

RELATONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION - RSHE Statement of Practice



LEES BROOK
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL

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Introduction

DfE guidance (2019) 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 provides many 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.”

On this basis, the DfE have made Relationships, Sex and Health Education compulsory in all secondary schools. This policy has been written to take account of these changes.

Related Policies, Statements of Practice and procedures

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, DfE, February 2019
- Keeping Children Safe in Education , DfE, September 2020
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools, DfE, January 2016
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools, DfE, June 2018
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years, DfE, May 2015

This policy also makes reference to other school policies, which should be referred to as needed.

Related policies

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Statement of Practice

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy - RSHE

This policy is subject to continuous review in-line with updates to DfE policy and as such has no fixed date for review. As a minimum, this policy is presented to governors annually for their approval.

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1. Context

What is RSHE?

RSHE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. At Lees Brook, RSHE provides an understanding that positive, caring environments are essential for the development of a good self-image and that individuals are in charge of and responsible for their own bodies. We will provide knowledge about the processes of reproduction and the nature of sexuality and relationships. We will encourage the acquisition of skills and attitudes which allow students to manage their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

The prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents and carers. Schools must recognise that parents/carers are key figures in helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up and in preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities which sexual maturity brings. The teaching offered by school should be seen as complementary and supportive to the role of parents. It is acknowledged that not all parents feel confident or comfortable talking to their children about this area therefore our work ensures that all pupils have a standard level of education about key aspects needed to keep safe, and make positive, informed and healthy choices.

In an attempt to achieve this, the 1988 Education Reform Act (Section 1) states that all pupils should be offered the opportunity of receiving a comprehensive, well-planned programme of sex education during their school careers through a curriculum which:

- 'Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and of society and
- Prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life'

The school recognises that relationships, sex and health education is a difficult issue which will place demands on schools and teachers. However, the purpose of relationships, sex and health education should be to provide knowledge about relationships, the nature of sexuality and the processes of human reproduction. At the same time it should lead to the acquisition of understanding and attitudes which prepare students to view their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

The law does not give a definitive statement as to what Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RHSE) is. At Lees Brook Community School, it is regarded as lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity (DfE, 2000).

2. Attitudes and Values

The RSHE programme will focus on exploring attitudes and values; developing skills; and, improving knowledge and understanding. Within these broad aims, teachers will develop students' learning about the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations. And, in addition, students will focus on learning the value of family life, marriage and stable 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 personal and social skills
- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- Managing conflict

- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse with knowledge and understanding
- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy

3. Objectives

- To enable students to understand the biological aspects of reproduction
- To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various methods of contraception in terms of personal preference and their social and moral implications
- To recognise and be able to discuss sensitive and controversial issues such as conception, virginity, birth, child-rearing, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and technological developments which involve consideration of attitudes, values, beliefs and morality
- To make students aware of the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society and recognise the importance of personal choice in managing relationships so that they do not present risks to health and personal safety
- To make students aware that feeling positive about sexuality and sexual activity is important in relationships and that people have the right not to be sexually active
- To understand the changing nature of sexuality over time and its impact on lifestyles e.g. the menopause
- To recognise that parenthood is a matter of choice
- To critically analyse moral values and explore those held by different cultures and groups
- To understand the concept of stereotyping and to discuss issues such as sexual harassment in terms of their effects on individuals
- To understand aspects of legislation relating to sexual behaviour, gender and equal opportunities and to make aware the availability of statutory and voluntary organisations which offer support in human relationships
- To develop knowledge and understanding of what positive and healthy relationships look like and the skills to form nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships.
- Enable students to recognise unhealthy relationships and abuse, and have the knowledge and skills to seek help for themselves.
- Support students to keep safe, both online and offline, including assessing the risks and benefits of their actions and recognising that pressures and influences come from a range of sources.
- Having awareness of knowledge and skills to access appropriate support

The RSHE programme is embedded within curriculum areas, including Science, RS and PE, in addition to more focused learning through Citizenship lessons, Drop Down events, the tutor time programme and assemblies.

4. Content

Due to current legislation that makes the provision of Relationships, Sex and Health Education at primary school compulsory, it is expected that students will arrive at Lees Brook Community School with a degree of prior knowledge relating to:

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

It is intended that RHSE at Lees Brook will provide clear progression from what is taught in primary school. The most notable development at secondary school is the inclusion of relationships and sex education – which is not compulsory at primary school. Alongside being taught about intimate relationships, pupils will be taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are all equally important in becoming a successful and happy adult. This enables students to distinguish between examples that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful.

Specifically, RSHE at Lees Brook Community School will develop students' understanding in the following areas:

Within the Science curriculum at Key Stage Three, the following topics are taught: reproduction, effects of recreational drugs on behaviour and health, comparing energy value of different foods. At Key Stage Four: relationship between health and disease, communicable diseases, reducing and preventing the spread of infectious diseases in animals and plants; impact of lifestyle facts; hormones in human reproduction, and sex determination in humans.

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media awareness and safety
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
- Mental well-being
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness, including healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Health and prevention
- Basic First Aid
- Changing adolescent body
- Careers
- Finance

The RSHE curriculum at Lees Brook Community School has been designed in accordance with current legislation (DfE, 2019) and is designed to afford students every opportunity to achieve the objectives set out in the Related Policies, Statements of Practice and procedures section of this policy whilst covering the statutory content listed above.

Should parents have any specific questions surrounding the content of RSHE, they are advised to either read the statutory guidance from the DfE (2019) or contact the school. RSHE is taught as part of the citizenship and PSHE curriculum at Lees Brook Community School. More information about what topics are being covered throughout each half term can be found on the school website.

5. Delivery

RSHE is taught in a cross curricular way through Science/ Biology, RE and Citizenship. The curriculum that is delivered is age-appropriate and progressive, building the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills year on year.

The diverse staffing and the variety of experience contained within our teaching body is seen as a valuable resource for the delivery of relationships and sex education. The provision of relationships and sex education is seen as progressive in terms of language, concepts and content which increases in depth and complexity as students progress through the school.

Throughout the teaching, it is inevitable that a variety of sensitive issues, including a range of different relationship and sexual identities will be explored and it is recognised that an individual's sexuality and relationships are a highly personal matter. The teaching at Lees Brook will place emphasis upon the need for understanding and awareness of a variety of sexual preferences across the spectrum of human sexuality.

It is intended that students will be given up-to-date information on a wide variety of contraceptive methods and whilst general statements about the efficacy of these methods will be given, specific advice and guidance to individuals will not be made without consultation with parents/carers. Part of the make-up of all humans is that they are sexual beings and it would be irresponsible of the school to ignore this. The relationships and sex education programme aims to be sensitive and responsible and set in a moral and social framework. It also aims to meet the statutory provision which has been outlined in various government documents mentioned in section 1 of this policy.

School staff will:

- Ensure that they are up to date with the school's policy and curriculum requirements and report any areas that they feel are not covered or inadequately provided for
- Attend and engage in relevant CPD sessions
- Encourage students to communicate their personal concerns
- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSE activities for learning
- Use a range of materials and resources that reflect the school population and encourage acceptance and tolerance
- Tailor their lessons to suit all students so that every student feels included, celebrated, respected and valued

Leadership will:

- Ensure that RSHE is age-relevant and appropriate across all year groups and provide staff with lesson plans and resources
- Provide support and relevant training to staff who feel uncomfortable or ill-equipped to deliver RSHE and engage external speakers for specific topics where appropriate
- Ensure all staff are up to date with policy changes and the curriculum for RSHE
- Communicate with staff, parents and the Academy Advisory Board to ensure a consistent understanding of RSHE and what is being taught

Monitoring and evaluation

- The quality of lessons will be monitored through lesson observation and student feedback
- The Senior Leadership Team will monitor the implementation of this policy through the SEAR cycle of review
- The Local Academy Advisory Board of the school will review this policy annually

6. Personalised Provision

We understand that it is important to distinguish between the school's function of providing education generally about sexual matters and the giving of advice to individual students. Our teachers take a pastoral interest in the welfare and well – being of their students but it is understood that this should never trespass on the proper exercise of parents'/carers' responsibilities. Teachers will, however, ensure that a student is aware of the implications of conduct which is likely to place them at moral or physical risk or is in breach of the law.

As with all lessons, it is expected that staff teaching RSHE will adapt teaching to be fully inclusive of, and accessible to, all learners. This includes (but is not limited to) students with specific beliefs and students with SEND. This may, as required, involve deviation from the standard lesson plans and resources provided by school leadership – as mentioned in section 5 of this policy.

Students who are menstruating will be supported in the following ways:

- Sanitary disposal units in female and accessible toilets
- Pupils can access emergency sanitary products from their Head of Year, LBM or school nurse
- For those experiencing period poverty, free sanitary protection can be accessed from the Inclusion Team

7. Disclosures and Safeguarding

We understand that students may have specific experiences, viewpoints and ideas surrounding the content taught in RSHE lessons. Whilst an open and inclusive environment is encouraged and is conducive to quality learning within the subject, it may be necessary for staff to report any disclosures of personal information by students under the school's safeguarding policy.

It is not appropriate for students to expect staff to keep information in confidence and students are made fully aware of this. It is also not appropriate for staff to promise confidentiality.

Through taught lessons, teaching staff will signpost students to sources of confidential local and national support services.

- The school nurse
- The school Mental Health Lead
- CAMHS

8. Student Outcomes

In enabling students to acquire knowledge, skills, responsible attitudes and behaviour with regard to relationships, sex and health education, Lees Brook Community School aims to provide a worthwhile educational experience for all students which will present opportunities to:

- Help students to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and others, acceptance of responsibility, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity
- Enable students to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications, and risks, of certain types of behaviour and to accept that both sexes should behave responsibly in sexual matters
- Support the personal development and social skills of the students
- Ensure that students have an understanding of their own and others' sexuality
- Allow students to experience relationships based upon mutual respect and responsibility which are free from abuse and exploitation
- Provide information which will counteract prejudice and ignorance
- Develop student understanding of risk and their strategies for personal safety
- Empower students with the skills and confidence to use sources of help available to them both within and outside of school

9. Parental Right to Withdraw

Parents, in most cases, have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education curriculum delivered as part of RSE. This right extends up to 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, the decision rests with the child. There is no parental right to withdraw their child from relationships education in RSE or health education, or from that content which is covered in other curriculum areas such as Religious Studies or Science.

Should a parent wish to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education curriculum, it is expected that the parent writes a letter to the Head teacher. Following this, a meeting in school with the head teacher (or a suitable member of the Senior Leadership Team) would take place to discuss the matter and to ensure the full implications of this decision are understood.

This process is the same for pupils with SEND, however in exceptional circumstances the Head teacher may take account of a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND when agreeing or not any application to be excused.

Teachers will plan appropriate, purposeful education for pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.