



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Policy approved and adopted: September 2020
Review date: September 2023

Aims

Here at Cove Junior School, we consider that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is an integral part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship curriculum, and is closely linked to the science curriculum. We aim to offer pupils a carefully planned programme on human development, relationships, sexuality and family life within a safe, comfortable atmosphere and in a relaxed relationship between teacher and pupil. The programme is set within a moral framework and matched to the pupils' level of maturity.

Through the development of this policy, we wish to display the ways in which pupils at Cove Junior School will be guided to make these key life skills.

Definition

RSE teaches children and young people how to be safe and healthy. It teaches them how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity or lifestyles.

Relationships Education: the focus is on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. These 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, and 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).

Health Education: the focus is on teaching the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. Teachers will be clear that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.

Sex Education: the focus is on teaching children the facts about puberty (preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings) and reproduction (how a baby is conceived and born).

The Statutory Guidance states that:

'Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.'

Our aims for delivering an RSE programme at Cove Junior School are to:

- Provide a toolkit for children to understand and manage their emotions
- Encourage pupils to value themselves and others
- Teach children how to make informed choices
- Promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all pupils
- To accept and appreciate diversity and difference
- Provide a framework for children to understand what constitutes a safe and healthy lifestyle

- Prepare pupils to be positive and active members of a democratic society
- Encourage questioning and foster a question based classroom
- Promote safety in forming relationships, on and off line
- Prepare students for puberty, including and understanding of sexual development
- Foster a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Use the correct vocabulary to describe their bodies
- Help pupils to identify the characteristics of healthy relationships, how relationships may affect mental and physical health; and how to stay safe online
- Foster feelings of empathy, self-worth and self- respect
- Provide pupils with the skills to identify the characteristics of healthy relationships, and how relationships may affect mental health
- Discuss and explore how to stay safe online

The teaching of RSE will be delivered to every year group throughout the school. It will be age appropriate and designed to build on knowledge each year. It is important that children learn about changes that will happen to them at the right time, limiting confusion and anxiety. Children will build on previous years' learning and subjects can be revisited and revised. It is important that RSE teaching starts early in primary school so that children can learn about their bodies, can recognise if other people make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe and can report abuse and get help. Lots of children start puberty before they leave primary school, so it is important that all pupils know what to expect before it happens.

Curriculum Design

We teach RSE through different aspects of the curriculum and carry out the main RSE teaching in our PSHE curriculum. The scheme of work for RSE at Cove Junior School maps out a grid of lessons/units for each year group which progress and return to themes as children move through the school.

This scheme of work is called 'idecision'. It includes all interactive resources which will be used to support and promote understanding within a moral context and underpin all the values of the school. Learning about relationships and sex education in PSHE education lessons will link to other subject areas such as science and PE. This enables the children to make links between the understanding of their own body, and how it is changing and developing. Linked with RE, children reflect on family relationships, different family groups and friendships. Pupils will be taught about different relationships sensitively, through learning about different types of family, including those with same sex parents to ensure that we foster equality of all regardless of their difference to us. They will learn about rituals and traditions associated with birth, marriage and death and talk about the emotions involved.

Teaching about mental health is at the heart of each of the subjects covered as this is something that we feel very strongly about.

Since RSE incorporates the development of self-esteem and relationships, pupils' learning does not just take place through the taught curriculum but through all aspects of school life including the playground. It is important then that all staff understand they have a responsibility to implement this policy and promote the aims of the school at any time they are dealing with children.

Science Curriculum

In Key Stage 2, children learn:

- The life processes common to humans and other animals including nutrition, growth and reproduction
- About the main stages of the human life cycle
- About changes as we get older, including puberty.

In Year 5, we place a particular emphasis on RSE, as many children experience puberty at this age. We teach the children about the parts of the body and how they work. We also explain what will happen to their bodies during puberty. We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it and there are opportunities for single sex question sessions. Teachers do their best to answer all questions with sensitivity and care.

By the end of Key Stage 2, we ensure that both boys and girls know how babies are born, how their bodies change during puberty, what menstruation is, and how it affects women. We always teach these with due regard for the emotional development of the children. Parents are not able to withdraw their children from this aspect of the science curriculum.

The Role of Parents

We know that as parents and carers, many of you will already have begun the important role of teaching your children about relationships and sex education and we want to build upon the good work that you have already started. 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 school's RSE policy and practice
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RSE curriculum
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSE in the school
- Provide information sessions to give parents/carers an opportunity to view and discuss the RSE content being taught.
- Inform parents about best practice with regard to RSE, so that teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home. This will ensure that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing understanding as they mature.

Parents' right to withdraw

Parents do have the right to withdraw their child from sex education within the RSE framework which only covers conception and contraception but not from the biological content covered within the science curriculum. However, this rarely happens, as by working in partnership with parents, they recognise the importance of this aspect of their child's education. Parents do not have the right to withdraw from relationships education, as this is statutory. We believe that learning about relationships, families, friendships and safety are essential for all children.

Requests to withdraw should be put in writing and be addressed to the Headteacher. If parents/carers do request their child be removed from these lessons, then that child will be provided with alternative work, linked with the PSHE and Citizenship programme, and be invited to join another class for that session. A register of any such pupils will be kept and distributed to all teachers involved.

Advising Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers will be advised (by letter) about forthcoming sex education lessons. Further details of the lessons will be provided to parents upon request and they will be invited to view any materials before the lesson.

Confidentiality (adapted from Hampshire County Council's Guidelines)

All teachers must make it clear to pupils that they cannot be offered unconditional confidentiality if a pupil begins to talk about something where confidentiality may become an issue. Unconditional confidentiality cannot be offered if there is a child protection issue or if the pupil discloses significant illegal activities.

In these situations, teachers are under a duty of care to inform the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who may have to involve other agencies. Teachers should deal with this sensitively and need to explain to the pupil that they must inform the appropriate people who can help. They must also stress that only those members of staff who need to be informed will be and that the pupil's best interests will be maintained.

Language

Children will be introduced, at appropriate stages, to the correct terminology in their programme of sex education. It is important that acceptable and unacceptable terminology is clarified. After initial discussion, correct biological terms will be used at all times for teaching.

Pupils' Questions

Teachers will reply to, and answer, children's questions sensitively and openly. They will ensure that balanced information is provided which will avoid any negative impressions. Strategies such as 'questions in a box' and 'worry monsters' will be used to help with anxiety and build confidence.

Teachers will need to answer questions that may arise through the direct teaching of sex education, as well as those that may be asked at other times. All questions will be handled sensitively and set within a general context.

Questions which teachers feel uncertain about answering will be discussed with a senior member of staff and answered at a later date. Consideration will be given to religious, faith or cultural factors, and to parents' wishes before questions are answered.

If the teacher decides to discuss the matter on an individual basis, a record must be kept of that discussion.

Special Needs

Pupils with special educational needs will be given the opportunity to fully participate in RSE lessons, and a differentiated programme will be provided where necessary, to ensure that all pupils gain a full understanding.

Equal Opportunities

RSE will be taught to ensure quality of access for all pupils, regardless of gender, race or disability, so giving equal opportunities and avoiding discrimination.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored and evaluated by the PSHE Leader, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Governors. The policy will, where necessary, be revised in light of these evaluations.

Further Policies

In conjunction with this policy, please also see:

- Behaviour Policy (includes Anti-bullying procedures)
- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Confidentiality procedures
- Science Curriculum
- PE Curriculum
- RE Policy
- PSHE and Citizenship Curriculum

Roles and Responsibilities

This policy was produced by senior leaders and subject leaders through consultation with parents and governors. It was produced to:

- Ensure the policy is implemented effectively.
- Ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.
- Monitor this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors on the effectiveness of the policy.