

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Adopted by Governors: *September 2021*

Next Review due: *Autumn 2022*

Committee Reviewed at:Quality Aut 2021.....

Signed by Chair of Committee:.....

Date:.....

Signed by Head Teacher:.....

Date:.....

Introduction

Birkett House is a mixed school for pupils aged 5-19, all of whom have moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. The school provides for pupils from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds. Birkett House School is committed to developing both learning and personal relationships, students are encouraged to exercise choice and be as independent as possible. Dignity, self-respect and awareness of the needs of others are all actively fostered.. The School adopts an open and positive attitude to the students' physical and emotional development. Every student is valued as an individual and actively encouraged to develop a positive self-image. The mandatory elements of National Curriculum Sex Education up to the age of sixteen are delivered within the wider PSHE and RSE curriculum by means appropriate to students' levels of understanding, and are clearly documented.

LEA Policy Statement for Sex Education

The School's policy on Sex Education follows the framework of the L.E.A.'s policy. This states that 'the importance of sexual relationships in all our lives is such that sex education is a crucial part of preparing children for their lives now and in the future as adults and parents. In sex education, factual information about the physical aspects of sex, though important, is not more important than a consideration of the qualities of relationships in family life and of values, standards and the exercise of personal responsibility as they affect individuals and the community at large' (Para 2.1 Administrative Memo 17, 1987)

The values of Sex and Relationship Education

Our sex and Relationship education programme encourages pupils to have regard to moral considerations and the value of family life. We believe that the basis of moral behaviour is that each of us feels valued for what we are. Our students need to experience self-esteem and positive self-awareness before they can form satisfying relationships with others. Marriage and parenthood is a real possibility for some of our students and sex and relationship education for those students is very important. Students for whom this will not be possible still need to be included in learning and experiencing caring and loving relationships. Our aim is to give our students the skills to conduct relationships with dignity and the assertiveness to avoid being exploited.

The Aims of Sex and Relationship Education

It is our aim for sex and Relationship education to

- Be an integral part of the learning process for all students
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Provide the knowledge and information to which all students are entitled reflecting the individual needs of the student.
- Raise student's self-esteem and confidence, especially in relationships with others
- Help students to foster an understanding of their own developing sexuality and appropriate behaviour

- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Help students to develop feelings of self and mutual respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around the issues of sexuality and relationships and to show respect and tolerance towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, feelings, vies and sexuality or be of a different gender
- Develop the skills of choice, assertiveness and decision-making which will enable students to cope in a range of situation
- Give practice of strategies which reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse
- Encourage the understanding of right and wrong and develop the skills to communicate their own feelings whilst recognising the feelings of others

Entitlement

We aim to provide a broad, balanced and relevant sex education programme tailored to meet the needs of pupils as identified in their individual programmes.

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning teaching for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities who represent a large minority of pupils. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility.

Schools should be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education and RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some pupils; for example those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors should be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects. In special schools and for some SEND pupils in mainstream schools there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages. As with all teaching for these subjects, schools should ensure that their teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.

We believe that all students have a right to:

- To receive education about their own bodies and their own sexuality.
- To have access to all knowledge about sex that they can comprehend and that is appropriate to their stage of personal and psychosexual development.
- To have the opportunity to love and be loved and to be helped to find expressions of sexuality that are socially and legally acceptable.
- To deliver education and counselling in socio-sexual behaviour in order to permit greater social contact and opportunities within the wider community.
- To receive education to enable our students to avoid situations in which there may be sexual exploitation.

(Harocops, D. 1992, 4th Autism Congress Europe)

Moral and Values Framework

In line with the requirements of Section 46 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 the school sex education programme encourages pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life.

The Sex and Relationship Education Programme

The DfE document (2020) writes that *“To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.”*

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity. It is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

Delivery of RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE). Birkett House School are also committed to the teaching of all aspects of safeguarding including protective behaviours, CSE, grooming, online safety, sexting, prevent etc.

We will provide all students with a programme of relationship and sex education at a level appropriate to their age, physical and cognitive development.

Details of programmes and resources to be used will be available to parents. Alternative arrangements can be made for students whose parents choose to withdraw them from certain parts of the sex education programme but not relationship or health education. For students with P.M.L.D. the programme will be adapted according to their needs and abilities. Our PSHE and RSE curriculum is available to view on request as well as on the Birkett House website.

Sex and Relationship Education in Birkett House will cover

- Body parts including private body parts
- Language about sex
- Gender recognition, similarities and differences
- Preparation for puberty – bodily and emotional changes
- Exploration of feelings and emotions

- Personal hygiene and personal presentation
- Making choices
- Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
- Online grooming
- Assertiveness and as a consequence self-protection
- Learning appropriate behaviour
- Decision making
- The difference between private and public behaviours
- Masturbation and related feelings
- Sexual intimacy and relationships
- Contraception
- Pregnancy and birth

Sex education for students of **primary age**, focuses on relationships, families, public and private, areas of the body, stages of life from a baby to an adult, puberty (including menstruation) and self-care. Although it is not a requirement, primary aged students can be taught additional content if this is applicable.

It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department continues to recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born.

Sex education for students of **secondary** age focuses on, safe sex, healthy relationships and safety, STIs and pregnancy, intimacy and any misconceptions. All of these topics will be taught in an appropriate manner for the students and their abilities.

The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

*In teaching Relationships Education and RSE, schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, (please see *The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Departmental advice*), under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics. 37. Schools should ensure that all of their teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum.*

As a school we feel this is an important area to embed throughout the course of PSHE so will be discussed where appropriate, for example as part of relationships in primary lessons.

Masturbation

Whilst not encouraged in school, we are of the understanding that on occasions this is an act which students find challenging to stop. With this in mind, staff will initially encourage this activity to stop and explain where this is most appropriate to happen. On occasions, this may exacerbate behaviour and whilst staff are encouraged to distract and redirect the student, this may not happen and consequently lead to physical challenges. In this instance, students will be supported to an area of privacy and dignity. Lessons on public and private and appropriate public behaviour, as well as other subjects, will form part of the curriculum throughout the whole of the PSHE curriculum.

Menstruation

The onset of menstruation can be confusing or even alarming for girls if they are not prepared. Pupils should be taught key facts about the menstrual cycle including what is an average period, range of menstrual products and the implications for emotional and physical health. In addition to curriculum content, schools should also make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls prepare for and manage menstruation including with requests for menstrual products. Schools will need to consider the needs of their cohort of pupils in designing this content.

Organisation and Methods of Teaching

PSHEC Curriculum Team are responsible for co-ordinating the sex education throughout the school. Sex and Relationship Education is taught by class teachers as part of a Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship Programme. Separate gender groups may be appropriate for certain topics and groups will be based on development and maturity. We encourage the use of correct words for body parts and functions. A wide range of teaching methods are used including discussion, role-play, looking at case studies and other active and creative ways of involving

students in understanding issues. Ground rules are established for group discussion when dealing with sensitive issues.

Teachers of secondary aged students have received training in 'The Sex Factor' aimed at delivering RSE for students with PMLD, MLD and SLD. We are also a part of the PSHE Association which supported our creation of the curriculum. This provides resources and support where necessary.

As professionals we are aware that once per year as part of our PSHE curriculum may not be 'enough' to teach the main aspects of RSE, and therefore we now include an 'Anything goes' session every Friday which encourages teacher to tackle aspects which are appropriate and relevant to the students within the classes. It also allows for students to become comfortable talking about such areas with their teachers and supports open and honest discussions or anonymous questions if any student has any concerns.

Contraceptive Advice

In accordance with the advice in Circular 5/94 staff must exercise particular care in relation to contraceptive advice for students under sixteen for whom sexual intercourse is illegal. In this school staff do not give pupils individual advice on contraception and other aspects of sexual behaviour. If students require individual personal advice parents will be advised about appropriate agencies to consult.

Resources

The most valuable resource in the education of students is the understanding, experience, creativity and skill of staff. All staff teaching sex education will feel confident and will have some training in the delivery of the subject. A variety of materials including books, worksheets, videos and other illustrative materials may be used. Where this material is used it will be with the knowledge and consent of parents/carers.

Partnership with Parents

We will take every opportunity to inform and involve parents and carers by

- Inviting parents to discuss their child's personal development
- Inviting parents to meetings with class teams
- By making the sex education policy available to parents on request and on the school website.
- By sending home letters to inform the parents of the topic

Staff are always willing to discuss with parents/carers any matters which concern them. It is important that there is no conflict of information given.

Parental Right of Withdrawal

Parents have the right to withdraw from non-statutory, non-science components of sex education for those with children in the primary sector (years R to 6). They do not have the right to withdraw

their children from relationships education. Parents of secondary school aged young adults (years 7-14) also have the right to withdraw up until the third term before the pupil's 16th birthday.

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. If parents wish to withdraw their child from sex education they will be asked to discuss this with the class teacher and the Headteacher. Schools will want to document this process to ensure a record is kept.

Safeguarding

The aim of our PSHE and RSE curriculum is to keep our students safe and encourage them to learn as much as possible to keep themselves safe also. As a school we are aware of the important role that we play.

Good practice allows children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children should be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This should include processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.

KCSIE is clear that all staff should know what to do if a pupil tells them that they are being abused or neglected or are witnessing abuse. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. 119. Good practice would be to involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) in anything that is safeguarding-related in the context of these subjects.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The sex education programme for individual students as outlined in individual programmes will be monitored as part of the yearly progress report. The P.S.H.E curriculum will be monitored by class teachers and the subject co-ordinator as part of the monitoring and evaluation cycle.

Please be assured that the teachers know their students well, their abilities, their cognitive levels and their developmental understanding and will always prepare work and content with this in mind. We acknowledge that these topics are serious and that the minutiae of such areas may not be appropriate for all students and consequently teachers will always make such subjects appropriate.

Other relevant Documentation

P.S.H.E.C Scheme of Work Leics Sex Education Policy & Guidelines (1994)

PAR3 documents

Child Protection

Harocops, D. 1992, 4th Autism Congress Europe
DFE Relationships education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education
(2019)