

Relationships, Sex & Health Education Policy

Last Review July 2025	Next Review July 2026	Review Frequency Annually	Coordinator Head Teacher	Nominated Trustee Rosemary Lilley
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1. Aims

All children who attend The Mulberry Bush School have experienced significant trauma in their early lives. This often includes neglect and/or abuse, including sexual abuse. The core work of the school is to support children's social and emotional development through a therapeutic environment and the development of secure and trusting relationships. Teaching children about relationships is central to the work that we do with all children throughout their placement at the school, both in their houses and in their education. It is essential that all children receive the full curriculum around relationships and sex education, and this must be done with great care given the children's prior experience of abusive and neglectful relationships.

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy, and to have a clear understanding about consent
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

2. Statutory requirements

In line with maintained primary schools, we provide relationships education to all pupils under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

We don't have to follow the National Curriculum, but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum.

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state, as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We also have regard to our legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At The Mulberry Bush School, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, families, networks and trustees. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – the PSHE Subject Leader and the Head Teacher pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.
2. Trustee consultation – the trustees were asked to read and comment on the policy.
3. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
4. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were sent the draft policy and invited to discuss this with the Head Teacher.
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with trustees and ratified.
6. The policy is reviewed annually, and re-shared with all stakeholders.

Pupil voice is central to the work of the school, and children's views are gathered through the process of teaching and learning.

4. Definition

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. Relationships are fundamental to the way that we work at The Mulberry Bush School, and children experience safe, consistent, trusting relationships throughout their placement at the school. Issues of healthy relationships, self-care, healthy lifestyles, identity, diversity, sexuality are discussed regularly throughout everyday interactions, particularly in the children's houses. We see the RSE curriculum as a way to ensure that all children receive planned education about these issues and sexual health as part of the curriculum.

RSE in the curriculum involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

Relationships education is woven throughout our PSHE curriculum, which is set out in **Appendix 1**. PSHE is delivered through circle time sessions, at least three times each week, using stories as a starting point for discussion and other activities. We adapt the teaching of PSHE as and when necessary, particularly in relation to any national, local or individual issues arising.

Relationships and sex education is taught explicitly in a one-week block each term. We use the *Growing Up with Yasmine and Tom* resources to support the teaching of

sex education. We may need to adapt the teaching of RSE as and when necessary, particularly in relation to any national, local or individual issues.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents and staff, and taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, staff will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and don't seek answers in unsafe ways, including online.

Sex education for primary school-age children will focus on:

- o Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings
- o How a baby is conceived and born

For more information about our curriculum, see our curriculum map in **Appendix 1**.

Parents and networks, and school care staff, are notified of planned sex education teaching before this is delivered in class, in order to support them to anticipate questions or conversations that their children may instigate as a result of this learning.

We are aware of the diversity of children in the school and are sensitive to religious, cultural, ethnic backgrounds and differences in belief. We teach the children about acceptance and teach them to be curious about each other and the world around them. We teach the children what is laid out in law in relation to protected characteristics.

Sometimes children's needs mean that providing additional information or targeted work is essential in safeguarding the child and responding to their presentation. For example, children may ask about violence in relationships, rape, masturbation, and it may not be appropriate for this to be discussed with the wider child group. Staff respond openly and honestly to these conversations in the moment, while ensuring that children are not exposed to conversations beyond their capacity and understanding. Targeted work with individual children may be planned in response to their presenting needs, in which case we work closely with families and networks to plan this.

In some cases, children's prior experiences of abuse need more individualised support, and this work happens in a planned way, often through programmes of Keeping Safe Work, Life Story Work or other bespoke approaches. These are planned and monitored by the child's treatment team.

6. Delivery of RSE

Relationships education is taught within the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Sex education is taught in three one-week blocks across the year.

Children at The Mulberry Bush learn in mixed-age classes. As with all teaching at The Mulberry Bush, we do not plan for specific year groups but instead build in assessment activities to ensure that our teaching is pitched appropriately for each child. Every week's PSHE teaching begins with an introductory or assessment activity, and children then engage with the topic at their own level. Their progress is assessed using our curriculum grids and the school's ESAPP grid.

RSE lessons are taught in class groups, so that children are supported through existing trusting relationships and class routines. Sometimes, it may be necessary to provide pre-teaching or follow-up individual work, to ensure that all children receive the full curriculum coverage at an appropriate level for their age and development.

For more detailed information about our RSE curriculum, see **Appendix 1: PSHE Curriculum** and **Appendix 2: Sex Education Curriculum**.

In all aspects of our PSHE and RSE curriculum, we take care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their family circumstances, acknowledging that families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers, (amongst other structures), and that some children do not live with their families.

We are also mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

6.1. Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- o Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them
- o Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences, including children with a history of trauma, abuse and neglect
- o During lessons, makes pupils feel:
 - o Safe and supported
 - o Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- o Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that is appropriate for them, for example in:
 - o A whole-class setting
 - o Small groups or targeted sessions
 - o 1-to-1 discussions
 - o Digital formats
- o Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

6.2 Use of resources

The school follows an adapted version of the PSHE Association SEND Framework for the teaching of PSHE. We use the FPA's *Growing Up with Yasmine and Tom* programme to teach relationships and sex education.

We consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- o Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- o Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- o Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils
- o Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- o Fit into our curriculum plan
- o Are from credible sources
- o Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- o Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

Information about the Family Planning Association's *Growing Up with Yasmine and Tom* programme, including resources, is available here -

<https://www.fpa.org.uk/rshe-for-parents/>

7. Use of external organisations and materials

We value our relationships with members of our local community, and try to involve external visitors as part of our PSHE teaching, where possible (for example inviting a PCSO to visit the school). However, external visitors would be invited as guests, and would not be allowed to deliver the content of the PSHE or RSE curriculum.

We will not allow any external or unfamiliar adults to teach any aspects of the sex education curriculum, as any adults teaching this content must have a detailed knowledge of the complex experiences of abuse, neglect and trauma of each child, in order to teach this material sensitively.

We make sure that any materials used in our teaching are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality. The school remains responsible for what is said to pupils. This includes making sure that any resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We will:

- o Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- o For external guests, be clear on:
 - o What they're going to say
 - o Their position on the issues to be discussed
- o Ask to see in advance any materials that the visitor may use
- o Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- o Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session

- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers

We **will not**, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The trustees

The trustees will approve the RSE policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

8.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE (see section 9).

8.3 Staff

As with all subjects taught at The Mulberry Bush School, there is a subject leader who has responsibility for monitoring progress and provision in the subject. Children's progress is monitored through use of the school's assessment grids and discussed in Treatment Team meetings, Internal Case Conferences and external review meetings, at least termly.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

All teachers are responsible for teaching RSE in our school.

8.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

9. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents (or those with parental responsibility) have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in **Appendix 3** of this policy and addressed to the headteacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative school work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

10. Training

All staff are trained to work therapeutically with children. This includes talking about difficult subjects and responding to children's questions and behaviours appropriately and supportively.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Rupert Stace, PSHE Leader, through:

- Lesson observations
- Planning scrutiny
- Peer planning and teaching
- Book scrutiny
- Discussions with staff
- Half-termly subject monitoring activities
- At least annual monitoring alongside the School Improvement Partner

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by Jessica Hooper, Head Teacher, annually. At every review, the policy will be shared with families and approved by the trustees.

Appendix 1: PSHE Curriculum

Term	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Theme	Self-awareness	Selfcare, support and safety	Managing feelings	Changing and growing	Healthy lifestyles	The world I live in
Topics	Things we are good at Kind & unkind behaviours Playing and working together People who are special to us Getting on with others	Taking care of ourselves Keeping safe Trust Keeping safe online Public and private	Identifying and expressing feelings Managing strong feelings	Baby to adult Changes at puberty Dealing with touch Different types of relationships	Healthy eating Taking care of physical health Keeping well	Respecting differences between people Jobs people do Rules and laws Taking care of the environment Belonging to a community Money

Appendix 2: Sex Education Curriculum

Our Curriculum is delivered using *Growing up with Yasmine and Tom*.

In each module, lesson 1 establishes ground rules for RSE lessons. We will establish ground rules each time we teach RSE (ie three times per year) so have not included these lessons as part of the sequence. The materials provided for these lessons will form the basis of our setting of ground rules.

<https://www.fpa.org.uk/>

Year of child's placement	Term	Lessons	Lesson aims
Year 1	Aut	Module 1: Lessons 1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To begin to be able to challenge gender stereotypes. • To understand how to be a good friend and what makes friendship feel good. • To develop understanding that there are many different types of family and that in our school we value all types of families equally.
	Spr	Module 1: Lessons 4, 5, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children to recognise that all bodies are different and that all bodies can do different things. • To begin to develop a positive body image about themselves and learn skills to respond to any negative comments about their bodies. • To develop an awareness of and take increasing responsibility for taking care of their own needs. • To be able to name their personal and private body parts, in a safe space, confidently. • To understand what 'private' means.
	Sum	Module 1: Lessons 7 Module 2: Lessons 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have an awareness of some of the ways that they can keep themselves safe. • To build a support network of people who can help them. • To develop an understanding of gender stereotypes. • To develop a positive sense of self.
Year 2	Aut	Module 2: Lessons 4, 5, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop pupil understanding of what a good and/or healthy friendship is. • To explore diversity in families and to have some ideas of what to do if there are any difficulties in their family. • To reinforce language for the personal and private parts of the body and to explore ideas of safe touch, personal space and consent.
	Spr	Module 2: Lessons 7, 8, 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To feel good about our bodies and to understand more about keeping clean and not spreading germs. • To begin to develop skills in assessing and managing risk.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure all pupils know who they can ask for help.
	Sum	Module 3: Lessons 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore the challenges of on and offline friendships. • To explore trust and secrets in our friendships. • To explore peer pressure and develop the skills to say no.
Year 3	Aut	Module 3: Lessons 5, 6, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand safe and unsafe touch. • To be able to say no to unwanted touch or behaviour. • To develop pupil understanding of the risks of sharing images of themselves and their bodies online. • To understand physical and emotional changes at puberty.
	Spr	Module 3: Lessons 8, 9, 10, 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn about periods (menstruation). • To understand more about wet dreams and masturbation. • To learn and understand how babies are made. • To learn about multiple births.
	Sum	Module 3: Lessons 12, 13, 14, 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn about pregnancy and how babies develop. • To develop pupil understanding of key terms related to sexual orientation and gender identity and the unacceptability of prejudice. • To understand more about discrimination and the groups covered by the equality act. • To learn about who can help including external services and know that it is good to talk no matter what the issue.

Appendix 3: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	