



# Great Dunmow School

## Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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## RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) Policy

### Rationale

One of our core aims is for all pupils to 'learn how to keep themselves safe, and build positive relationships with those around them' (see above). The RSE programme at our school is fundamental to enabling us to achieve this aim. We understand the importance of educating pupils about sex and relationships so they can make responsible and well-informed decisions in their lives. This is particularly important for our students who all have exhibited harmful behaviour or experienced abusive relationships, loss and personal trauma in the past.

'Sex and Relationship Education Guidance' (DfE) defines RSE as: "Learning about physical, moral and emotional development; understanding 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 health." At our school we teach RSE objectively, without prejudice and do not promote any form of sexual orientation.

Great Dunmow School takes pride in offering a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, catering for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. Personal, Social, health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) is central to this and is delivered as a discreet subject. The majority of RSE is taught in these lessons, supported and complemented by work in other subjects and through the ethos of the school as a whole.

### Aims and objectives

Our RSE programme is an opportunity for pupils to develop their understanding of:

- Relationships of all kinds including friendships, family, on-line and intimate relationships;
- Sex and sexuality;
- The importance of family life;
- The biological facts related to human growth and development, including reproduction;
- Recognising and forming positive personal identities;
- Empathy and their abilities to work with others;
- The interplay between relationships and mental wellbeing- including loss, separation, divorce and bereavement;
- Recognising and managing risks;
- Bullying;
- Knowing when and where to access help and support;
- The importance of healthy relationships and the characteristics of these.

Through our programme, pupils will practise and develop their personal, interpersonal and social skills; and explore, clarify and, sometimes, challenge their own and others' attitudes, values and beliefs and moral reasoning in relation to a range of issues.



## Content of RSE programme

The PSHE programme follows a curriculum to develop and embed key skills and knowledge over time. We follow the PSHE curriculum and subjects are covered through themes.

Themes covered are - = Difference and diversity- tolerance, equality, prejudice and stereotyping; Puberty, menstruation, masturbation and personal hygiene; Healthy relationships- keeping yourself safe from exploitation, coercion, peer pressure and gangs; Local and National Sexual Health agencies and services; On-line safety including youth-produced sexual imagery, and forming relationships on-line; Sexuality; Body image, body confidence and the media. Some aspects of RSE are also delivered through the theme of *Health and Wellbeing* such as Healthy relationships- sexual health and contraception, consent and sexual bullying. This is taught in conjunction with the clinical team and when appropriate for the young people due to history of trauma.

The Science programme follows the National Curriculum Programme for Study for Science. In Key Stage 3 pupils learn the scientific facts surrounding sexual reproduction, specifically they will develop knowledge and understanding about gametes, fertilisation, the male and female reproductive systems, sexual reproduction, puberty, the menstrual cycle, pregnancy and birth. Pupils will also learn about the legal age of consent, the emotional and health aspects of sex and discuss why it is sensible not to have sex until you are over the age of 16. In Key stage 4 pupils develop their knowledge further learning about DNA, mitosis, meiosis and genetic inheritance. Knowledge and understanding is embedded through additional work and discussion as part of the PSHE curriculum.

In addition to the planned schemes of work for PSHE and Science, the school participates in National Anti-Bullying Week every year.

The content of the RSE programme will be delivered through a variety of teaching methods, resources and interactive activities including cards sort, quizzes, discussion, debate, educational film clips, imaginary case studies or real events from the media. Visitors and organisations may also be invited into school to complement the programme.

## Creating a safe learning environment

Much of the content of this subject area touches on sensitive issues which may provoke strong emotional reactions including distress or embarrassment. Teachers create a climate of trust, cooperation and support.

The class establish Ground Rules that apply in all PSHE lessons. These rules refer to: respect; confidentiality and when this will be broken; thinking carefully before sharing personal information; the right to leave the room if necessary; the use of the correct language; and the right to decline to answer personal questions.



Distancing techniques will be used such as imaginary scenarios; discussing issues in the third person; discussing issues without using names.

Teachers will be conscious of expressing their own views and opinions and when they do so, will work within the school's values, policies and the law.

When an open learning environment has been created, pupils feel able to ask questions throughout the lesson. At times, pupils may ask difficult questions. These do not need to be answered immediately: it may be more appropriate to address them later once the teacher has had time to give careful consideration to the answer. Whenever possible age-appropriate factual answers will be given.

Consideration will also be given to the size and dynamics of the teaching group and who is best placed to deliver particular content.

### **The role of the multi-agency team**

Due to the particular needs and vulnerabilities of our students, we will liaise with the Clinical and Home teams to let them know our curriculum plans for each student in advance. This will allow them to advise teachers about any content that may cause a particular issue for any of the young people concerned, and alert them to the need to follow up any issues that might arise from lessons in school. In some circumstances it might be agreed to remove a pupil for particular content and to cover this in 1-1 sessions led by the therapist or key worker.

### **Diversity and inclusion**

We recognise that the pupils we teach are vulnerable to exploitation and to forming unhealthy relationships in the future. As a result of the sensitive nature of the subject content, and the specific needs of our pupils, certain aspects of RSE may be taught individually, or at the time agreed is most appropriate in discussion with Care and Therapy. Throughout the school day, every pupil has access to one-to-one support from a member of Education Team. Support for individual pupils will be provided through therapy, tutor support and key-work sessions.

We are sensitive to the range of religious and cultural views about sexual behaviour whilst still ensuring that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. We include clear, impartial scientific information on matters such as the changes of puberty, abortion and assisted conception, as well as covering the law in relation to, for example, forced-marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).

Our PSHE programme covers the concept of equality and the legislation relating to it. We recognise that as a school we have specific responsibilities in relation to equality and protected characteristics. Our RSE programme aims to foster gender and LGBT+ equality, challenge all forms of prejudice,



discrimination and bullying. We are respectful of how pupils choose to identify themselves, understanding that their sexual orientation and gender identity may be 'emerging'.

### **Right to be excused/ withdrawn from sex education**

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. This right does not apply to relationships education, health education or science.

Parents should make their request to the Headteacher. Before granting any such request the Headteacher will discuss the request with the child's parents, therapist, social worker and care team, and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. A record will be kept of this process along with the decisions made.

In this discussion, the Headteacher will ensure parents understand the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher.

Except in exceptional circumstances, the school will 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 will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. There may be exceptional circumstances where the Headteacher may take a pupil's specific special educational needs into account when making this decision.

### **Safeguarding and child protection**

Effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. The school Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures will be followed.

### **Statutory framework**

Great Dunmow School has due regard for *The Equality Act (2010)*; the (draft) statutory guidance *Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education (DfE, 2019)* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019)*.

### **MONITORING**

The RSE programme and policy are regularly evaluated and reviewed by the PSHE Lead. The views of pupils, parents, staff and governors are used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis.



## REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Executive Head.  
It will be due for review in September 2024.

## REFERENCES

Certain points discussed in this policy may be investigated in greater detail through referring to the following policies and documents listed below:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Framework for Mental Health and Wellbeing
- PSHE SOW
- The PSHE Education Association Programme of Study
- Education for a Connected World (DfE, 2018)