schools.

Staff who deliver RSE will receive relevant training from identified organisations and consistent support from their line manager, seeking specialist advice and guidance where required.

#### 4. Legislation

"The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations...make Relationships and Sex Education compulsory for all learners receiving secondary education... They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools."

This policy is written in conjunction with government guidance. For further information related to the statutory guidance, please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

Please see Appendix 1 for more information on existing guidance that informs this policy. We include the statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education within our wider PSHE Programme.

The DfE Guidance (2021) integrates Relationships and Sex Education at secondary school level. Most of the DfE outcomes relating to Sex Education sit within the 'Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health' section of the guidance and include aspects like:

- the facts about reproductive health...
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices ...
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, are transmitted...
- how to get further advice...
- consent and the law

*DfE Guidance page 29.*

We agree with the Sex Education Forum definitions of Sex Education and Relationships Education:

"Sex education is learning about the physical, social, legal, and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual health."

"Relationships education is learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human relationships including friendships, intimate, sexual and committed relationships and family life. Relationships education supports children to be safe, happy and healthy in their interactions with others now and in the future."

*(Sex Education Forum, 2020)*

#### 5. Curriculum

Our RSE curriculum caters to the diverse needs of students by providing individualised learning pathways based on developmental stages and abilities between the ages of 3-19. These pathways ensure all students can access age-appropriate and inclusive content, promoting understanding of healthy relationships, personal boundaries, sexual health, and safety.

The RSE curriculum is delivered through a combination of whole-class lessons, small group discussions, assemblies and individual support where necessary. The content is structured to ensure it is age and stage appropriate, progressive, and inclusive. External agencies and visitors are invited to deliver sessions in school to further support this, e.g. NSPCC the Disability Nursing Team and the Police. We aim to 'live' what is learnt and apply learning within everyday contexts both inside and outside the school community.

### **Pre-formal Learners:**

For students with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) or severe learning difficulties (SLD), the focus is on sensory engagement and basic life skills. Topics include:

- Personal care and hygiene
- Respecting boundaries and understanding personal space
- Basic communication using symbols and sensory activities

### **Informal Learners:**

For students developing foundational RSE skills, the curriculum uses visual aids and structured learning to explore:

- Recognising and expressing emotions
- Healthy relationships (e.g., respect, kindness)
- Personal hygiene and safety
- Understanding boundaries and appropriate touch

### **Semi-formal Learners:**

For students working on more structured tasks, the focus is on self-regulation, resilience, and understanding healthy relationships. Key topics include:

- Managing change (e.g., puberty)
- Respecting personal boundaries
- Sexual health basics (e.g., privacy, consent)

### **Formal Learners:**

For students preparing for independent learning, the curriculum includes:

- Puberty and reproductive health
- Sexual health and safety (e.g., contraception, STIs)
- Consent and respectful relationships
- Sexual orientation and gender identity

These pathways ensure that all students, regardless of ability or developmental stage, receive an age-appropriate and inclusive RSE education that supports them in making informed decisions about relationships and personal safety.

### **Curriculum Content: EYFS, KS1, KS2 (Relationships Education)**

- Building Positive Relationships: Emphasis on kindness, empathy, respect, and communication.
- Family Diversity: Exploring different family structures and promoting inclusivity.
- Personal Safety and Hygiene: Developing awareness of personal hygiene and privacy.
- Recognising and Expressing Emotions: Developing emotional literacy and self-regulation.
- Respecting Boundaries and Appropriate Touch: Understanding personal space, consent, and how to respect others' physical and emotional boundaries.

### **Curriculum Content KS3, KS4, KS5 (Relationships and Sex Education)**

- Healthy Relationships: Focusing on respect, communication, and consent in relationships.
- Puberty and Reproductive Health: Detailed understanding of the physical and emotional changes of puberty, including menstruation and reproductive systems.
- Sexual Health and Safety: Information on contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and safe sexual practices.
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: Exploring the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities, promoting inclusivity and challenging stereotypes.
- Consent: Understanding the importance of consent in all forms of relationships.
- Online Safety and Relationships: Understanding the impact of technology on relationships, including the risks of sexting, cyberbullying, and maintaining privacy.

## **6. Safe and Effective Practice**

Teachers create a safe learning environment by establishing a group agreement using the PSHE Charter, which outlines everyone's rights and responsibilities (Appendix 2). This is referred to at the start of every lesson, so that a safe and calm environment is established prior to lesson delivery. Where applicable, teachers will employ distancing techniques, including role play, film clips and scenarios.

For learners who can ask questions but don't feel comfortable doing so in the group environment, as well as to aid understanding for all, an 'Ask it Basket' will be made available: Learners can post questions anonymously, which will enable their questions to be addressed in a group environment and for learning to be facilitated both through and with the other group members.

In line with DfE guidance, we aim to leave no question unanswered. We encourage learners to be curious and to feel confident to ask questions. Wherever possible, teachers will use their professional knowledge to answer questions in a factual and un-biased, yet sensitive manner. Questions of a particularly sensitive nature, or any that are left unanswered need to be addressed at an appropriate time, with the learners' understanding that this will happen.

It is the responsibility of the member of staff to seek guidance on how to best answer the question; they are advised to refer this initially to the PSHE & RSE Lead, except where the question is a potential safeguarding concern. In this instance, they should follow standard safeguarding procedures and inform the DSL by recording on CPOMs. Relevant support will be provided in a timely manner, which may include the involvement of parents/carers.

All learners are prepared for the delivery of RSE by careful advance planning, which includes identifying any learners who may be more vulnerable to certain topics evoking strong emotions; in these instances, the DSL and teacher will communicate regarding the planned content and agree on any adaptations or pre-learning required.

We ensure that teachers are supported in the delivery of RSE through staff meetings and collaboration with the PSHE & RSE Lead. The PSHE & RSE Lead is responsible for monitoring of the subject, as well as keeping up to date with training and sharing relevant information with staff. They work closely alongside the headteacher to ensure consistent high standards are maintained in the delivery of RSE across the school.

We recognise that some staff may feel uncomfortable teaching specific topics, due to personal circumstances and/or trauma. In such instances, staff are strongly encouraged to discuss their concerns with a senior leader, where appropriate support will be put in place.

The PSHE and RSE curriculum is monitored by the safeguarding team and staff are able to communicate concerns by recording on CPOMS.

## **7. Confidentiality**

There may be times when a child wishes to confide in a member of staff. Learners need to be made aware that school staff cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. The Child Protection Policy outlines areas of responsibility and referral procedures.

## **8. Parents and Carers**

We believe that RSE should be a partnership with parents and carers. Parents and carers will be routinely consulted through letters and provided with opportunities to see examples of the curriculum content and resources; staff will also be on hand to discuss any aspect of the RSE curriculum and how it is delivered to meet the needs of their child/children. A strong dialogue between staff and parents/carers promotes understanding about what is being taught and helps to reassure parents and carers that good RSE will give their children the knowledge, skills and confidence to make informed, safe choices throughout their lives. Parents and carers are encouraged to have ongoing conversations with their children about relationships and emotional well-being. All discussions between home and school will be approached with sensitivity and an awareness of the possibility of trauma experienced by any stakeholder.

Whilst we will always try to work with families to accommodate their wishes, we also accept that parents and carers can exercise their right to withdraw their child if they do not want them to take part in sex education. There is no parental right to withdraw from relationships education, as it is a mandatory subject. Puberty is also a statutory part of Health Education and therefore learners cannot be withdrawn from these lessons. Parents/carers can withdraw their child from part or all of sex education that is not part of the National Curriculum Statutory Science. They can do this up until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After that, it's the child's decision.

Should parents/carers wish to discuss withdrawing their child from any aspect/s of sex education, they are advised to communicate this in writing to the school. Upon receipt of

the letter, a member of staff will contact you to discuss the details and make further arrangements.

## **9. Monitoring and Review**

The governing body monitors this policy on an annual basis. This committee reports its findings and recommendations to the full governing body, as necessary, if the policy needs modification. The Trust gives serious consideration to any comments from parents about the RSE programme and makes a record of all such comments. Governors scrutinise and ratify teaching materials to check they are in accordance with the school's ethos.

Schools continuously assess the effectiveness of their RSE programme through:

- Ongoing assessments in line with the Assessment and Feedback Policy.
- Feedback from students, staff, and parents to improve content and delivery.
- Annual reviews of the curriculum to ensure it aligns with current best practices and statutory requirements.

## **10. Inclusion and SEND**

At Inspire Connected Communities Trust, we pride ourselves on our inclusive policy and on how we make provision for all learners' needs.

PSHE and specifically RSE are introduced and taught to meet all learners at their point of need, whilst remaining mindful of age-related expectations. Lessons and themes are adapted to ensure appropriate coverage to a range of individual needs. Themes are readdressed to consolidate learning or to support learning in other areas of the curriculum (e.g., LGBT+ History Month and Black History Month) or to address misconceptions or 'hot topics' to support knowledge and understanding for our learners.

Lessons are adapted to consider the needs of each individual learner and class. Teachers make use of their professional judgement and knowledge to personalise each lesson to their learners; examples of this include:

- The use of pre or post learning activities
- Using additional resources, such as concrete objects and pictorial representations
- Simplifying or extension of tasks
- Offering small group/ one-to-one support

## **11. Equality**

Inspire Connected Communities Trust promotes respect for all and values every individual learner, including those with protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010). All learners are given the opportunity to take part in the RSE programme, regardless of their gender, religion, ethnicity, or ability. We also respect the rights of our learners, their families, and our staff, to hold beliefs, religious or otherwise, and understand that sometimes these may be in tension with our approach to some aspects of RSE and Health Education.

## **12. Policy Review**

This policy is accessible via the school website. A hard copy can be requested by contacting the school office. Should parents/carers require further clarification or support in accessing any area of this policy, the school pastoral team will be available to meet either face to face or remotely.

This policy is reviewed annually.

## Appendix 1: Guidance

This programme's complimentary update policy ensures we are always using the most up-to-date teaching materials and that our teachers are well-supported.

Our PSHE policy is informed by existing DfE guidance:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool](#) (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#) (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between learners)
- [Equality Act 2010 and schools](#)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Alternative Provision](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (advice for schools, including advice on [cyberbullying](#))
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance](#) (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- [Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools](#) (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC))
- [SMSC requirements for independent schools](#) (guidance for independent schools on how they should support learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).

The PSHE Association Programmes of Study for PSHE and aligned to the definitions of Relationships and Sex Education offered by the Sex Education Forum (National Children's Bureau, April 2020).

## Appendix 2: PSHE Charter

Everyone has the right to...	Everyone has the responsibility to...
Participate or pass	Allow others to participate or pass
Listen and speak	Listen and allow others to speak
Privacy	Maintain privacy
An opinion	Respect difference of opinion
Learn	Allow others to learn

## **Appendix 3: Responses to Touching of Genitals and Masturbation**

### **Introduction**

We are fully aware that our young people are changing and growing, and our curriculum reflects the help and support required to tackle sensitive and spontaneous issues. Curiosity in one's own body is part of normal development, as is the touching of genitalia and masturbation, which are part of natural sexual behaviour. For many of our young people touching their genitalia may be a way of exploring their bodies, gaining sensory stimulation or enjoyment- this may occur in response to many different stimuli. Without information and support they may not fully understand what is happening when they touch their bodies or the different feelings they are experiencing. It is important for young people to learn social rules, as behaving inappropriately in public situations can put them at risk and increase their vulnerability.

Staff will work to reassure young people that for many it is a natural part of sexual fulfilment. They will not impose their own individual views regarding this behaviour and will work with our young people from an early stage adopting strategies which take account of an individual's needs and behaviours, meeting them at their point of need.

### **Responses to Touching of Genitals and Masturbation in School and During Associated School Activities**

Although this can be challenging, we feel that it essential to work with a young person as soon as such behaviours become apparent. In support of this, staff will use established methods for monitoring and assessment of behaviour. The overall aim will be to support our young people to learn about appropriate behaviours, privacy and hygiene. This will take place through teaching and learning about the concept of public and private and delivering consistent messages in relation to the subject matter and to incidents as they occur. Reinforcement of the fact there are no 'private' spaces within the school environment is maintained. The style of approach will vary according to the young person's age and stage of development and level of understanding. Home – school liaison will take place to develop an agreed action plan. All staff will be consistent in their approach and in the use of any agreed action plans which may include:

- The use of distracting techniques, designed around their preferred interests
- Encouraging other activities with the use of hands (e.g. sensory activities)
- Visual cues to show that it is a 'private time' activity
- Reinforcing that there are no private spaces in school
- Using symbols/ flashcards outlining unacceptable behaviour in school
- Not ignoring the behaviour, but also not drawing too much attention to it to prevent inadvertent behaviour reinforcement
- Positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviours
- Referrals for specialist help where appropriate
- 'Not here, not now'

### **Home– School Liaison**

In response to masturbation or persistent genital touching, staff will try to ensure that there is liaison between home and school as soon as behaviours become apparent. The aim of this will be for staff and parents to gain as full a picture as possible of a young person's behaviours in different environments. Through such links, we hope to ensure that there is support for parents/ carers, other family members and school staff in managing incidents both in and out of school. As part of the liaison process, an agreed action plan will be developed with the aim of establishing a consistent approach, meeting the learner at their point of need. This may include support to establish 'private time' within the home setting. Staff will continue to reinforce the fact there are no 'private' spaces within the school environment.

#### **Appendix 4: Safe Touch in School**

As well as becoming curious about their own body, it is also completely natural for young people to start to develop romantic feelings towards others. Learners will be taught what makes a healthy relationship. If a staff member has any worries or concerns regarding the safety, legality, or health of a relationship between learners, they will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and recording concerns on CPOMs.

The boundaries and expectations of what is appropriate/ inappropriate in terms of physical contact in school will be clearly communicated and a consistent message will be delivered across the school by all staff members. Occasions where contact may be permitted include times where learners seek to give or receive emotional support to one another.

#### **Appropriate behaviours include:**

- Offering a sideways hug
- A high five or a pat on the back to show encouragement/ support
- Holding hands during team- based/ circle activities

In these instances, learners will always be taught to seek consent before making physical contact with one another, as well as respecting boundaries when another learner says 'no'.

At Inspire Connected Communities Trust, we prioritise social development for our learners and relish every opportunity for them to practise the use of social skills. During more unstructured times, such as break and lunchtime, learners are encouraged to spend time and socialise with whoever they choose. To help to keep all learners safe, any learners who are in romantic relationships may not have physical contact with one another during the times of the school day.

#### **Inappropriate behaviours include:**

- Holding hands
- Hugging
- Arm around each other
- Kissing
- Touching of legs/ thighs
- Touching of genitals, buttocks or breasts (over or under clothes)
- Frottage (rubbing on each other)
- Any sexual act
- Any behaviour deemed inappropriate towards staff (see safeguarding policy)

If pupils are found to be displaying any of the above inappropriate behaviours, staff will follow the usual safeguarding procedures by reporting each incident according to the Safeguarding Policy and taking action relevant to the individual incident.