



## **Danesfield School Relationships and Sex Education Policy**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

This policy sets out our school’s approach to statutory Relationships Education and non-statutory Sex Education. It was produced by the Senior Leadership in conjunction with Governors. We have based our school’s relationships and sex education policy on the statutory guidance document “Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education” (DfE, 2019).

Department for Education guidance states that from September 2020, all primary schools must teach Relationships and Health Education. The teaching of Sex Education in primary schools remains non-statutory, with the exception of the elements of sex education contained in the science national curriculum including the main external body parts, the human life cycle (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. Other related topics that fall within the statutory requirements for Health Education, such as puberty and menstrual wellbeing, will be included within PSHE education lessons.

The Department continues to recommend 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.

Through our PSHE programme we aim to provide children with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active and responsible citizens. In providing children with an understanding of healthy and respectful relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider effective RSE to be a fundamental part of our approach to supporting pupils to grow into confident, caring, responsible and respectful young citizens.

RSE is lifelong learning about personal, physical, moral and emotional development. It is set in the context of clear values about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care, for family life. It should teach children and young people to develop and form positive values, attitudes, personal and social skills, and increase their knowledge and understanding of how to make informed decisions and life choices.

### **STATUTORY RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION**

As part of our PSHE/Relationships Education programme of study, children will be taught what a relationship is; the different types of relationships they might have e.g. with family members, friends, and other adults; the importance of healthy and secure relationships to wellbeing; what constitutes a healthy relationship, in person and online; how to set and observe appropriate boundaries in relationships; how to recognise when a situation is unsafe; strategies for dealing with situations that they find uncomfortable or that are unsafe; and sources of help and advice. Children will be taught about relationships within a family; this will require sensitive and well-judged teaching based on knowledge of pupils and their circumstances. Families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children. (Families can include for example, single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents and carers amongst other structures.) Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances and needs and will reflect sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them.

### **NON-STATUTORY SEX EDUCATION**

As part of statutory Health Education, children are taught in an age appropriate way about puberty and the associated physical and emotional changes in Year 6. As part of the science curriculum, children learn in Year 5 about how reproduction occurs in some plants and animals. The DfE guidance 2019 also recommends that all primary schools have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of pupils, and this should include how a baby is conceived and born. Although sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, we believe children should understand the facts about human reproduction before they leave primary school. We therefore provide some non-statutory sex education, covering how human reproduction and conception occurs. This is included in the “Changing Me” unit in the summer term of Year 6. Children are taught:

- that for a baby to begin to grow, part comes from a woman and part comes from a man; that in most animals including humans the baby grows inside the mother
- that for a baby to be made, a sperm from the man and an egg from the woman must meet.
- that when a sperm and egg meet, this is called conception; that conception usually occurs as a result of sexual intercourse, and what sexual intercourse means
- how a baby develops in the womb and how babies are born

We believe that teaching this additional content to pupils will ensure that they are better prepared for transition to secondary school and also support their personal and social development as they grow into young adults.

As is legally prescribed, parents have a right to withdraw their children from these additional non-statutory sex education lessons – please see the relevant section within this policy in regard to this process.

## **DELIVERY**

All elements of our Relationships & Sex Education programme will be delivered in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner as part of our regular weekly timetabled PSHE education programme. RSE is delivered predominantly by class teachers in mixed gender groups, other than when it is deemed more appropriate for topics to be covered in single sex groups; this will be decided by the class teacher after discussion with the subject lead.

Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE in school, for example the school nurse. All visitors will be familiar with and understand the school's RSE policy and be expected to work within it.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

We aim to provide an environment and atmosphere for RSE where pupils feel safe, relaxed, unintimidated, and focused; and where they have confidence and trust in the knowledge, ability and skills of staff in school. This ensures that both pupils and staff feel fully confident in engaging in age-appropriate discussions around potentially sensitive topics and themes. To provide clarity and create a safe learning environment, at the beginning of each session, a set of ground rules will be agreed by the class based on a school-wide template.

As a minimum, ground rules are likely to include the following basic guidelines:

- Listen politely to each other.
- Everyone gets a turn - if they want one.
- Respect everybody's contribution.
- No personal information - no names.
- No personal questions.
- No making fun.
- An age-appropriate rule around confidentiality and safeguarding Children and teachers are free to suggest and agree further ground rules as appropriate to the topic of each lesson. It will be emphasised to children that any voluntary sharing of information should be anonymous (for example "someone I

know..." rather than "I" or naming names). All staff teaching RSE will be supported and advised by the PSHE lead and senior leadership team on sensitive matters as required.

## **MANAGING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS**

During both formal and informal PSHE/RSE sessions, pupils are encouraged to ask questions. Any questions from pupils are answered according to the age and maturity of the pupil concerned, and if the teacher delivering the session deems it appropriate to answer.

Teachers will:

- Use specific ground rules for this work which will clarify boundaries for children/young people, and mitigate disclosures in class
- Clarify that personal questions should not be asked
- Clarify that pupils should not give out personal information in class but speak to someone they trust after the lesson, e.g. school nurse, teacher, pastoral staff.

Children will be encouraged to ask questions using an anonymous question box. This can help children to have the confidence to ask sensitive questions, and provide an opportunity for teachers to pre-empt questions that might not be age appropriate or that might raise safeguarding or child protection concerns.

Teaching staff will endeavour to answer questions as openly as possible but if faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, or that is not age-appropriate (or within the school's RSE policy), provision may be made to address the individual child/young person's requirements. The school believes that individual teachers must use their professional skill and discretion in this area and refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are concerned about any

## **RESOURCES**

At Danesfield, we follow the Jigsaw Scheme of work for all aspects of PSHE and the RSE curriculum. This scheme of work is designed to provide an age-appropriate perspective and contextualises the facts about human conception and reproduction within a committed, loving adult relationship. These materials have been viewed and approved by SLT.

Our pupils have different needs based on their emotional and physical development, life experiences, and learning differences, but we aim to ensure that all pupils are properly included in RSE. Teachers will plan and deliver work in a variety of ways, in order to meet the needs of individual pupils with SEN or learning differences. We focus on activities that increase a pupil's assertiveness, communication and relationship skills, their self-esteem and understanding.

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

Schools, like all public institutions, have specific responsibilities in relation to equality and protected characteristics. Planning and resources are reviewed to ensure they comply with equalities legislation and the school's equal opportunities policy. All RSE is taught without bias and in line with legal responsibilities such as those contained within the Equality Act (2010). Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect others that may have different opinions. The personal beliefs and attitudes of staff delivering RSE will not influence the teaching of the subject in school. In our school we seek to recognise and embrace the diverse nature of our community. We aim to value and celebrate religious, ethnic and cultural diversity as part of modern Britain. We will explore different cultural beliefs and values and encourage activities that challenge stereotypes and discrimination and present children with accurate information based on the law.

## **THE ROLE OF PARENTS/PARENTAL RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL**

We recognise that parents and carers are the primary providers of RSE for their children. Our RSE curriculum is designed to support and complement this. We aim to build a positive and supportive relationship with parents and carers through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation.

In promoting this we will:

- Inform parents about the school's RSE policy and practice;
- Answer any questions that parents may have about RSE for their child;
- Take seriously any issues or concerns that parents raise.

We believe that all of the content within our school's PSHE curriculum, including RSE, is of the utmost importance and relevance to all pupils. However, parents have the legal right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all non-statutory sex education other than that which is part of the National Curriculum for Science. Please note there is no parental right of withdrawal from Relationships Education or Health Education content within the school curriculum, or from any statutory sex education that forms part of the National Curriculum for Science.

These are statutory requirements which the DfE mandates schools to teach; please see the statutory document if further information is required. We will inform parents of the right to withdraw by letter in the first part of Summer Term in advance of non-statutory sex education lessons being taught in Year 6. Parents and carers who wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child from non-statutory sex education should talk with the class teacher who will explore any concerns and discuss resources being used.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Our aim is to provide RSE that is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our pupils, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason, SLT and governors regularly review the RSE curriculum to evaluate its effectiveness and will inform parents of any revisions to the school policy or curriculum as required.