



Brinsworth Whitehill Primary

Relationships and Sexual Health Education (RSHE)

A Policy on Relationships and Sexual Health Education (RSHE)

Introduction

Relationships and Sexual Health Education (RSHE) is lifelong learning about physical, moral and mental development. It is about the understanding of the importance of family life, as well as other stable and loving relationships, based on respect, love and care. It is also about the age appropriate teaching of aspects of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills, and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

'Effective Sex & relationships education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. It should not be delivered in isolation. It should be firmly rooted within the framework for Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE).....'

DfEE 0116/2000

Young people, when asked about their experiences of 'sex education' at school often complain about the focus on the physical aspects of reproduction and the lack of any meaningful discussion about feelings, relationships and values. Relationships and sexual health education set within the framework of PSHE across the four key stages will significantly redress that balance. It will help young people to respect themselves and others, and understand difference.

Comprehensive relationships and sexual health education, taught as part of the overall framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), in a safe environment, fosters self-esteem, self-awareness, a sense of moral responsibility and the confidence and ability to resist abuse and unwanted sexual experience.

The school recognises that relationships and sexual health education is for all pupils in the school, taking into account all of their needs e.g. gender, religion, sexual orientation, special educational needs, maturity, ability etc.

This policy was written in consultation with representatives of the whole school community and different drafts were considered before this final version.

Aims and Objectives of RSHE

Aim

To contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, emotional and physical development of pupils at school and to prepare pupils for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Objectives

- To develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships
- To develop the ability to name parts of the body correctly and understand how bodies work
- To prepare pupils for puberty
- To develop positive attitudes and explore and clarify values
- To understand how babies are conceived and born

- To build self esteem and self confidence
- To teach about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood
- To help children develop skills to enable them to understand difference, respect themselves and others
- To help children move with confidence from childhood to adolescence
- To help students develop the skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy and independent lives

Planning and delivery

The Relationships and Sexual Health Education at this school is firmly embedded in the PSHE framework and will help children learn to respect themselves and others, and move with confidence from childhood, through puberty and into adolescence.

The Rotherham Healthy Schools Scheme of Work for PSHE and Citizenship – Primary Phase is used as a framework for delivering this area of work. The issues outlined in this policy arise in many different areas of the curriculum, but the main focus of the work is covered in 45 minutes discrete PSHE and Citizenship time with the class teacher.

The school believes that the responsibility for planning and delivering this area of the curriculum lies firmly with the teaching staff. RSHE is taught by classroom teachers, sometimes supported by classroom assistants / support staff and occasionally the school nurse.

It is recognised that some staff may find it uncomfortable, and may lack confidence when delivering sensitive issues. If this is the case, every effort will be made to provide support, either with resource materials, training or in the classroom.

Training for those delivering this area of work is offered via the Rotherham Healthy Schools Team, and staff will be given the opportunity to access it where appropriate.

It is recognised that there may be occasions when it is felt more appropriate to deliver aspects of the work in single gender groups and this is in line with Government guidance (0116/2000). The same curricular content will be delivered to both boys and girls when this occurs.

The Rotherham Healthy Schools Scheme of Work for PSHE and Citizenship – Primary Phase refers to and uses a wide range of resources and these are constantly being reviewed and updated.

Parents and governors are welcome to view the Scheme of Work and any resources used and to discuss their use with the teaching staff.

A variety of teaching strategies is used in this area of the curriculum. This includes circle time, group work, discussion, pair work, role-play, individual work, reflection, film clips, use of children's fiction books, etc.

It is important for staff teaching this area of the curriculum to make good use of the teaching strategies suggested in the DfEE guidance document 01116/2000.

RSHE is monitored through inspection of teachers' short term planning and classroom observations and it is evaluated through discussion with teachers, parents and pupils, and end of unit evaluation sheets.

This area of the curriculum is constantly under review as a result of feedback from pupils and staff involved in the teaching.

There is recognition within the school that there are different values, arising not only from religion, but also from social circumstances and upbringing. Teachers need to be sensitive to these issues, and take into account a variety of different value bases when planning and delivering this programme of work.

Values Framework

Sex and relationships education is supported by the school's wider curriculum for personal, social and health education. In this way the school can ensure that pupils:

- receive their Relationships and Sexual Health Education in the wider context of relationships
- are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life

The school believes that RSHE:

- is an integral part of a lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life
- is an entitlement for all children irrespective of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, special needs, culture, faith or religious tradition
- should foster self esteem, self awareness, a sense of moral responsibility, and the confidence and ability to resist unwanted sexual experience and abuse
- should be mindful of children's earlier experiences
- should provide consistent messages
- should be continuous and progressive
- should support children as they move from childhood through puberty to adolescence
- should provide opportunity for discussion and clarification around values and attitudes.
- should provide accurate, unbiased information

Teachers and all those contributing to RSHE must work within this agreed values framework, which is in line with current legislation and Government guidance, irrespective of their personal feelings and beliefs.

The underlying values which underpin the whole of this work are based on respect for others, the development of positive relationships, and personal choice. The right of children and young people to have balanced, factual information and the need to have an opportunity to discuss issues in a safe and supportive environment are the cornerstones to the programme.

It is hoped that our comprehensive programme of RSHE will promote self esteem and emotional well-being and will help pupils to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the community.

It will meet the needs of everyone; boys as well as girls, those with physical, learning or emotional disabilities, those with a religious or faith tradition, whatever their culture and whatever their developing sexuality.

RSHE is delivered in a safe, supportive environment where pupils feel able to discuss sensitive issues in an honest, open forum. When dealing with questions teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Questions which pupils ask will be answered honestly and openly in line with the school's aim of giving knowledge and information appropriate to the developmental age of the pupil, and in line with DfEE Guidance 0116/2000 (See Section 5 – Guidance for teachers.)

Guidance for teachers (in light of DfEE guidance 0116/2000)

The school must make sure that the needs of all pupils are met. Children and young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that RSHE is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. Teachers can and should deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support.

The issue of sexual orientation is one that will feature in discussions about sexuality. When it does arise, teachers should deal with the subject honestly and sensitively, giving objective information, allowing balanced discussion, and challenging homophobic comments.

Teachers need to be aware that effective RSHE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.

Disclosures from children may take place at an inappropriate place or time. If this happens, the teacher should talk again, individually, to the child before the end of the school day.

Staff should follow the school's child protection procedures, should this arise, and liaise with the designated teacher for child protection.

Teaching Strategies

A variety of teaching strategies should be used to enhance this area of work. These should include the early setting of ground rules, the use of distancing techniques, pre-arranged ways of dealing with questions and time for reflection. Use of such strategies will create a safe learning environment for staff and pupils alike.

There are 3 elements of good relationships and sexual health education and these are interdependent. They are:

- Values, attitudes and beliefs
- Personal and social skills
- Acquiring and understanding accurate, unbiased knowledge.

Knowledge alone will not promote sexual and emotional health and well-being. A proper consideration of values, attitudes and beliefs is closely related to the development of personal and social skills and to acquiring and understanding accurate information.

Within the context of talking about relationships, pupils will be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and the bringing up of children, but will understand that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside of marriage. They will have the opportunity to talk about feelings, values and attitudes, and will learn how to have respect for themselves and others, and how to understand and appreciate difference.

It is important that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of sex and relationship education within the PSHE framework. Teachers and all those contributing to sex and relationships education must work within an agreed values framework as described in the school's policy, which is in line with current legislation and government guidance.

It is acknowledged that RSHE deals with some very sensitive issues but the following points are very important:

- Correct terminology should be used when naming body parts, whilst recognising that there are 'pet' or 'family' words that may be used at home.
- Both boys and girls will need to be prepared for puberty before the onset of puberty. (This may include issues such as wet dreams and menstruation.)
- The issue of masturbation may arise. Appropriate questions will be answered honestly and openly, but whether this is in front of a class or on an individual basis will be decided dependent on the situation.

Parental rights

The school believes that relationships and sexual health education is the right of every pupil and encourages active participation and involvement in the curriculum.

However, parents do have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the programme, excluding the DfE Science orders. Any parent wishing to exercise that right should initially contact the Head teacher to discuss the matter. How provision will be made for their children will be negotiated on an individual basis, dependent on the needs of each child.

It is possible that the teaching of apparently unrelated topics will occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour outside of the 'taught' course. Provided that such discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the subject concerned, it will not necessarily constitute part of 'sex and relationships education'.

In such a case, particularly where it involves pupils whose parents have asked for them to be withdrawn, teachers will need to balance the need to give proper attention to relative issues.