

MERSTONE SCHOOL



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

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1. Aims and objectives

In writing this policy, special consideration was given to the current guidance from: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. Department of Education 2021.

In a school for students with severe and complex needs, the RSE curriculum is heavily adaptable and is taught, as appropriate, to individuals and specific cohorts. In general terms, it is there to support young people and their relationships and prepare them for an adult life where they can:

- Be aware of their sexuality
- Behave responsibly within their sexual and personal relationships
- Develop and clarify a set of values that will guide their decisions, behaviours and judgements
- Express and manage emotions
- Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves from infection and unwanted pregnancies
- Have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others
- Communicate effectively
- Neither exploit nor be exploited
- Identify the security offered by consistent and stable partnership relationships

Pupils at Merstone School demonstrate a wide range of abilities needs and personal attributes. In order for them to benefit from the learning experiences that are offered, a considerable number of factors have to be considered by all staff. These factors relate to influences of emotion, behaviour, social interaction and capacity to comprehend.

The Governing Board has determined that the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education be available to all pupils. It may also be appropriate to provide specific education in response to individual need in consultation with parents. It may also be appropriate to include an IEP specific to Relationships and Sex Education for a specific student. The programme will be flexible as determined by pupil needs.

In this document the term relationships education rather than sex education is used. This is to stress that sex education needs to go beyond biological information, focussing on clarifying attitudes. This is in line with current DfEE guidance, stating that SRE is: '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'.

Rational

RSE is a lifelong process of acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs and attitudes about sex, sexuality, relationships and feelings. At Merstone RSE should contribute to preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of adult life. It should empower all pupils, regardless of sexuality, gender, ethnicity, faith, ability or disability. This RSE policy is based on both national and local guidance. It has clear links with the school's PSHE policy. RSE is part of the PSHE curriculum at Merstone School. Pupils at Merstone have a right to an appropriate RSE based on their individual needs. We aim to ensure we educate around issues that affect our pupils lives but ensure this is balanced with cognitively appropriate materials and resources. Care needs to be taken not to underestimate pupils' feelings, understanding, current and possible future relationships and sexual experiences.

2. Principles that underpin the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education

Students at Merstone have rights and responsibilities in regards to their personal relationships and sexuality including the right to:

- Receive structured education about human development including sexuality and to be supported to develop a positive self-image of themselves
- Learn to communicate about sexuality and to develop the appropriate language and the vocabulary to do so
- Be provided with information advice and guidance on inappropriate sexual behaviour that might be socially, culturally or legally unacceptable
- Be taught about sexual exploitation
- To be aware of situations when they are at risk of exploitation or of exploiting others. Such teaching or training should include both information and skill development
- Information about help with contraception and safer sex
- Be equipped with coping strategies with regards to the physical and emotional aspects of growing up
- Relationships and Sex Education within a school curriculum that is not a discrete subject on the timetable but features within the broader context of personal development activities
- Be presented with Relationships and Sex Education that takes due regard for the multicultural society in which we live

3. Roles and responsibilities within the policy

- The Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that resources and facilities are maintained at an appropriate level and that special educational provision within the school is fit for purpose
- The principal has the responsibility for ensuring that the personal, social and educational needs of each pupil are appropriately accounted for within the management and organisation of the school and for advising the Governing Board
- The role of the subject leaders will be to provide a sound body of knowledge and support other members of staff. To co-ordinate and update effective use of resources and update school policy and practice, as and when necessary, in line with LEA and national guidelines.
- All staff have a responsibility to ensure that pupils receive appropriate information, advice and guidance regarding Relationships and Sex Education and that students receive a personalised approach relevant to their understanding
- All staff have a responsibility to ensure that materials, resources, language, labelling and terminology used by adults should be relevant, meaningful and not stereotypical or patronising. Teaching of gender, race, disability and sexual orientation should be presented in an equal and non-judgemental manner
- Teachers have a responsibility to obtain written permission from parents/carers before teaching Sex Education and for informing them that they have the right to withdraw their child if they so wish, consent and right to withdraw is not relevant for relationship education as the teachings are relevant to pupils needs
- Parents / carers have an important role to play in liaising closely with members of staff to support, commit and contribute to Relationships and Sex Education that may be supported at home

4. Curriculum approach

The following strategies are particularly relevant to the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education:

- “Ice breaker” activities to promote inclusion and contribution
- Individual support from a staff member to present facts to encourage relevant and specific discussion
- Small group activities and discussion sessions
- Role Play
- Setting the scene to encourage individual contributions
- Story telling
- Clear, unambiguous verbal information
- Visual material in the form of diagrams, pictures, slides and video material
- Scenarios to identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviours
- Audio materials

5. The Curriculum

RSE is specifically referenced to in the PSHE long term and medium-term planning across the school. PSHE is either taught as a discrete subject or within a wider adapted scheme of work that ensure key principles are addressed and built upon each year. Some elements of RSE are integrated into the whole curriculum, such as toilet and hygiene skills, social skills etc. Termly modules are studied in specific subject areas, at Key Stage 4/5 many link in with the ASDAN curriculum – ‘Transition Challenge’ and ‘Towards Independence’.

Staff will judge when older pupils are ready to move on to more specific work on sexuality and sexual relationships. Some of these areas may only be dealt with on a 1:1 basis. These include:

- Masturbation and the related feelings
- Sexual intimacy and relationships
- Sexual preference
- Pregnancy and birth
- Safer sex and contraception
- Work on relationships, self-esteem and emotions will be supported by areas of the PSHE curriculum.
- Many pupils in school will be given support toilet and hygiene skills on a daily basis.

Some pupils may require unplanned support and guidance, in response to individual need or circumstance. Any matters that arise are treated with confidence and sensitivity, and adhere to the principles of this policy. These sessions may be delivered by the class teacher, subject leaders / SMHL or the family support team.

Parental Involvement/community links

The aims of the school cannot be met effectively without parental involvement; a partnership between home and school is essential. At Merstone, we ensure that parents are kept well informed and involved in all aspects of their child’s education and we endeavour to be a support to parents. As RSE can be an area of the curriculum of concern to our parents, we make every effort to inform parents of the content of our RSE curriculum. Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in all stages of their child’s development and learning. Concerned parents are invited into school to discuss curriculum content with the relevant class teacher, and the PSHE subject leader/Head Teacher if appropriate. The emphasis is upon learning within the home, school and community. Pupils must be given the opportunity to transfer the knowledge, skills, attitudes and concepts that they have learnt in other situations.

6. External services involvement

As a school, we will ensure that we join with and use external services that will benefit our pupils RSE knowledge and development. We currently have a strong link with Umbrella and our school nursing team, to deliver bespoke workshops and sessions across our departments within school. This ensures expert knowledge and delivery of essential RSE teachings.

7. Links with other policies

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to RSE, we also have the following policies, either joint or individual, to support the teaching of RSE:

- Safeguarding Policy
- PSHE policy
- Positive Mental health and Wellbeing Policy

Appendix 1 – RSE Curriculum content

Key Stages 1 and 2

These aspects of Sex and Relationship Education will be taught through the Science and /or PSHE curriculum and are statutory.

At Key Stage 1 Moonstones, Sapphire 1, Emerald 1

- Recognise the main external parts of human bodies
- Animals and humans grow

At Key Stage 2 Emerald 2, Sapphire 2, Topaz

- Animals and humans grow and reproduce
- The main stages of the human life cycle

These aspects will be taught as part of the Relationship and Sex Education Curriculum

At Key Stage 1 and 2: Moonstones, Sapphire 1, Emerald 1, Emerald 2, Sapphire 2, Topaz

- Body parts – recognition and naming of body parts including by the end of Key Stage 2 the external sexual body parts
- Gender – identifying male or female, physical differences
- Public and private – public and private places at home and school
- Feelings – recognising and naming feelings and recognising that they can have an effect on others
- Relationships – recognition of self and others; recognising difference. Developing friendships and identifying the range of relationship in and outside school including family, friends and strangers
- Life cycle – identifying the life cycle; baby, child, teenager, adult. This will include body changes and puberty

Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 Sapphire and Emerald 3, Diamonds 1-3.

At Key Stage 3

- The physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence recognise the main external and internal reproductive parts of the human body
- The work Key Stage 2 would be reinforced and extended
- Body parts – naming public and private body parts and understanding body functions including menstruation and masturbation
- Gender – understanding the differences between men and women
- Public and private – understanding the privacy required for masturbation and developing their understanding of their rights to privacy
- Feelings – understanding the changes in and consequences of feelings
- Relationships – understanding the importance of their peer group and how they relate to one another. Develop strategies for forming friendships
- Life cycle – understanding body changes as they grow and change

At key Stage 4 and 5

- The work from Key Stage 3 will be reinforced and extended
- Body parts – understanding the sexual organs and similarities and differences between the sexes
- Gender – exploring the and recognising stereotypes
- Public and private – offering opportunities to create a private space
- Developing a sense of privacy such as in the bedroom and bathroom
- Feelings – recognising physical responses and developing a language for them
- Managing responses to feelings including sexual feelings and arousal
- Relationships – developing skills for friendships
- Life cycle – understanding sexual body changes and changing relationships with friends and families

1:1 basis:

- Body parts – including the sexual function of the body parts
- Gender – exploring and challenging gender and racial stereotypes and different roles in parenting
- Public and private – understanding their own and other's need for privacy
- Feelings – understanding sexual feelings, sexual desire and sexual response
- Relationships – skills for developing an intimate relationship
- Developing an awareness of the range of sexual relationships include same sex relationships
- Developing their understanding of sexual health, safer sex and HIV
- Life cycle – learning about the use of contraception, understanding conception, pregnancy and birth including parenting and child rearing. Sources of support