



RSE Policy

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Rationale

The school recognise the entitlement of all learners to receive Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE), which is current, meaningful, and relevant. Coombswood School embeds a respect for diversity and encourages a sense of compassion and understanding of others. We recognise and respect that members of the school community are diverse in culture, religious values, and sexual orientation. We also recognise that modern technology brings with it issues of safeguarding and we are committed to addressing online safety in its various forms.

We will ensure that Relationships and Sex Education is accessible for all learners. Delivery and resources will be adapted and personalised to meet the needs of all young people with SEND, in preparation for adulthood and in line with the SEND Code of Practice (2014).

Statutory Obligations of RSE and Health Education

Relationships education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under section 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all learners receiving secondary education.

"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."

"This is why we have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools, as well as making Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools."

"Schools are free to determine how to deliver the content set out in the DfE guidance 2019 in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. Effective teaching in these subjects will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to pupils, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme of lessons."

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. DfE Guidance p.8.

"All schools must have in place a written policy for Relationships and Sex Education."

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. DfE Guidance p.11.

All the compulsory subject content will be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It will be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds, religion and beliefs of learners and parents while always with the aim of providing learners with the knowledge they need of the law. It will teach about LGBT+ content at integrated and timely points. We will make reasonable adjustments and take positive action to alleviate disadvantage, being mindful of the SEND Code of Practice.

This RSE policy is also informed by the following legal guidance:

- Equality Act (2010)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

Definition

The Sex Education Forum defines relationships and sex education (RSE) as learning about the emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality, and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills, and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

Whilst knowledge of biology and the reproductive system is important, RSE is concerned with attitudes and values, personal and social skills, respect for self and others, family, stable loving relationships, feelings, gender roles and decision-making.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Aims

The RSE curriculum at Coombswood recognises that today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world. 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.

With this objective in mind our RSE curriculum is taught as 6 strands – "Families", "Respectful relationships and friendships", "Online and media", "Being safe" and "Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health". Learners will study a wide variety of RSE-based topics that will enrich their cultural capital and help them navigate through complex situations in life.

RSE, as part of the PSHE education curriculum, is vital to the development of the young people in our school. The planned programmes are designed to help them deal with the difficult moral, social, and health-related issues that arise in their lives and in society. They also help them to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy, independent lives as individuals, parents, workers, and members of society. Effective RSE is a key component in our approach to safeguarding our learners through the curriculum. The secondary age group is considered vulnerable with respect to the specific safeguarding issues of child exploitation (CCE and CSE) and child on child abuse, including teenage domestic violence.

Effective RSE can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by learners if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

Specifically, our RSE curriculum:

- Provides a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
- Prepares learners for puberty and gives them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- Helps young people develop feelings of self-respect, confidence, and empathy.
- Creates a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships.
- Teaches and confirms the correct vocabulary for young people to describe themselves and their bodies.

Policy Development

This policy will continually be developed in consultation with staff, young people and parents.

The consultation and policy development process involves the following steps:

1. Review – the staff working group pulls together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.
2. Staff consultation – all school staff are given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
3. Parent consultation – parents are invited to attend a meeting about the policy and provide feedback through various mechanisms.
4. Young people consultation – an enquiry into what exactly young people want from their RSE.

5. Ratification – once amendments are made, the policy is shared with directors and ratified.

Consultation with young people takes place both formally and informally. Formally, learner's complete evaluations, with form tutors, in enrichment and with the PSHE Education teacher. Informally, there is an open dialogue between staff and learners. There is also the use of plenary activities to evaluate lessons.

The Law

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships, and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos, and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people, and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

Young people should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent.
- violence against women and girls
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting,' youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)

Inclusion and Equality

Our RSE programmes recognise that young people will bring prior learning and real-life experiences to their learning. Our curriculum respects and builds on these, providing programmes that reflect both the universal and unique needs of our learners. In this way, the programmes recognise and respect learners' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, gender identity, faith, or culture (which may, depending on their age and maturity, not be something they have yet considered or may be emerging) or the sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture of their immediate family, close friends, and wider community.

The Equality Act 2010 covers the way the curriculum is delivered, as schools and other education providers must ensure that issues are taught in a way that does not subject learners to discrimination. This includes protection for all the *nine characteristics* stated in the Act. Schools have a duty under the Equality Act to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) and any other groups, however they choose to identify. Inclusive RSE will foster good relations between learners, tackle all types of prejudice – including homophobia – and promote understanding and respect. The Department for Education has produced advice on The Equality Act 2010 and schools (DfE 2014b).

Partnerships with Parents

The school recognises that parents are crucial to the success of the RSE programme and is committed to providing both information about what is provided and accessible opportunities to comment on policy and practice.

Parents will retain the right to withdraw their child from sex education at the school. However, young people can opt into sex education from three terms before their 16th birthday and at that point, parents will not have the option to withdraw their children from relationships education or health education. Schools are advised to keep a record of the process of dialogue with parents relating to requests to withdraw from sex education. If you wish to withdraw your child from sex education, please speak to the school principal.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using a form available for this purpose and available from the office. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the learner's educational record. The school principal will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative, purposeful, and appropriate work will be given to learners who are withdrawn from sex education.

Confidentiality, Safeguarding and Child Protection

Everyone involved in RSE is clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. Teachers will discuss confidentiality with learners through the development of a group agreement at the start of lessons, making it clear that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and will report concerns or suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as outlined in the safeguarding and child protection policy.

Delivery of the RSE Curriculum

To ensure both progression and coverage of the statutory curriculum, we use the PSHE Association's Education Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND. We respect and build on these, providing programmes that reflect both the universal and unique needs of our learners.

Controversial topics will be covered with sensitivity and respect for all viewpoints. The programmes are not aimed at telling what is right and wrong but to consider different perspectives and provide young people with the information to make their own decisions.

At school, we teach young people in mixed-age classes, divided into key stage 3 (years 7-9) and key stage 4 (years 10-11). We have amalgamated the frameworks into a rolling 3-year programme for Key Stage 3 and a 1 and 2-year programme for Key Stage 4. Much of the RSE curriculum is delivered as part of this.

Some young people at the school may either be sexually experimental or know friends who are. They will be interested to know what they should expect of a partner and how to talk to them. They will need more information on contraception, sexual health and how to access services. They will want to know about different types of relationships. They may want to know about how to cope with strong feelings and how to cope with the pressures to have sex. They will start to ask questions about parenthood and may like to know how they can talk to a trusted adult. They will also be interested in other influences on sexual decision-making such as the law, different cultures and religious beliefs, pornography, the media and the effects of drugs and alcohol.

Young people at KS4 will need more information on sexual risk, pregnancy, sexual health, fertility, and infertility. They may be keen to discuss gender stereotyping, violence, exploitation, the law, and discrimination. Learning about the relationship between self-esteem and body image and how to challenge negative messages from peers, the media and society is also important.

The curriculum will be developed through the following themes:

- Relationships
- Feelings and attitudes
- My body
- Influences on behaviour
- Keeping safe and looking after my sexual health
- People who can help me / sources of help and advice.

RSE will be taught primarily within PSHE, but also in Science, ICT and PE lessons. Lessons may be taught as part of a discreet unit, or they may be embedded within other subjects. The school will offer a flexible approach to delivery where a particular need or concern is identified.

Young people also have regular access, throughout the academic year, to workshops and RSE lessons taught by external organisations promoting positive sexual health and relationships.

Young people will also be signposted to appropriate support and services when required. This may include counselling services, local sexual health services and healthcare professionals.

How We Assess, Record and Report Learners' Learning and Progress

We will ensure that assessment opportunities are built into the RSE programmes and that RSE is assessed on skills and attributes as well as knowledge. Regular opportunities will be provided to enable learners to reflect on their work and learning, for example, in-class question and answer, discussion, group work, peer assessment, self-assessment and marking.

Learner progress will be tracked by the PSHE teacher and will link with the schools' overall learner tracking, including individual needs.

We will ensure that parents and other stakeholders are provided with feedback and information about learners' learning in RSE.

The curriculum itself will be quality-assured in a variety of ways including learning walks, drop-ins, lesson observations, planning, and work scrutiny. This will be carried out as part of the schools' ongoing quality assessment cycle by the SLT.

Roles and Responsibilities

Learners

Young people are expected to participate in RSE and treat others with respect and sensitivity. Alternative work, which focuses on values and self-esteem will be given to those who are withdrawn from RSE.

Staff delivering RSE are responsible for:

- Planning the curriculum using the school's proformas.
- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way.
- Adapting and personalising delivery to the needs of the individual.
- Modelling positive attitudes to Relationships and Sex Education.
- Monitoring and tracking progress.
- Responding to the needs of individual young people and issues as they arise.
- Responding appropriately to young people whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the sex education components of RSE.
- Take responsibility to attend regular CPD to ensure they are confident and have up to date knowledge and understanding.

The Principal:

The principal is responsible for ensuring that RSE is fully covered and that it is taught consistently well. The principal is responsible for managing requests to withdraw learners from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE. The principal and RSE Lead will provide regular access to training and development to ensure that staff are confident in their subject knowledge and delivery. The principal is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the RSE programmes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The principal will lead the evaluation by encouraging learners to participate in completion of surveys and focus group discussions. Relationships and Sex Education can be evaluated by monitoring the decline in recorded instances of homophobic bullying, bullying, use of derogatory language, including genderised or sexual comments.

Links to Other Policies

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- PSHE/RSHE - whole school curriculum overview
- PSHE (incorporating SMSC) Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy

Further Information

Brook – the UK's leading sexual health charity for young people under 25 www.brook.org.uk.

Bish websites – online advice and information for both professionals and young people, created by Justin Hancock, an experienced relationships and sex educator www.bishtraining.com (for professionals) & www.bishuk.com (for young people).

Sex Education Forum – a membership organisation that works together with its members for quality relationships and sex education www.sexeducationforum.org.uk.

RSE Hub – a membership organisation that believes that relationships and sex education (RSE) should be an entitlement for all children and young people www.rsehub.org.uk.

Family Planning Association – a UK registered charity working to enable people to make informed choices about sex and to enjoy sexual health www.fpa.org.uk.

National Aids Trust – the UK's leading charity dedicated to transforming society's response to HIV www.nat.org.uk.

PSHE Association, <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/>.

Parents Right to Withdraw

Parents' have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wished to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix B of this policy and addressed to the principal.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the learner's educational file. The principal will discuss the request with the parents and take appropriate action. Alternative work will be given to learners who are withdrawn from sex education.

Appendix A

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. (Please state if there is a specific aspect of the curriculum)			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			
TO BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL			
Agreed actions from discussion with parents			
Principal Signature			

Appendix 1

Relationships and Sex Education Expectations

By the end of secondary, learners will need to know:

Families

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- What marriage and civil partnerships are, including their legal status (e.g., that marriage and civil partnerships carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony).
- Why marriage and civil partnerships are an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into; further linked to educating on **protected characteristics**.
- The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships
- The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy; how to judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

Respectful Relationships, including Friendships

The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online), including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.

- Different (non-sexual) types of relationship.
- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, can cause damage (e.g., how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice).
- That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority, and due tolerance of other people's beliefs.
- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying, and how and where to get help.
- That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

Online and Media

- Their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.

- About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
- The impact of viewing harmful content.
- That specifically sexually explicit material (e.g., pornography) presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviour, can damage the way people themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared, and used online.

Being Safe

- The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence, and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
- How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).

Intimate and Sexual Relationships, including Sexual Health

- How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex, and friendship.
- That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively (e.g., physical, emotional, mental, sexual, and reproductive health and wellbeing).
- The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.
- That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure, and not pressurising others.
- That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
- The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy, and options available.
- The facts around pregnancy, including miscarriage.
- That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).
- How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.
- About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
- How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.