



Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Applicable to:	✓	Astley Community High School
	✓	Seaton Sluice Middle School
	✓	Whytrig Middle School
Approval body:	Curriculum and Performance Committee	

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Approval by	Governing body to determine

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Changed by	Revision Date		

Review Date	
Frequency	Next Review Due
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1. Policy Statement

The Seaton Valley Federation of Schools aims to offer all pupils high quality Relationship and Sex Education (RSE), which is sometimes referred to elsewhere as SRE, so that they can make informed choices throughout their lives, through a well-planned programme in accordance with the guidance given in the publication, **Sex and Relationship Education Guidance** (DfEE 0116/2000 July 2000) and from RSE in Northumberland (Northumberland County Council).

2. What is Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)?

“RSE 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. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching.” (DfEE 0116/2000 July 2000)

3. Background

Our children learn about relationships and sex from the very youngest age, even if we don't talk with them. Some of the things they learn are incorrect, confusing and frightening. In a world where sex is used to sell things from food to fast cars, and celebrities' lives become everyone's business, we should talk to our children to make sense of it all. As well as this, in the UK we have the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in Western Europe. We also have high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

4. Principles and Values

Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. However it does enable young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and to understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity until they are ready. Parents and carers are the key people for their child's learning about relationships and sex and schools should always work in partnership with home. Parents and carers need to know that the Federation's programme will complement their role and support them in the education of their child regarding relationships and sex. The Federation will ensure that parents' and carers' views are heard and that taught RSE is culturally appropriate and inclusive of all children.

We believe that RSE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people.
- Be set within the wider school context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model; eg. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.
- Encourage pupils and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are inclusive schools and we respect sexual orientation without promoting any particular family structure. The important values are love, respect and care for each other.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment. Ground rules are essential to provide an agreed structure to answer sensitive or difficult questions. *Teachers will endeavor to answer questions as honestly as possible but questions they do not feel comfortable answering within the learning environment or ones which are not age appropriate or beyond the curriculum objectives may not be explored.*

- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we will work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.
- Build upon programmes developed in Seaton Valley Partnership First Schools.

5. Aims and Objectives

There are three main elements to our RSE programme:

Developing positive attitudes and values

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices
- learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships, and marriage
- learning about the nurture of children
- learning the value of respect, love and care
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour.

Extending personal and social skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- developing self-respect and empathy for others
- learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- managing conflict
- empower pupils with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter)

Gaining knowledge and understanding

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

In the Seaton Valley Federation, we have a commitment to ensure that our programme is relevant to all pupils and is taught in a way that is age and stage appropriate. The objectives of RSE in the Federation are:

- to enable our pupils to make responsible, informed and healthy decisions about their lives, both now and in the future.
- to teach our pupils to respect themselves and others so that they can move confidently through childhood, through to adolescence and into adulthood.
- to provide a supportive learning environment in which pupils can develop their feelings of self-worth and confidence, especially in relationships to others.

Our pupils will develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and become active and informed citizens. Our approach as a Federation (where age appropriate) is therefore:

- To teach about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood, as well as sex education.
- To focus on boys as well as girls.
- To build up self-esteem so that pupils value themselves.
- To equip pupils to avoid being exploited.

- To equip pupils to communicate effectively and to avoid being pressured.
- To provide pupils with information about the different types of contraception, safe sex and how they can access local sources of further advice and treatment.
- To link sex education with issues of peer pressure, and other risk taking behaviour such as the misuse of illegal and legal drugs such as tobacco and alcohol.
- To equip pupils to access confidential sexual health advice, support and if necessary, treatment.
- To give pupils a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting peer pressure.
- To ensure that pupils understand how the law applies to sexual relationships.
- To ensure that pupils and staff are aware of the designated member of staff for child protection.
- To teach the taking on of responsibility and the consequences of one's actions in relation to sexual activity and parenthood.
- To stimulate a growing awareness of moral values and to be able to discuss sensitive and controversial issues such as abortion, STIs and HIV/AIDS.

6. RSE Content

In the Seaton Valley Federation, schools have a duty to teach the statutory content of the RSE programme, as part of the National Curriculum in Science.

Key Stage 2

In Year 5 pupils are taught to:

- Describe the differences in the life cycles of a mammal, an amphibian, an insect and a bird
- Describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals
- Describe the changes as humans develop to old age

In Year 6 pupils are taught to:

- Describe how living things are classified into broad groups according to common observable characteristics and based on similarities and differences, including micro-organisms, plants and animals
- Give reasons for classifying plant and animals based on specific characteristics
- Recognise the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle on the ways their bodies function

Key Stage 3

In Key Stage 3 Biology, pupils will learn about reproduction and health:

- Reproduction in humans (as an example of a mammal), including the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycle (without details of hormones), gametes, fertilization, gestation and birth, to include the effect of maternal lifestyle on the foetus through the placenta.
- Health effects of recreational drugs (including substance misuse) on behaviour, health and life processes.

Other aspects of the RSE programme will be delivered through PSHE lessons, usually with a child's class teacher. Specialist sessions on health and relationships in Year 5 and in Year 8 will be delivered by the school nursing team. Consent will be sought from parents or carers in advance of such sessions.

At Astley Community High School, the majority of the RSE programme is delivered through PSHE, although other curriculum areas make significant contributions to sex and relationships work. Specifically, all pupils study the physical aspects of sex education in

Science; issues relating to population and reproduction in Geography; and moral and ethical issues, such as abortion and reasons for marriage, in RE.

RSE lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction are also included. These lessons are complemented by year group assemblies, cross-curricular work, intervention activities, enrichment courses and drop in sessions. We also have a network of agencies that support students both inside and outside of school, which enhance and support the curriculum.

7. Inclusion

Ethnic and Cultural Groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items in mixed groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns.

Pupils with Special Needs

We will ensure that all young people receive relationship and sex education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our pupils, taking specialist advice where necessary.

Sexuality, Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that relationship and sex education is relevant to them.

8. Consulting with parents and right of withdrawal from RSE

Some parents prefer to take the responsibility for aspects of this element of education. Under Section 405 of the Education Act 1996, parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the relationship and sex education except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (i.e. in Science lessons). We would make alternative arrangements in such cases. Parents are encouraged to discuss their decisions with staff at the earliest opportunity. Materials which will be used in the school's RSE programme can be seen by parents in school on request. The schools will inform parents when aspects of the RSE programme are taught and will provide the opportunity for parents to discuss the content of the lessons and the resources being used.

9. Use of visitors

"Visitors should complement but never substitute or replace planned provision. It is the PHSE coordinator's and teacher's responsibility to plan the curriculum and lessons." (DfEE 0116/2000 p29 6.11) When appropriate, visitors such as the school nursing team may be involved in the delivery of RSE, particularly in key stages 2 and 3. A consent letter will be sent out to all parents and carers of pupils in advance of these sessions taking place.

10. Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Teachers are not legally bound to inform parents or headteacher of any disclosure unless the headteacher has specifically requested them to do so. In a case where a teacher learns from a pupil aged under 16 that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

- the young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice.
- child protection issues will be considered, and referred if necessary to the designated member of staff for child protection under the school's procedures.

- the young person will be properly counselled about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first. Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual pupil, but in a classroom situation they must follow the school's confidentiality policy.

11. Support and Training

The governors acknowledge that the effective teaching of RSE, within the PSHE framework, requires particular skills and expertise. All staff will have the opportunity to attend awareness-raising sessions and to discuss whole school issues. Those staff with specific responsibility for delivering the programme will be consulted as to their particular training requirements, and access to these will be through CPD. It is essential that those teachers delivering the programme are confident in their abilities, and in the support offered by this policy.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation of Sex and Relationship Education

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PSHE, in the context of each school's plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

The Governing Body's Curriculum and Performance Committee is responsible for overseeing and reviewing of the Relationships and Sex Education Policy and monitoring the effectiveness of its implementation.

Ofsted is required to evaluate and report on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. This includes evaluating and commenting on the school's relationships and sex education policy, and on support and staff development, training and delivery.