

**Reviewed August 2023**

## **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the approach in this school to the teaching of relationships and sex education (RSE).

### **Scope**

This policy applies to the Management Committee, employees and pupils of the school.

### **Rationale**

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. Effective RSE can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by pupils if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing. At our school we aim to deliver a whole school approach to RSE and deliver this through the science and PSHCE curriculum.

- Relationships and sex education is learning about the emotional and, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Some aspects are taught in science, and others are taught as part of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHCE). A comprehensive programme of RSE provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex and sexual health. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline. (PSHE Association)]

Northumberland PRU ensures the RSE curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and is informed by issues in the school and wider community. This policy takes into account the views of teachers, pupils and parents. We will engage with these groups in the following ways:

- *Surveys*
- *Parent/carers voice group meetings*
- *Student voice meetings*

## **Policy statement**

The aim of relationships and sex education (RSE) is to provide balanced, factual information about physical and emotional changes, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious and moral dimensions of sexual health in an age appropriate way and which meets the needs of our school community.

RSE is taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example cared for children, or young carers).

Northumberland PRU's approach is intended to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic, cultural and religious groups. Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have about RSE with the Headteacher.

Northumberland PRU understands that pupils with SEND or other needs (such as those with social, emotional or mental health needs) are entitled to learn about RSE and the programme will be designed to be inclusive of all pupils making reasonable adjustments wherever possible to promote accessibility and inclusivity of the curriculum.

We work in partnership with parents and carers and inform them of our RSE curriculum content by communicating details of content at the start of each school term. This also includes details of our collaborative work with the wider community, e.g. health authority, local clergy, youth workers. Information is also made available via the PRU website.

## **Legal considerations**

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations (2019), made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act (2017) make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education from September 2020.

Schools are not required to teach sex education beyond the compulsory elements contained in the science curriculum but may choose to do so. Parents do not have the right to withdraw children from relationships education but can withdraw their child from any sex education in the RSE curriculum which is additional to the statutory elements of sex education in the science curriculum. (see section 9.1 for information on parents' right to withdraw).

Northumberland PRU understands its responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010 specifically that it must not discriminate against any pupil on the basis of protected characteristics (sex or sexual orientation, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity), and the requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. The makeup of our school community (including the gender and age range of our pupils) is considered and whether it is appropriate or necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with any protected characteristic. The school fosters healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour and challenges occurrences (e.g. sexism, homophobia, misogyny and other gender stereotypes) contrary to these principles.

Provisions under the Equality Act 2010 allow Northumberland PRU to take positive action where it can be evidenced as a proportionate response to particular disadvantages affecting a group because of a protected characteristic, e.g. consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence that they are disproportionately subject to sexual harassment.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

- **The Management Committee** approves the RSE policy and evaluates the effectiveness of its implementation.
- **The Headteacher** ensures that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and that members of staff have sufficient training to teach RSE effectively and handle difficult issues with sensitivity. The Headteacher is responsible for managing parent/carer requests to withdraw pupils from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE (see section 9).
- **The PSHCE coordinator** ensures that the RSE curriculum complements and does not duplicate content covered in National Curriculum subjects such as citizenship, science, and computing.
- **Staff** are responsible for:
  - Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
  - Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
  - Monitoring progress
  - Responding to the needs of individual pupils
  - Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory elements of RSE
  - All teaching staff are responsible for the teaching of RSE in school. Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher.
- **Pupils** are expected to engage fully in RSE and when discussing issues related to RSE to treat others with respect and sensitivity.

## **Curriculum design**

Northumberland PRU has worked with other schools within the authority and more widely to develop an RSE curriculum that is sequenced in an age appropriate way with clear progression of content and skills and which prepares pupils for the next stage in their personal and academic/career development.

The curriculum may be adapted as and when necessary, for instance to respond to an emerging issue in the school or community.

Teaching of the curriculum reflects requirements set out in law, particularly the Equality Act 2010, so that pupils understand what the law does and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of the decisions they make.

## **Safe and effective practice**

Effective RSE may bring about disclosures of child protection issues, if any issues arise

where a member of staff feels that a child is unsafe the necessary procedures in the school's Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

*Please see policy section of the Northumberland PRU school website for further information and links to this policy.*

### **Parents'/carers' right to withdraw**

Northumberland PRU acknowledges that RSE can be a sensitive issue however, just like any other strand of PSHE education, RSE is taught at an age appropriate level.

Some parents/carers may prefer to take responsibility for aspects of this element of education and may choose to discuss the content with their child before pupils participate in the sessions. The school aims to work in partnership with parents/carers to get the best outcomes for pupils. If parents/carers have any questions they should contact the Headteacher to talk through any concerns.

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents/carers do have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE.

Requests for withdrawal must be put in writing and addressed to the Headteacher. Parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited to meet with Headteacher to explore concerns and discuss the impact that withdrawal may have on the child. Alternative work to be completed in school away from the class will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

Parents/carers can exercise the right to withdraw their child up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

Policy will be reviewed annually.

<b>Approved by the Headteacher, Mr R Carr</b>	<b>Date: 3rd August 2023</b>
<b>Approved by the Management Committee Chair, Mr G Reiter</b>	<b>Date: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023</b>
<b>Last Reviewed On:</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>
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