**Supporting church schools in The Diocese of Salisbury with Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education.**

**The purpose of this document is to support schools as they engage the school community (staff, parents, governors, clergy in particular) in their plans for planning, teaching and delivery of Relationships Education or Relationships and Sex Education (RSE/RSHE) in church schools. It can be used to help schools and school communities as they consider key issues and will support the writing of a school policy for RSHE before it is published on the school website.**

Background:

* This document has been put together by the school advisory team from the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education in consultation with headteachers and the Children and Young People’s Committee (governance committee) and Trust Board.
* It is based on the policy structure developed by Katy Staples (Adviser for Bristol Diocese) in consultation with national diocesan advisers and Church of England Education Office.

Guidance to schools and academies:

1. ([*DFE Sex and Relationships Guidance*](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education__Relationships_and_Sex_Education__RSE__and_Health_Education.pdf)for September 2020 requires that each school has a published RSHE policy - *the content is on pg 11.)*
2. Before writing a school RSHE policy the DBE recommends that the Church of England’s **Charter for RSHE** and **Growing Faith** website pages, as well as **Goodness and Mercy Website** are explored by senior leaders including governors and staff - as these documents all support the development of understanding to support wise and reflective conversations.

* Church of England Charter for RSE<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/relationships-sex-and-health-education>
* Growing Faith <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/renewal-reform/growing-faith>
* Goodness and Mercy [*https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/about/*](https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/about/)

1. This document also references **Valuing All God’s Children** which is useful for supporting conversations with those who may wish to know the ‘lens’ through which the school might consider questions around sexuality and gender. <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%20July%202019_0.pdf>
2. The DBE recommends that plans for school-wide engagement are put in place to support the writing of or finalising of a policy.

**The content of the following pages may be useful to church schools and academies seeking a structure for a school policy.** The language should be personalised to the school’s Christian vision and relate to the conversations that have been had following engagement with the school community.

**Red text indicates guidance**

**Relationship, [Sex] and Health Education Policy: [insert name] Church of England School/Academy**

**Our School Vision**

Insert school vision and associated Christian values and theological underpinning

Our school’s approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) follows that of the Church of England Education Office in that it seeks to be faith-sensitive and inclusive. (See CofE Charter [here](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/RSHE%20Principles%20and%20Charter_0.pdf).)

It is underpinned by two key Biblical passages:

*“So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them”* **(Genesis 2:7)**

*“I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness”* **(John 10:10)**

**Rationale**

**The Education Reform Act 1988** states that schools should provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum which:

*“promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.”*

In [insert name] Church of England School/Academy, we aim to treat everyone with dignity as all people are made in the image of God and are loved equally by God. (**See Valuing All God’s Children** document [here](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%20July%202019_0.pdf).) We believe that all pupils have a right to an education which enables them to flourish and which is set in a learning community where differences of lifestyle and opinion (within that which is permissible under UK law) are treated with dignity and respect; where bullying of all kinds is eliminated; and where they are free to be themselves and fulfil their potential without fear.

As part of our emphasis on the well-being and care of all pupils, our school seeks to ensure that the RSHE curriculum protects, informs and nurtures them. We aim to prepare pupils to cope with the physical and emotional challenges of growing up and in doing so, our RSHE curriculum clearly differentiates between factual teaching (biology, medicine, the law, marriage, different types of families and the composition of society) and moral teaching about relationships and values, recognising that the distinction can be easily blurred and that there needs to be discernment about the manner in which this is taught. We teach RSHE within a moral (but not moralistic) framework.

RSHE in [insert name] Church of England School/Academy is about what constitutes wellbeing and loving care for ourselves (Physical and Mental Health Education), how we show loving care for others (Relationships Education) and, when at an appropriate age and stage in life, how we show loving care to those we choose to be intimate with, including within marriage (Sex Education).

It is also about the spiritual and moral aspects of healthy, loving and nurturing relationships within a context of a Christian vision for the purpose of life.

Pupils will consider how to ensure that they treat themselves and others, at all times and in all contexts, with dignity and respect.

*For Primary Schools (see DfE Requirements* [*DFE Sex and Relationships Guidance*](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education__Relationships_and_Sex_Education__RSE__and_Health_Education.pdf) *p19-23)*

**Defining Relationships Education**

Relationships Education is learning about how to:

* be appreciative of existing relationships
* form new healthy friendships
* enjoy strong positive, caring, relationships with good boundaries, online and in person

This will particularly refer to family relationships (including marriage), friendships and relationships with peers and adults.

*(For Primary Schools who have decided not to include Sex Education to add)*

In this school any content that might be regarded as Sex Education (learning about human body parts, growth, puberty and gestation) will be taught through the science curriculum. Parents and guardians do not have the right to excuse their children from this aspect of the curriculum.

*(For Primary Schools who have decided to include Sex Education to add)*

**Defining Sex Education**

Sex Education is about reproduction: learning how babies can be made and the emotions that people experience when they are ready for close intimacy.

The National Curriculum for science includes content about human body parts, growth, puberty and gestation. Parents do not have the right to withdraw from this aspect of the curriculum.

In this school we have decided that it is important to include [insert aspect of sex education curriculum] to educate the children in our community for adulthood (and for secondary school) in their last year(s) of primary school.

**The right to withdrawal from Sex Education** *For Primary Schools including Sex Education you may prefer to put this information into an appendix, so that it is not right at the front of your policy. If so, reference the appendix here. Some further guidance here on right to withdrawal* <https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/subject-leaders/managing-the-parental-right-to-withdrawal-from-sex-education/>*)*

Parents and guardians do have the right to request that their child is excused from the Sex Education aspect of RSHE and can do so by making concerns known and applying in writing to the Headteacher. The school will invite any enquiring parents or legal guardians to talk through concerns. An explanation of the rationale for RSHE will be given; an opportunity will be offered to review the intended materials and to consider the impact of not receiving Sex Education with peers.

Withdrawing a child from Sex Education remains a statutory right as a parent or legal guardian. If a pupil is excused from Sex Education it is the school’s responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

The school will document this process to ensure a record is kept.

*(For all schools)*

**Defining Health Education**

Health Education is learning about physical health and mental wellbeing so that pupils can make wise choices to ensure their own flourishing and the flourishing of others.[[1]](#footnote-2)

*For secondary schools (see DfE Requirements* [*DFE Sex and Relationships Guidance*](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education__Relationships_and_Sex_Education__RSE__and_Health_Education.pdf) *p25-30)*

**Defining Relationship and Sex Education**

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is about giving young people the information they need to make choices that will help them to form healthy and appropriate relationships of all kinds, including intimate relationships.

RSE will support people throughout their lives to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships at the appropriate time.

*For secondary schools*

**The right to withdrawal from Sex Education** *For Secondary Schools including Sex Education you may prefer to put this information into an appendix, so that it is not right at the front of your policy. If so, reference the appendix here. Some further guidance here on right to withdrawal* <https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/subject-leaders/managing-the-parental-right-to-withdrawal-from-sex-education/>*)*

Parents do have the right to request that their child is excused from this aspect of RSHE and can do so by making concerns known and applying in writing to the Headteacher. The school will invite any enquiring parents or legal guardians to talk through concerns. An explanation of the rationale for RSHE will be given; an opportunity will be offered to review the intended materials and consider the impact of not receiving sex education with peers.

Withdrawing a child/young person from Sex Education remains a statutory right as a parent or legal guardian up until three terms before the child turns 16 years of age. After that point, if the child/young person wishes to receive Sex Education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide them with Sex Education during one of those terms.

If a pupil is excused from Sex Education, it is the school’s responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

The school will document this process to ensure a record is kept.

**Teaching and Learning/How RSHE will be taught in our school** *Adapt to reflect reality in your school*

**DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance 2019:** *“The focus in primary schools should be on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships and relationships with other children and adults”*

RSHE will be delivered professionally and as an identifiable part of Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE). It is mainly taught by the class teacher and is led, resourced and reported to parents in the same way as any other subject. There is a planned programme delivered in a carefully sequenced way.

RSHE will be taught in a way that affords dignity and shows respect to all who make up our diverse community. It will be sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. It will not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act and will be sensitive to the faith and beliefs of those in the wider school community.

RSHE will seek to explain fairly the principles, beliefs and varying interpretations of religious communities on matters of sex and relationships and teach these viewpoints with respect. It will value the importance of faithfulness as the underpinning and backdrop for relationships. It will encourage pupils to develop the skills needed to disagree without being disagreeable, to appreciate the lived experience of other people and to live well together.

RSHE will seek to build resilience in our pupils to help them form healthy relationships. We seek to ensure that they have the knowledge to recognise and understand boundaries in relationships, including online and that they know how to report abuse.

RSHE will promote healthy resilient relationships set in the context of character and virtue development that sits within the school’s Christian Vision and Values. Insert here/explain how your vision and values connect to this. Eg: These include values such as honesty, integrity, self-control, courage, humility, kindness, forgiveness, generosity and a sense of justice.

All staff teaching this sensitive and important subject will have received training and resources will be up to date and, by arrangement, be available for parents to see. This training will be regularly reviewed and revisited.

At [insert name] Church of England School/Academy RSHE is taught mainly by the class teacher*[[2]](#footnote-3)* and all staff teaching RSHE have had training. Only some elements will be taught by outside agencies (outline such instances such as School Nurse such as First Aid or aspects about puberty).

**Confidentiality** – It is important that pupils have confidence in the teacher and that a ‘safe space’ is created where pupils feel confident and can ask age-appropriate questions. Wherever possible, teachers will help to establish clear boundaries for confidentiality between pupils and adults. They will:

* Reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained;
* Encourage pupils to talk to their parents or carers and give them support to do so;
* Make sure that pupils are informed of sources of confidential help;
* Ensure that pupils understand that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and that if there is any possibility of abuse, that school adults will follow the school’s child protection policy/procedure.

**Answering difficult questions** – it is our aim to generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on personal health, relationship and sexual matters can take place without embarrassment and that questions are answered with honesty. Teachers will set ground rules for answering questions. Occasionally, it may be that a pupil asks an explicit or difficult question in the classroom and, while it is our aim that pupils speak to a known adult rather than use the internet for information, the teacher may not feel it is appropriate to answer the question there and then. We believe that individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in these situations, and may answer some questions directly, while others may receive a response such as, ‘that is a good question but I will talk to you after the lesson’. Teachers can refer to the headteacher/xxx if they are concerned. Parents may be advised of what has been asked.

**Pupils with SEND** will have had the content made accessible to them by [………………Useful guidance can be found here <https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/other-resources/rshe-for-send-pupils/>…………]

**What will be taught in the RSHE Curriculum**

In [insert name] Church of England School/Academy we teach [list topics and content] …………….in Yr 1 ……..in Yr 2 …in Yr9 ….. etc. Or reference the link to the curriculum content on the school’s website.

These are in line with the requirements for RSHE from the Department for Education [click [here](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education__Relationships_and_Sex_Education__RSE__and_Health_Education.pdf)]

**How RSHE will be assessed, monitored and evaluated**

Outline your school’s approach…. For example:

The assessment of pupils’ personal, social and emotional development is as important as any other school subject and, pupils will have the opportunity to reflect on their own leaning and personal experiences in order to explore how their knowledge and understanding has developed.

The monitoring and evaluation of RSHE in our school follows the same monitoring and evaluation processes used throughout the school for all subjects. This includes staff meeting discussions and peer review between colleagues. Pupil conferencing, work reviews and learning walks are also used to gain a holistic view of the impact of teaching of RSHE and to inform further developments.

**Policy Review**

This policy has been produced through engagement with *[insert groups who have contributed – Governors/(subcommittee), parent forum/group, – pupil voice group, etc.] See Goodness and Mercy Website/CofE Charter for ways in which this can be done.*

Whilst a number of school stakeholders have been involved in the development of this policy, it must be recognised that the law specifies what is taught. How it is taught is ultimately a decision for the school.

This policy will be reviewed every: [time period]

It is due to be reviewed again on: [date]

It was approved by FGB on: [date]

**Related Documentation**

This policy should be read in conjunction with The Equalities Act 2010 [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance) and the following school policies:

* Insert relevant policies for example:
  + Safeguarding Policy
  + Equality Policy
  + Health and Safety Policy

1. See [“Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach” March 2018](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-04/Mental%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Guidance.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. It does not need to be the class teacher or tutor who teaches Relationships [and Sex] Education. It is best delivered by teachers who are skilled and confident at managing sensitive issues and are good at handling class discussion. See research from Bristol University about secondary RSE <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/5/e014791> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)