HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL (PART OF HADRIAN LEARNING TRUST)

RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION and RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

RATIONALE AND ETHOS

This policy covers the Trust's approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). We define relationships and sex education as the information, attitudes and skills young people need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships.

We believe relationships and sex education is important for our young people and our schools because every person deserves to feel special and loved, in relationships that help them to thrive and flourish. We encourage our young people to have the highest expectations of themselves and others in relationships and to recognise the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing.

We view the partnership of home and school as vital in providing the context for family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult.

Our Trust's overarching aim for our young people is that every child will grow into a happy, fulfilled and successful adult.

We ensure RSE is inclusive and meets the needs of all our pupils and their diverse experiences, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) through high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised.

We ensure RSE fosters gender equality and LGBT+ equality by complying with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. All pupils are taught the importance of equality and respect, particularly in relation to the protected characteristics, which includes sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. We challenge all forms of discrimination in RSE lessons and in everyday school life.

The intended outcomes of or programme are that pupils will:

- Know and understand the importance of families, respectful relationships and friendships.
- Understand they have a right to feel special and loved in a relationship and to be treated equally regardless of sex, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.
- Understand they have a responsibility to treat people equally and with respect and that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
- Develop the skills to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of a healthy relationship and the strategies for identifying and managing pressure, including peer pressure, sexual pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
- Develop the attributes of honesty, trustworthiness, respectfulness, compassion and consideration for others.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The PSHE and RSE programmes will be led by Paul Freeman-Myers (Assistant Headteacher – Personal Development). It will be taught by staff regularly trained in RSE and PSHE (with expert visitors invited in to enhance and supplement the programme where appropriate).

LEGISLATION (STATUTORY REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE)

From September 2020, all schools are required to teach Relationships Education (in primary schools) and Relationships and Sex Education (in secondary schools).

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of Sex Education delivered as part of statutory RSE. We will respect parents' request to withdraw their child. Parents/carers do **not** have the right to withdraw their child from lessons regarding relationship education.

The RSE policy complements the PSHE, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Online Safety and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Documents that inform the Trust's RSE policy include:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st Century (2014)
- Keeping children safe in education – Statutory safeguarding guidance (2016)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)

CURRICULUM DESIGN

Our RSE programme is an integral part of our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum and the wider personal development of pupils, which has planned, timetabled lessons and assemblies across all the key stages. The RSE curriculum covers:

- Families
- Health and Wellbeing (including puberty menstrual wellbeing)
- Respectful relationships (including friendships and LGBTQ+IA)
- Online and Media
- Being Safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health and consent)

For further review of both the PSHE curriculum (including RSE) and the wider personal development curriculum for pupils at Hexham Middle School refer to the below school website sections:

- PSHE/RSE Curriculum
- Personal Development Curriculum

There is a clear intention to ensure the delivery of RSE recognises the nature of a middle school context. The RSE curriculum allows for age-appropriate progression, retention and recall of knowledge. Our Key Stage 2 pupils receive an RSE curriculum that is appropriate for a primary phase context. This, at present, does not include any element of sex education, which adheres to non-statutory governmental guidance. The school will consult with relevant third-party stakeholders if there is a desire for change.

The RSE programme delivers lessons where pupils feel safe and encourages participation using a variety of teaching approaches with opportunities to develop critical thinking and relationship skills.

Active learning methods will include the discussion of real-life issues appropriate to the age and stage of pupils including friendships, families, healthy lifestyle choices, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and safe relationships online.

Pupils will also be given the opportunity to reflect on values and influences (such as from peers, media, faith and culture) that may shape their attitudes to relationships and sex (Key Stage 3 only), and nurtures respect for different views.

The school recognises the importance of pupils' health and wellbeing and its link with RSE. The core theme of health and wellbeing is woven across every year group in PSHE lessons and forms part of the broader assembly and personal development programme. The spiralled approach to the PSHE curriculum also allows for opportunities to revisit many topics in relation to health and wellbeing.

The curriculum is based on reliable sources of information. PSHE Association resources are typically used in Key Stage 3 and Chameleon PDE resources in Key Stage 2. Both sources of information meet guidelines for teaching PSHE/RSE in English schools. Resources used seek to teach pupils about the law and legal rights and distinguish between fact and opinion. The curriculum includes learning about how to get help from sources such as the school nurse, and other health and advice services including reliable information online.

The science department supports the RSE curriculum specifically at key points across both key stages.

- In year 5, pupils are taught about living things, including the life cycle of a mammal (including humans). They also learn about the changes in humans from birth to old age.
- In year 6, pupils learn more about reproduction from an inheritance and selection perspective.
- In year 7, reproduction is covered. This allows for further sex education to be covered in PSHE lessons across key stage 3.

High quality resources will support our RSE provision and will be regularly reviewed by staff and pupils. Pupils' views about RSE will be sought so that teaching will be relevant to their real lives and assessed and adapted as their needs change.

Assessment

Pupils will be encouraged to reflect on their own learning and progress by completing evaluations at the end of each unit. Assessment in RSE could include a combination of teacher assessment and pupil self and peer assessment. The model of assessment that is most meaningful in RSE education is ipsative assessment. Ipsative assessment compares where a pupil is at the end of a lesson or series of lessons against where they were before the lesson(s). Examples used in RSE include:

- Baseline assessments to gauge prior knowledge and understanding
- Ask-it-basket end of lesson or unit question / summary of key messages
- Mind-map / Spider diagram
- Questionnaire
- Explain to an alien
- Washing line
- Card sort / diamond 9
- Discussion

Further details can be found [here](#) for HMS.

SAFE AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

A safe learning environment helps pupils to share feelings, explore values and attitudes, express opinions and consider those of others, without attracting negative feedback. As well as encouraging more open discussion, it also helps to ensure that teachers are not anxious about unexpected disclosures or comments and that pupils are not put on the spot, upset or traumatised.

To ensure a safe learning environment, staff will:

- work with pupils to establish ground rules about how they will behave towards each other in discussion
- provide opportunities for pupils to discuss issues in small groups as well as sharing views with the whole class
- make 'ask-it-baskets' available in which pupils can place anonymous questions or concerns
- provide access to balanced information and differing views to help pupils clarify their own opinions (whilst making clear that behaviours such as racism, homophobia, bi-phobia, transphobia, discrimination and bullying are never acceptable in any form)
- be cautious about expressing their own views, bearing in mind that they are in an influential position and must work within the school's values, policies and the law
- be sensitive to the needs and experiences of individuals, as some pupils may have direct experience of some of the issues
- endeavour to apply quality first teaching principles within all PSHE/RSE lessons, including best practice to ensure pupils with special educational needs or disabilities are able to access the taught curriculum fully and with appropriate adaptations
- always work within the school's policies on safeguarding and confidentiality (and ensure that pupils understand school policies on disclosure of confidential information and following up concerns in a more appropriate setting outside lessons)
- link PSHE education into the whole-school approach to supporting pupil wellbeing
- make pupils aware of reliable sources of support both inside and outside the school

Distancing techniques such as stories, scenarios, clips from TV programmes or case studies can provide fictional characters and storylines that stimulate discussion whilst 'de-personalising' discussions. This allows pupils to engage more objectively with the lesson content.

SAFEGUARDING

Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. In this event, teachers will consult with the designated safeguarding lead and in their absence their deputy.

Visitors and external agencies which support the delivery of RSE will be required to comply with the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

The RSE policy with be available to parents via the schools' websites. Parents/carers will be able to see when RSE will be taught by referring to the schools' websites.

Pupil voice will be used to review and adapt out RSE programme to match the different needs of pupils through end of topic evaluations, pupil panels and quality of education reviews.

The Senior Leadership Team at Hexham Middle School will ensure that the RSE policy is reviewed and updated, where necessary, to respond to any needs that may arise. Trustees will be involved and conversant on the strategic overview of this policy and updated on its impact to help improve RSE provision.

When amendments to the RSE curriculum are being considered, the Senior Leadership Team will collaborate with trustees prior to wider stakeholder consultation (including seeking the views of parents/carers).

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RSE through end of topic reviews, departmental meetings and quality of education reviews.

Pupils will have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lessons by completing online surveys and through the 'ask-it-basket'.

RSE POLICY REVIEW DATE

This policy will next be reviewed on 15 September 2024 and is reviewed annually.

It will be reviewed by Paul Freeman-Myers in conjunction with the wider Senior Leadership Team. It will be approved by Executive Headteacher, Graeme Atkins, and shared with the Trust Board.

This will ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff and parents/carers and that it is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance.

Appendix 1

The Department for Education's 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' guidance states that by the end of primary school (Year 6):

Families and people who care for me	Pupils should know: • that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability. • the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives. • that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care. • that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up. • that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong. • how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
Caring friendships	Pupils should know: • how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. • the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties. • that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. • that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right. • how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
Respectful relationships	Pupils should know: • the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs. • practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. • the conventions of courtesy and manners. • the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. • that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority. about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help. • what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. • the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

Online relationships	**Pupils should know:** • that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not. • that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous. • the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. • how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. • how information and data is shared and used online.
Being safe	**Pupils should know:** • what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). • about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe. • that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact. • how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know. • how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. • how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. • how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. • where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

The Department for Education's 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance states schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition should cover the content stated here by **the end of secondary school (Y11).**