



PRIMARY SCHOOL

*'Attainment through Caring, Challenge & Creativity'*

## **Birkdale Primary School**

# **Relationships, Health and Sex Education Policy (RHSE)**

**September 2023**

*Parent consultation - October 2023*

*Review date - September 2024*

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## **1) Definitions and Context of RHSE**

*Relationships Education* is the teaching of the building blocks and characteristics of good, healthy relationships (both with friends and families, children and adults) and how to forge and maintain these relationships as well as teaching about kindness, mutual respect, honesty, permission seeking and privacy. It also includes teaching about respect for our own bodies and emotions, and how to recognise unhealthy relationships. The theme of positive relationships also applies online.

*Health Education* is any form of teaching that instructs children how to take care of themselves, both physically and mentally, by imparting knowledge, developing their skills and influencing their attitudes towards caring for themselves. Health Education provides children with the ability to make good decisions about their physical health and mental wellbeing.

*Sex Education* is the teaching of an age-appropriate understanding of the changes that adolescence and adulthood will bring, providing children with the skills and support to navigate this difficult time and to respect and care for their bodies.

At Birkdale Primary School we believe that teaching children to form and maintain positive relationships as well as how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy will provide them with the key building blocks to a happy, respectful and content future in all contexts. Whilst we understand that parents and carers are the prime educators in these areas, we know that school has a huge part to play in building on the foundations set at home. Children are now living in an increasingly complex world, both on and offline, and all adults have a responsibility to help children understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy and to manage their personal and social lives in a positive way.

Teaching about mental health is absolutely central to our teaching of RHSE and it something that we passionately interweave throughout our curriculum, enrichment opportunities and the school day. Wellbeing and resilience are fundamental to children becoming happy, successful and productive members of society so we aim to ensure that children have the knowledge and capability to care for themselves or seek help if problems arise.

We believe that RHSE is most effective when provided in the wider context of social and emotional development. It is firmly rooted in our Life Lessons (PSHE, SMSC and British Values) but also through cross-curricular lessons in the mainstream curriculum and through regular assemblies, enrichment days and circle/reflection times.

We as a school, together with our governors and wider community, are committed to continually enhancing the development and implementation of a comprehensive, positive and enriching RHSE curriculum that will provide our children with the knowledge and attributes needed to support their own, and others', wellbeing and become successful and happy adults.

## **2) Entitlements**

The RHSE Team and the Senior Leadership Team are committed to upholding the following entitlements:

**Children** are entitled to:

- Accurate, up-to-date, useful and appropriate information delivered in a way that meets their individual needs
- A well-planned, well-delivered RHSE programme, which is flexible to cater for their changing needs over time
- Know where and how to access information, support and local services
- Be informed about issues of confidentiality and how it affects them
- Have their views and ideas received in a respectful and non-judgemental manner
- Be involved in developing and evaluating the content, delivery and timing of their RHSE programme.
- Their own contribution to the RHSE Education

**Adults working with children** are entitled to:

- Access to high quality, up-to-date, accurate information, resources and training
- Mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to the planning and delivery of RHSE
- Contribute their views and ideas in support of the development of RHSE for children
- Professional guidance and support
- Opportunities to share good practice
- Be informed about issues of confidentiality and procedures to be followed.

**Parents, carers and other adults in the community** are entitled to:

- Contribute to the schools RHSE curriculum through our school questionnaire and regular invitations to discuss the current scheme of work
- Accessible, accurate, up-to-date, information delivered in a way which meets their needs
- A safe and supportive environment for their children
- Information on how and when RHSE is taught
- Understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to RHSE policy and curriculum
- Be informed about issues of confidentiality and how it affects them and their children
- Have their views and ideas received in a respectful, non-judgemental manner.

### **3) Requirements of the school in law**

RHSE is part of the wider agenda of promoting positive relationships and the good health of young people, to which many individuals and organisations in our community contribute. Our RHSE Policy contributes to meeting local and national priorities as described in:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policies (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- Looked After Children policies
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 - 25 years statutory guidance
- The Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) non-statutory curriculum
- Promoting Fundamental British Values guidance
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC) guidance

Other school policies are relevant to our provision of RHSE:

- 'Life Lessons' (PSHE, SMSC and British Values)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- E-Safety, Acceptable Use and Social Networking
- SEND

- Early Years Foundation Stage

This RHSE Policy will be made available to staff on the school network and on the school website. Our Policy reflects recommendations from OfSTED and the PSHE Association. Our RHSE policy is the responsibility of the governing body and has been developed by the PSHE Coordinators with the support of the Headteacher and reviewed by our Governors. It was discussed and ratified by the school governors in September 2021.

#### **4) Creation and development of our RHSE curriculum**

##### The RHSE Lead

Our RHSE Lead is responsible for creating and developing the school's RHSE curriculum and this has been done as a part of our wider Life Lessons scheme (PSHE, British Values and SMSC). The Life Lessons curriculum is wholly consistent with the National Curriculum (2014), DfE and OfSTED guidance as well as the new Relationships and Health Education guidance, statutory from September 2020. Some elements of our RHSE curriculum are part of the compulsory National Curriculum for Science (e.g. the biological aspects of puberty, reproduction and the spread of viruses), Computing (e.g. e-safety) and some parts are based on the non-statutory PSHE guidance.

The RHSE Lead utilises local authority- and nationally-approved websites and resources such as the PSHE associations and the Relationships and Health Education statutory guidance to ensure that the RHSE curriculum meets all expected standards for primary school pupils.

##### Role of Governors

It is the responsibility of the governors to ensure, through consultation, that the RHSE Policy reflects the wishes of the parents and the views of our community. It is the responsibility of governors to ensure that the Policy is made available to parents. In order to facilitate this process, the RHSE Policy will appear every year on the agenda of a governors' meeting.

##### Pupil Participation

We will involve children in the evaluation and development of their RHSE in ways appropriate to their age.

- We will refer to local/countywide/national data e.g. Health Related Behaviour Survey for our school/district.
- We will conduct assessment activities to establish their development needs
- We ask children what they want to learn about in the context of Relationships and Health and use this to guide planning
- We will consult with UKS2 children in an age-appropriate way about what they feel they should understand through Sex Education
- We will consult children about their perception of the strengths of our RHSE programme when appropriate and the areas to be further developed.

##### Working with Parents/Carers and our School Community

Parents and carers are the key figures in supporting their children through the emotional and physical aspects of growing up. We recognise that many children would prefer to receive information about RHSE from their parents and carers. Therefore, we seek to work in partnership with parents and carers when planning and delivering RHSE. We will encourage this partnership by:

- Inviting parents to engage in a yearly questionnaire about what they want their children to learn about Relationships, Health and Sex Education

- Gathering parents' views on the RHSE Policy and taking these into account when it is being reviewed
- Informing parents and carers by letter or leaflet of forthcoming RHSE topics
- Inviting parents to learn more about resources and activities used in RHSE
- Informing parents and carers about the RHSE programme as their child joins the school through the school brochure/prospectus
- Inviting parents to discuss their views and concerns about RHSE with Subject Leaders or the Head Teacher on an informal basis.

Parents and carers will be given access to this Policy on request.

Parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children only from the Sex Education aspects of our RHSE programme of study, they are unable to withdraw their children from any aspects of the programme that covers the national expectations for Science, Relationships or Health Education. What constitutes 'Sex Education' at our school is outlined further on in this policy.

Any parent or carer who wishes to withdraw their child should, in the first instance, contact the Class Teacher to discuss the matter. If needed, the RHSE subject lead will further explain the content of the lessons and support parents with the resources that will be used for the lesson. If a parent still decides to withdraw their child from this aspect of the lesson, alternative lessons will be provided for the child for that period. Parents or carers will be asked to reconfirm their decision to withdraw each time RHSE is planned for their child's class/year group.

### **5) Our Relationships and Health Education Programmes of Study**

Our Life Lessons overviews are available to parents and carers in the Life Lessons section of the school website. These overviews highlight all areas in which Relationships, Health and Sex Education are taught in the varying year groups.

*In 2022, the government required all schools to ensure they included 'child-on-child' abuse in their curriculum. Our planning teaches this sensitive topic in an age-appropriate way, focusing on recognising the qualities of healthy relationships with peers, how to respect (and expect respect) for their own bodies, the power of saying 'no' and how to seek help or advice when needed.*

In Year 5, additional lessons take place around puberty and the changes children will experience during this time. We feel it is incredibly important to prepare children for these changes in a safe environment. Parents are always advised before the teaching of puberty begins in plenty of time to cover some of this themselves at home. School also offers documents to support parents in talking to their children about puberty and adolescence.

### **6) Non-statutory Sex Education**

Parents are consulted about our Sex Education programme yearly and have played a part in creating a comprehensive education for our Upper Key Stage 2 (Y5 and Y6) children which is taught separately to our Life Lessons curriculum and in line with the Science Curriculum.

The Department for Education recommends 'that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and - drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born'. For our school, the only aspect of Sex Education that we include in our RHSE

programme is how a baby is conceived, grows and is born. Our rationale behind including this in the Y5 curriculum is as follows: the statutory Science curriculum teaches about reproduction in some plants and animals; the statutory Health Education curriculum teaches about puberty and the growing adolescent body. Together, these compulsory lessons naturally lead to questions about human reproduction. For this reason, we have drawn on the above advice included conception as part of our Year 5 curriculum which blends Science and Health Education lessons into a comprehensive scheme of learning for all children.

Parents of Year 5 children will be informed before the teaching of RHSE and given the opportunity to come into school to speak to the staff delivering the lessons about the content and ask any questions or see the material which will be used to teach the lessons. Parents are encouraged to allow their children to take part in the non-statutory Sex Education elements to prevent 'playground gossip' confusing their child afterwards.

#### Sensitive Issues:

We recognise that through quality teaching of RHSE, some sensitive issues may arise such as:

- IVF
- Contraception
- Abortion
- Miscarriage
- STIs and STDs

Whilst our RHSE programme of study does not directly cover these issues, we acknowledge that some children may have a wider understanding of RHS matters and may ask questions relating to the above. If this is the case, staff will manage the questions in a factual, sensitive and age-appropriate way. In some instances, this may mean being unable to answer the question at all as parental advice may need to be sought which staff would do immediately. There are extremely rare occasions when an adult in a primary school may believe that a child's question derives from a child's own sexual activity or contemplation of sexual activity. In this case, the adult will consult immediately with the designated teacher for child protection, who will make sensitive arrangements, ensuring there has been discussion with the child and explanation of the Confidentiality Policy, to involve the child's parents and, if necessary, other professionals.

#### Sexually Active Pupils

There are extremely rare occasions when a primary-aged child, who is sexually active or contemplating sexual activity, approaches an adult. If this occurs in our school, it will be viewed as a child protection issue. The designated member of staff will follow Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures and seek advice from the relevant agency.

### **7) Delivery of our RHSE Curriculum**

#### Programme of Study:

Our curriculum for RHSE is delivered primarily through our Life Lessons subject during our 'Good Relationships' focus. However, we consider RHSE to be a continuous process of learning, which begins well before the children enter our school and continues into adulthood. We have planned a progressive curriculum appropriate to each age group. All adults working with children have a part to play in supporting the delivery of RHSE.

The objectives of the RHSE Curriculum will be taught in:

- Life Lessons, through our 'Good Relationships' focus in Spring Term (see appendix)
- Other Curriculum areas, especially Science, English, RE and PE
- Enrichment activities, especially our assembly programme, social skills groups, provision for external visitors, activities carried out as part of our development as a health promoting school.

Specific Units of Work on RHSE are planned into our teaching programme every year (as described in our Life Lessons Programme Plans). Specific content on Puberty will be taught in Year 5 and Year 6 in addition to the RHSE unit of work each year.

#### Responsibility for delivering RHSE:

We regard it as the *shared responsibility of all adults* working in the school to respond appropriately to a child's request for information and advice. All staff are encouraged to access support from colleagues where necessary.

The PSHE Subject Leader is responsible for reviewing and evaluating RHSE at our school and will report to the Head Teacher and Lead Governor in this task. The subject Leader will assist teaching staff in their planning and delivery of the 'Curriculum for RHSE' with support, lesson plans and activities for colleagues and plan INSET to meet staff needs.

Governors also hold responsibility for the RHSE Policy and will be assisted in monitoring its implementation by the PSHE Subject Leaders and Head Teacher.

The RHSE curriculum will primarily be delivered by class teachers, who we feel are in the best position to assess their class' needs. Teachers delivering RHSE will have responsibility for assessing children's needs and selecting appropriate activities and methodologies to meet these needs, supported by the PSHE Subject Leaders.

We understand that at times children will benefit from varying methods of delivering the RHSE curriculum. For example, we will use team teaching where this enables us to best use teacher expertise or hold sessions led by Subject Leaders. In Year 6, boys and girls may be taught some sessions separately to ensure the children feel they are able to ask more gender-specific questions about changing bodies, puberty and pregnancy. We will ensure there are always positive educational reasons for each method of delivery.

#### Staff Training

Teaching RHSE can be very rewarding, but we understand that, in order to feel confident, staff need opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes. We recognise that all adults have different personal beliefs and attitudes about RHSE. We will discuss relevant issues and, where appropriate, arrange training to enable staff members to feel confident in delivering the Curriculum for RHSE. We will also encourage the sharing of good practice. Those with special responsibility for the development of RHSE will be offered opportunities to consult with advisors. We will also work closely with national agencies such as the NSPCC and PSHE association to inform staff and support them in their own delivery. Year 5 teachers have completed CPD of effectively teaching puberty in Primary Schools.

#### Ground Rules:

RHSE is taught in a safe, non-judgemental environment where adults and children are



confident that they will be respected. Specific ground rules will be established at the beginning of any RHSE work, in addition to those already used in the classroom. They will cover the following areas:

- Appropriate use of language. Language used will be age appropriate and themes may be discussed (e.g. recognising unhappy and harmful relationships) without using specific terms (e.g. domestic violence)
- Not asking and answering of personal questions
- Strategies for checking or accessing information and resources

#### Answering Questions:

We acknowledge that sensitive and potentially difficult issues will arise in RHSE as children will naturally share information and ask questions. When spontaneous discussion arises, it will be guided in a way which reflects the stated school aims and curriculum content for RHSE. As a first principle we will answer questions relating to the taught planned curriculum for that age group to the whole class. We will answer questions relating to areas beyond the taught planned curriculum for that age group, in a sensitive and age appropriate way, only to the child or children who have asked the question if we deem it disadvantageous to leave the question unanswered. If a member of staff is uncertain about the answer to a question, or indeed whether they wish to answer it they will seek guidance from the PSHE leader. In some cases, we may guide the children to try and discuss the question at home and, in extreme cases, may contact home to seek advice. Where a question or comment from a pupil in the classroom indicates the possibility of abuse, teachers will pass this information to the designated person for child protection in line with school policy.

#### Distancing Techniques:

In order to protect children's privacy, we will employ teaching and learning strategies which enable them to discuss issues without disclosing personal experience. For example, we will use fiction, puppets, case studies, role-play, videos to enable children to share ideas and opinions and to practise their decision-making skills in a safe learning environment.

#### Inclusion

We understand the importance of ensuring that all children in our school receive their entitlement to RHSE. We will carefully consider special educational needs or disability, gender, sexual orientation and age, nationality, religion, cultural and linguistic background when planning and delivering RHSE. In relation to nationality, sexual orientation, religion and cultural diversity, we value the different backgrounds of our pupils and, in addressing different views and beliefs, seek to promote tolerance and understanding.

In order to ensure the RHSE Curriculum meets the needs of all:

- We will not promote one particular lifestyle over another.
- We will not seek to gain consensus, but will accept and celebrate difference.
- We will encourage respect and discourage abuse and exploitation.
- We will not ask children to represent the views of a particular religious or cultural group to their peers, unless they choose to do so.

In relation to those with special educational needs or disability, we will review our RHSE programme to ensure that provision is made for those with additional needs. We will consider:

- their level of vulnerability
- their need to learn and demonstrate appropriate behaviour
- their need to develop self-esteem and positive body image

- the need to involve all staff, including ancillary staff and carers, in policy development, planning and training
- the management of personal care
- clarity about sources of support for pupils.

### Resources

We will primarily use our in-school 'Life Lessons - Good Relationships' unit to deliver RHSE and The Red Cross First Aid Scheme for first aid support. We will carefully select resources from recommended websites and books which meet these objectives. We will carefully evaluate teacher resources, leaflets and videos, before using them. If needed, teachers will seek advice from Subject Leaders on the content or appropriateness of resources. The PSHE Association offers recommendations for many resources and Subject Leaders utilise these and review their effectiveness with class teachers. We will select resources which:

- are consistent with the Curriculum for RHSE
- relate to the aims and objectives of this Policy
- are suitable to the age, maturity, needs, linguistic proficiency and ability of the children
- appeal to adults and children
- are up-to-date in factual content
- are produced by a reputable organisation
- do not show unfair bias e.g. towards a commercial product
- avoid racial, gender and sexual stereotyping
- encourage active and participative learning
- conform to the legal requirements for RHSE.

### Use of Visitors to Support RHSE

We believe that RHSE is most effectively taught by those who know our pupils well and are aware of their needs. We encourage visitors to our school who may enhance, but never replace, our planned provision. We will work closely with visitors to ensure that the needs of our pupils are met. We will follow this Code of Practice when working with visitors:

- The care and management of pupils is the responsibility of the school at all times.
- In class teaching situations, visitors will not be asked to work alone with pupils, but will be supported by a member of staff.
- The school will know whether visitors are DBS checked and arrangements will be made to accompany them as appropriate.
- All visitors will be made aware of the content and principles of this Policy, prior to their visit and provided with our school's Safeguarding leaflet.
- All lessons will be planned in direct liaison with the Class Teacher, taking account of the age and needs of the group and the context of the work within the RHSE programme.
- Visitors will be reminded that, whilst contributing to RHSE in a classroom setting, they must adhere to the same confidentiality code as staff members.
- Any resources which a visitor wishes to use or distribute will be discussed and agreed with the Class Teacher or Subject Leaders beforehand.
- The contributions of visitors will be regularly monitored and evaluated.

### **8) Safeguarding and Child Protection**

We recognise that because effective RHSE may alert children to what is appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour, there is an increased possibility that a disclosure relating to abuse may be made. All staff are aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and will report the disclosure to the designated person for child protection immediately.

## Confidentiality

Staff are unable to offer absolute confidentiality and know how to make a child aware of this in the event of a serious disclosure. Staff will reassure children that adults will act in their best interests and that this may involve sharing information if the child is at risk of harm. Children will always be told if information is to be shared (unless the child is very young or has significant special needs) and will be offered appropriate support. Professionals, such as school nurses and youth workers, are bound by their professional codes of conduct when offering advice and guidance to individual pupils but when working in school will always work alongside the class teacher or subject leads.

## 9) Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing Our RHSE Policy

Monitoring and evaluation of the Policy is the responsibility of the Subject Leaders, in conjunction with the governing body and Lead Governor for RHSE. Information will be gathered from the Head Teacher, the PSHE Subject Leaders and parents to inform judgements about effectiveness.

- We will reflect on our contribution to the provision of the Entitlements for RHSE and seek to develop this.
- We will continue to work in partnership with parents/carers and members of our community to ensure the delivery of high quality RHSE for our children.

The Policy will be formally reviewed every year. The next review will take place in 2018.

## 10) Glossary of terms

**Community:** All people who live, work or in some other way impact on the lives of children in the area in which they live.

**Co-ordinator:** The lead member of staff in school for a particular area of work.

**DfE Department for Education** (previously known as DCFS: Department for Children, Families and Schools, DfES: Department for Education and Skills and DfEE Department for Education and Employment)

**PSHE:** Personal, Social and Health Education

**School:** Any educational establishment

**RHSE:** Sex and Relationships Education

**Visitor:** Someone who is not a member of school staff, who contributes to the planned provision of RHSE or offers another service, such as giving advice or support. A visitor may be a member of another organisation (e.g. health professional, youth worker) or an individual (e.g. parent with a new baby).