Relationships and Sex Education Policy (RSE)

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The Department for Education (DfE) published statutory guidance about how Relationships Education, Relationships, Sex Education (RSE), and Health Education should be implemented in all schools across England by 2020 (DfE, 2019a). This follows a consultation with parents, young people and professionals.

The term Relationships and Sex Education – RSE –rather than sex education, is aimed to acknowledge that the primary school approach goes beyond provision of biological information to also focus on clarifying attitudes and values, and developing self-esteem and the skills to manage relationships.

At Ecton Brook we recognise 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.

Context

We teach sex education in the context of the School's aims and values framework. While RSE in our School means that we give children information about sexual behaviour, we do this with an awareness of the moral code and values, which underpin all our work in school.

In particular, we teach RSE in the belief that:

- sex education should be taught in the context of family life;
- sex education is part of a wider social, personal, spiritual and moral education process;
- children should be taught to have respect for their own bodies;
- children should learn about their responsibilities to others, and be aware of the consequences of sexual activity;
- it is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect;
- children need to learn the importance of self-control.

At Ecton Brook safeguarding is at the heart of Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education. There is a constant focus on keeping children safe and providing pupils with preventative education. Teachers are aware of the risks in teaching about sensitive subjects and considered planning allows children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues in a confidential manner. All adults in school are aware of how to respond and how to report any disclosures of abuse or concerns around a child's wellbeing. Regular training is provided for all staff.

Aims and Objectives

- To put in place the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online.
- To teach pupils about the physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults
- To educate children about the way humans reproduce
- To ensure that pupils respect for their own bodies and value the importance of sexual activity as part of a committed, long-term, and loving relationship
- To encourage pupils to explore moral questions

- To ensure that pupils value diversity and respect the views and beliefs of others
- To educate pupils about relationship issues that they may encounter
- To ensure that all pupils know their rights and understand sex abuse and what they should do if they are worried about any sexual matters
- To educate pupils about the importance of mental wellbeing and where to turn for support

Organisation

We teach RSE through different aspects of the curriculum. The main RSE teaching is addressed through our personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. This is supported by the Jigsaw Curriculum, which was updated in July 2020 to meet the September 2020 Government requirements. We also teach some sex education through other subject areas (for example, science and PE), where we feel that they contribute significantly to a child's knowledge and understanding of his or her own body, and how it is changing and developing.

In PSHE we teach children about relationships, and we encourage children to discuss issues. We teach about the parts of the body and how these work, and we explain to them what will happen to their bodies during puberty. For example, we tell the boys that their voices will change during puberty and we explain to the girls about menstruation. We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it.

In science lessons in both key stages, teachers inform children about puberty and how humans reproduce. For this aspect of the school's teaching, we follow the guidance material in the national scheme of work for science. In Key Stage 1 we teach children about how animals, including humans, move, feed, grow and reproduce, and we also teach them about the main parts of the body. Children learn to appreciate the differences between people and how to show respect for each other. In Key Stage 2 we teach about life processes and the main stages of the human life cycle in greater depth.

In Years 5 and 6 we place a particular emphasis on health education, as many children experience puberty at this age. 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 humans reproduce; how their bodies change during puberty; what menstruation is and how it affects women. We always teach this with due regard for the emotional development of the children (see above, in this policy).
We arrange a meeting for all parents and carers of children in Years 5 and 6 to discuss this particular programme of lessons, to explain what the teaching includes, how it is taught, and to see the materials the school uses in its teaching.

The role of parents

The School values the role that parents play in supporting their child's relationship and sex education. We wish to build a positive 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
- take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or Governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSE in the school;
- encourage parents to be involved in reviewing the School policy and making modifications to it as necessary;

- inform parents about the best practice known with regard to RSE, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home. We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing responsibilities.

Parents Right to Withdraw

As of September 2020 the Department for Education made Relationships Education compulsory for all primary aged children. This provides important education on friendships, healthy relationships and how to stay safe.
In the primary setting, parents have the right to withdraw their child from some or all of the lessons on Sex Education. If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from sex education lessons, they should discuss this with the Head Teacher, and make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The school always complies with the wishes of parents in this regard.

Further detail can be found by searching 'relationships and health education' on GOV.UK.

The role of the Head Teacher

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our sex education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the Head Teacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The Head Teacher liaises with external agencies regarding the School sex education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the School policy, and that they work within this framework.

The Head Teacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to Governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

The Head Teacher is the Co-ordinator for Relationship and Sex Education. S/he is supported by the School Nurse.

Monitoring and review

The Governing Body monitors our RSE policy on an annual basis. This committee reports its findings and recommendations to the full governing body, as necessary, if the policy needs modification. The Curriculum Committee gives serious consideration to any comments from parents about the RSE programme, and makes a record of all such comments.