

# Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

## Hawthorn Primary School



**Approved by:** Teaching and Learning

**Last reviewed on:** June 2025

**Next review due by:** Sept 2027

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies, including Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, PSHE, Positive Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy, Confidentiality Policy and SMSC.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Section 80A of the Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- DfE (2013) 'Science programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2'
- DfE (2019) 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education'
- DfE (2021) 'Teaching about relationships, sex and health'
- [Updated] DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'

### **Statement of Intent**

At Hawthorn Primary School, we provide age-appropriate relationships and health education (RHE) to all pupils as part of the school's statutory curriculum. Our school aims to assure parents and pupils that all aspects of RHE will be delivered in a safe space, allowing time and compassion for questions at a level that every pupil understands. Sensitive topics relating to RHE will be delivered in a sensitive manner as part of a whole-school approach where parents and teachers work in partnership.

RHE is compulsory in all primary schools in England. The key topics applicable for all key stages have been carefully planned in consultation with responses from parents, young people, schools and experts. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss this policy at any time and staff will be provided with accurate training and further resources to deliver lessons to pupils.

We understand that pupils must be provided with an education that prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. A key part of this relates to relationships education, which is required to be delivered to every primary-aged pupil. Primary schools also have the option to decide whether pupils are taught sex education. Relationships education focusses on giving pupils the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships, and ensures can talk to a trusted adult if there is anything worrying them. Health education focusses on equipping pupils with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their own health and ensures they receive factual information about the changes they will experience emotionally and physically during puberty.

We understand our responsibility to deliver a high-quality, age-appropriate and evidence-based relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) for all our pupils. This policy sets out the framework for our RSHE curriculum, providing clarity on how it is informed, organised and delivered. Any sex education included within the curriculum consists of age-appropriate content which covers how babies are conceived and how they are born. Sex education does

not go above and beyond the focus of reproduction. State-funded primary schools are also required to teach health education.

*“We want all children to grow up healthy, happy, safe, and able to manage the challenges and opportunities of modern Britain.*

*These subjects are designed to equip your child with knowledge to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships as well as preparing them for a successful adult life. The world for all young people looks very different from the way it did 20 years ago when this curriculum was last updated – these changes bring the content into the 21st century, so that it is relevant for your child. Your child’s school will have flexibility to deliver the content in a way that is age and developmentally appropriate and sensitive to the needs and religious background of its pupils” DfE 2019*

### **Relationships Education**

*“Relationships Education will put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships, including with family, friends and online. Your child will be taught what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who can support them. In an age-appropriate way, your child’s school will cover how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect.” DfE 2019*

### **Why do we teach Relationships & Sex Education?**

The term relationships and sex education (RSE) is used in this policy rather than sex education. This is to stress that our approach goes beyond provision of biological information to focus on clarifying attitudes and values, and developing self-esteem and the skills to manage relationships.

Research has shown that young people who feel good about themselves, and are knowledgeable and confident about sex and relationships, are likely to be more discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviours and more likely to have fulfilling relationships.

By the end of primary school, pupils will have been taught content on:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

### **What is RSE?**

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human sexuality, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- Learning about a safe & healthy lifestyle based on accurate information.
- Learning about seeking appropriate help & advice.

### **Attitudes and values**

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.
- Learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision making.
- Learning to respect & value difference & diversity.

### **Personal and social skills**

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Learning to manage change.
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.
- Learning to make informed choices.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Managing conflict.
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

### **How RSE is provided at Hawthorn Primary School**

1. Within the taught, age appropriate, spiral RSE programme within PSHE & Science.
2. Through other curriculum areas delivering aspects (e.g. Drama, English/Literacy etc.)
3. Assemblies/ Collective Worship.
4. Pastoral support for pupils who experience difficulties (Please see Confidentiality Policy).
5. By the provision of appropriate information through leaflets and books.
6. Delivery in response to incidents.

### **Teaching Methods & Resources**

Continuity and progression will be generated through the adoption of a whole school approach to the planning and delivery of clearly defined and progressive learning objectives covering knowledge, skills and understanding.

RSE is conducted in a safe learning environment through the use of ground rules and distancing techniques so that pupils are not put on the spot or expected to discuss their own personal issues in class. For example:

- No one (teacher or pupil) should be expected to answer a personal question.
- No one will be forced to take part in a discussion.
- In most cases the correct names for body parts will be used in an age-appropriate manner.
- The meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.

Active learning methods, which involve children's full participation, will be used.

RSE takes place within mixed sex classes or single gender groups as deemed appropriate and relevant, with the pupils' usual class teacher. A visitor such as a school nurse may, at times, supplement the RSE curriculum as a planned event with the teacher present.

Teaching resources are selected on the basis of their appropriateness to pupils.

In most cases teachers will attempt to answer children's questions and concerns in a sensitive, age and development appropriate manner. Individual teachers will use their skill and discretion in these situations and if necessary refer to the Headteacher/ PSHE Coordinator for advice and support. Teachers will also follow the following guidance:

- Teachers will establish clear parameters about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class or group setting.
- If a child's question is inappropriate to address with the whole class the teacher should acknowledge the question and attend to it later on an individual basis.
- If a question is too personal the teacher should remind the pupils of the ground rules.
- Teachers will set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that pupils discuss issues in a way which encourages thoughtful participation.
- Pupils may have opportunities to write down questions anonymously and post them in a question box. The teacher will have time to prepare answers to questions before the next session, and can choose not to respond to any questions which are inappropriate to address in whole class lessons.
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse the Head teacher should be informed and the usual child protection procedures followed.

### Equal Opportunities

Children may have varying needs regarding RSE depending on their circumstances and background. The school strongly believes that all pupils should have access to RSE that is relevant to their particular needs. To achieve this, the school's approach to RSE will take account of:

- **The needs of boys as well as girls-** Girls tend to have a greater access to RSE than boys, both through the media (particularly magazines) and the home. We will consider the particular needs of boys, as well as girls, and approaches that will actively engage them. We shall also be proactive in combating sexism and sexist bullying.
- **Ethnic and cultural diversity** Different ethnic and cultural groups may have different attitudes to RSE. The school will consult pupils and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for, and understanding of, the views of different ethnic and cultural groups.
- **Varying home backgrounds** We recognise that our pupils may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. We shall take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.
- **Sexuality** On average, about 10% of our pupils will go on to define themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans-gender (LGBT). Some pupils may have LGBT parents/carers, brothers or sisters, other family members and/or friends. All our pupils will meet and work with LGBT people. Our approach to RSE will include

sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. We shall actively tackle homophobic bullying.

- **Special educational needs** We shall take account of the fact that some pupils may have learning, emotional or behavioral difficulties or physical disabilities that result in particular RSE needs.

#### **Parental concerns and withdrawal of pupils**

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated 'sex education' lessons. They do not have a right to withdraw their children from those aspects of RSE that are taught in National Curriculum Science or where RSE issues arise incidentally in other subject areas. Parents cannot withdraw their child from Relationships Education because it is important that all children receive this content, covering topics such as friendships and how to stay safe.

We will work in active partnership with parents/carers, value their views and keep them informed about our RSE provision. If a parent/carer has any concerns about the RSE provision we will take time to address their concerns and allay any fears they may have. If any parents/carers decide to withdraw their child we shall work with them and their child to explore possible alternative provision

**Personnel** RSE is part of our PSHE programme. Relevant staff are appropriately trained to deliver RSE within this framework.

#### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The programme is regularly evaluated by the school. The views of pupils and teachers who deliver the programme are used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis.