



## Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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## Definition and Delivery of RSE

1. RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.
2. RSE is taught within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. The biological aspects of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) are taught in Science Lessons, and some aspects are included in the Religious Education curriculum. The majority of RSE is taught as part of each student's once per fortnight PSHE lesson : a third of these are RSE-themed. This programme will be further enriched by occasional year-group assemblies and on three Life Ready Days where external visitors often support the teaching.
3. Other subjects, along with the pastoral system and the positive ethos of the school, make a valuable contribution to the learning of our students. The more specific contribution of subjects across the curriculum, has been mapped across the PSHE programme so that the wider contribution, particularly to Health and Relationships aspects of the programme, is recognised.

## Aims

4. The aims of RSE at Alderbrook School are to:
  - To develop a sense of kindness, care and mutual respect for others.
  - To increase young peoples' self-esteem and self-respect.
  - To dispel myths and increase understanding and provide accurate information about sex related issues.
  - To create a positive culture around issues of relationships and sexuality, helping young people to develop healthier behaviours.
  - To develop personal, social and emotional skills relevant to all relationships e.g. communication, risk assessment and management, managing relationships, decision making, assertiveness, conflict management, helping others, seeking help and accessing and using services.

## Statutory Requirements

5. As a maintained secondary school we must provide RSE to all pupils as per the updated statutory guidance on RSE and Health Education 2021. In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance by the secretary of state as outlined in 'New RSHE Guidance' 2024.
6. This policy has been developed in consultation with staff and students. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:
  - A review of current policy and practice by PSHE team.
  - Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.

- Student voice and evaluations, and the Health Related Behaviour and HAPI (Health Action Partnership International) Questionnaires are recognised within the policy as informing the planning the units of work.

## Values and Inclusivity

7. The RSE programme is planned to provide students with the knowledge they need to play a full part in society as responsible citizens, equipping them for a safe and happy future. There is due regard to the values of family life, within the context of a diverse and inclusive society.
8. The programme is progressive and designed for age appropriate teaching. Teachers should also be aware of the physical and emotional maturity of their classes, and the special educational needs and disabilities of their students. Teachers will be supported to differentiate their teaching as appropriate.
9. The teaching of RSE is framed within the school values of ambition, bravery and kindness. This supports the wider PSHE curriculum in helping to foster students' emotional and physical wellbeing, and development of character that are fundamental to students being happy, successful and productive members of society.
10. Up to date, correct information, based upon the age, maturity and needs of groups and individuals must be used to enable children and young people to stay safe and make informed choices and decisions.

## Key Principles

### Kindness

11. Negotiated ground-rules will ensure that the climate for learning is respectful of individuals/groups and their opinions, beliefs and choices.
12. Fulfilling relationships are based upon love, care, empathy and mutual respect.
13. Questions will be responded to with care, attention and thought.
14. In caring for our students, networks of support inside and outside of school are clearly identified and the information is readily available at all times.

### Rights and Responsibilities

15. Students will be taught about the laws in relation to all aspects of RSE.
16. All students have the right to be given up to date, correct information in response to any questions that they may ask.
17. We all have the responsibility to keep others, and ourselves physically and emotionally safe within our relationships.

### Safety and Trust

18. RSE will always be delivered within a safe learning environment, underpinned by negotiated ground-rules.
19. Safety of oneself and others within relationships will always be promoted, including safe sexual practice and assessment and management of risk

20. Students will be given opportunities to consider people they can trust to give them support (e.g. parents, staff, and young people's health clinics).
21. School staff (including the First Aid coordinator) can never guarantee confidentiality and may have to refer issues where students are at risk (see Child Protection Policy).
22. The school nurse can offer confidentiality to students on a one to one basis.
23. The 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).

## Confidentiality

24. All schools are required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to 'promote the well-being of students at the school'. We are committed to the well-being of our students therefore actively signpost confidential support services that can be accessed by our students.
25. In the classroom, the aim is to strike a balance between helping students to feel respected, safe and able to participate fully and openly while still protecting privacy and safeguarding welfare.
26. Effective teaching and learning in PSHE / RSE actively encourages students to share thoughts and voice opinions, so it is important to establish boundaries and clarify with students at the outset what will happen to any personal information they might disclose in the classroom.
27. Within school, the following protocols must be followed:
  - Staff should never promise unconditional or absolute confidentiality
  - It should be made explicit to students that staff have a duty to protect young people from serious harm. In such circumstances, staff will need to talk to another external professional about a disclosure. In the first instance, names should not be shared with external professionals in order to maintain confidentiality.
  - Sharing information without consent is only recommended if it is in the child's best interests to do so and there is a clear risk of significant harm to the young person or to others.' Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
  - There is no legal requirement to report sexual activity between 13-15 year olds. Although the age of consent remains at 16, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 was never intended to criminalise sexual activity between consenting young people of this age.

- All disclosures of sexual activity involving students in Year 7-11 must be discussed with the DSL for Child Protection. Sexual activity involving 16-17 year olds is unlikely to involve an offence. Discussion with the DSL and subsequent action may be appropriate if staff suspect significant harm or the risk of serious harm.
- It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a student if they hold a position of trust or authority in relationship to them.

## Sensitive issues

28. The following areas may involve discussion of sensitive issues.

Issues addressed within the taught programme	Sensitive topics that may arise
Physical and emotional changes during puberty	Pornography
Managing changing relationships with family and friends	Rape
Physical and sexual relationships	Paedophilia
Contraception	Emergency contraception
Assessing risks, sexual activity	Pornography, rape
Sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDs	Stereotypes
Parenting	Teenage parents
Sexuality	Homosexuality Transgender
Child Sexual Exploitation	Grooming
Pregnancy and abortion	
Loss and change, eg divorce, bereavement	
Marriage	
Masturbation	

29. In order to de-sensitise some of these issues and to enable discussions to take place, staff should make use of:

- Ground rules
- Our moral and values framework
- Distancing techniques e.g. create a character, story boarding
- Specialist support where appropriate e.g. school nurse, Theatre in Health
- Education
- Regular CPD opportunities to attend and to discuss issues openly

## Answering difficult questions

30. In answering questions, all staff must respond within the agreed values framework as outlined above. Ground rules, negotiated and agreed with students at the outset, should ensure that a climate of trust is created with clear boundaries so that neither staff nor students ask personal questions.

## Bullying and homophobic / transgender bullying

31. Bullying is taken seriously at Alderbrook School and our approach to dealing with the issue is detailed in our Anti-bullying policy. Evidence of homophobic/transgender bullying suggests that young people who are, or who are perceived to be gay, lesbian or transgender face a higher risk of victimisation than their peers. It is also the form of bullying that is least likely to be self-reported. We have a legal duty to ensure that homophobic bullying is dealt with (Education and Inspections Act 2006).
32. Alderbrook School will not tolerate the use of homophobic language by adults or young people and will invoke anti-bullying procedures appropriately to promote equalities and diversity.

## Use of outside agencies

33. Delivery of formal RSE is the responsibility of staff teaching PSHE within the PSHE team, led by PSHE leaders, including one RSE specialist teacher. However, we recognise that it is good practice to include outside agencies with expertise in RSE, to support the delivery where appropriate. The school nurse in particular has a key role in supporting the RSE programme in partnership with school staff, and Alderbrook School frequently uses the services of professional partners including Umbrella, Urban Heard and Loudmouth Theatre Company.
34. Any supporting agencies deemed appropriate by the PSHE team must:
  - work within the school's RSE policy at all times, including our values framework and confidentiality protocols
  - work in partnership with school staff, using a partnership agreement
  - add significantly to the learning experience for our students e.g. specialist health knowledge

## Parental Right to withdraw

35. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from aspects of sex education that go beyond statutory National Curriculum orders for Science, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. Parental views and rights will always be respected. Any parents who wish to discuss the possibility of withdrawal from RSE are asked, in the first instance, to contact the Head Teacher. The RSE Co-ordinator is happy to discuss aspects of our RSE provision with parents or carers.
36. Where students are withdrawn from planned RSE, they will be accommodated in an alternative venue. However, they may not be withdrawn from other lessons or areas of school life where discussion around relationships and sex education could arise spontaneously.

## Student and Parent Consultation

37. The Health Related Behaviour and HAPI (Health Action Partnership International) questionnaires, collect student voice and continue to inform our programme.
38. Staff and students have the opportunity to evaluate the provision regularly. Changes may be made to ensure that the provision continues to meet the needs of our school community.
39. As a result of the consultation process, following parental wishes, letters are sent to parents prior to their child beginning a unit of learning about RSE.

## Roles and Responsibilities

40. Putting this policy into practice is the responsibility of all members of the Alderbrook school community in their daily contact with students. Form tutors teach the planned RSE curriculum, and this is led by the PSHE Co-ordinators. One member of staff has responsibility for the design of the RSE Curriculum, working in a small team of staff with responsibilities for the other PSHE areas of Health and Well-Being and Living in the Wider World.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

41. The PSHE Co-ordinators at Alderbrook are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of RSE, supported by the Heads of Year and the Senior Leadership Team. Student and parent voice are evaluated by the PSHE Co-ordinators. The Governing Body, through the Head Teacher, has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the policy is adhered to. Evaluation will feed into the planning cycle to enhance provision and to meet the needs of young people.

## Resources

42. Resources are clearly identified within schemes of work. Those that are selected should be in line with our moral and values framework, up to date and up to date and non-discriminatory. The curriculum is mapped against the PSHE Association Programme of Study Objectives.
43. Any other resources not highlighted within the scheme of work must be approved by the PSHE Coordinators. Where necessary, the advice of governors will be sought.

## Training

44. Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of our continuing professional development programme.
45. The PSHE team will also invite visitors from outside the school to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.
46. The PSHE team attend regional and national conferences for their own professional development, and to support a well-developed and resourced programme.