

Matravers School

**Relationships and Sex Education
Policy**

Matravers School takes its responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible relationships and sex education (RSE) to all its pupils as part of the school's personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) curriculum very seriously. The school wants parents and pupils to feel assured that sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both the age and development of pupils, and safe to voice opinions and concerns relating to the sex education provision.

The policy is reviewed and approved by the governing body every three years. Professionals consulted in the policy include Pastoral Managers, Wiltshire Healthy Schools, Progress Leaders, the Safeguarding team.

Matravers School PSHEE and RSE is delivered routinely in tutor time and assemblies by tutors and progress leaders as part of our SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural) education. We aim to include national awareness weeks, such as Sexual Health week, in our Thought For The Week calendar to raise the profile and importance of the content covered.

1. Policy aims

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching sex, sexuality and sexual health in a way that is fully understood and effectively retained by pupils in our care. It is also about teaching what it is to be in a caring, stable and mutually supportive relationship with another person, and how to control and understand feelings that come with being in a relationship. RSE will outline the importance of marriage for family life and the raising of children, as well as highlighting the role of marriage and other stable relationships as building blocks for community and society.

The school would like to emphasise that by providing comprehensive RSE we are not encouraging pupils to become sexually active at a young age. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the right provision is in place so that pupils may have all the background knowledge they need to make informed decisions and responsible choices as they grow up.

Through the provision outlined in this policy we also aim to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, trying to develop communication and assertiveness skills that can help them stay true to their values if challenged by others, their peers or what they see in the media. We hope to teach pupils to be accepting and respectful towards people with different beliefs, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, physical and mental abilities, backgrounds and values to those around them. We want our pupils to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle, teach them to care for and respect their bodies and provide them with all the right tools that will enable them to seek information or support, should they need it, both during their school years and after.

A copy of the policy will be accessible on the school webpage.

2. Roles and responsibilities

School staff

It is important that *all* school staff feel comfortable to teach PSHEE and answer questions from pupils. If the teacher does not feel confident leading RSE discussions then that is likely

to be reflected by the pupils, and their learning will be compromised. The school provides regular professional development training in how to deliver sex education; in line with our Safeguarding Policy, and an introduction to the rationale of why teaching RSE is so important. There are certain members of the school leadership team and middle leadership, who will hold more responsibility for ensuring that the school's sex education provision is relevant to our pupils and effective, but this is generally a responsibility for all staff members and the school expects staff to voice opinions and share expertise in this area.

Governors and senior leaders will:

- Develop this school policy and review it every three years.
- Review the content delivered in consultation with school parents, pupils and staff to ensure that it meets the needs of the whole school community.
- Ensure that all staff are given regular and ongoing training on issues relating to RSE and how to deliver lessons on such issues.
- Provide support to staff members who feel uncomfortable or ill-equipped to deal with the delivery of sex education to pupils. This may be because they do not feel that their training has been adequate or that aspects of the curriculum conflict with their religious beliefs.
- Ensure that sex education is age-relevant and appropriate across all year groups; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as our pupils do and meets their needs.
- Ensure that the knowledge and information regarding RSE to which all pupils are entitled is provided in a comprehensive way.
- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing a balanced RSE in school.
- Communicate freely with staff, parents and the governing body to ensure that everyone is in understanding of the school policy and curriculum for sex education, and that any concerns or opinions regarding the provision at the school are listened to, taken into account and acted on as appropriate. We want the provision of sex education at home to be complementary to the provision the school provides, and this should be clearly communicated to parents and additional support given where necessary or requested.

All staff will:

- Take it upon themselves to ensure that they are up to date with school policy and curriculum requirements regarding sex education. Any areas that they feel are not covered or inadequately provided for should be reported back to their *progress leader*
- Attend and engage in professional development training around sex education provision.
- Encourage pupils to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal and emotional development in confidence, listen to their needs and support them seriously. If a pupil comes to a member of staff with an issue that that member of staff feels they are not able to deal with alone, they should take this concern to their manager. No one else should be informed at this stage, and a breach of confidentiality may fall under staff misconduct and disciplinary procedures.
- Provide regular feedback to their managers on their experience of teaching RSE and pupil response.
- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSE in school.

- Tailor their lessons to suit all pupils in their class, across the whole range of abilities, including those pupils with special educational needs. If teachers need support in this area they should speak to the *school SEN coordinator* or their progress leader.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend sex education classes that are in their school timetable and take them seriously. Although they are not assessed through examination, these classes are still a very important part of the curriculum and a tool to aid personal development and the school expects pupils to recognise this.

Pupils should support one another with issues that arise through RSE. Listening in class, being considerate of other people's feelings and beliefs, and complying with confidentiality rules that are set in class are key to effective provision. Pupils who regularly fail to follow these standards of behaviour will be dealt with under the **school behaviour policy**, which can be found on the school website.

We also hope that pupils will feel comfortable to talk to a member of staff, in confidence, regarding any concerns they have in school related to sex education or otherwise. Conversations of this nature between staff and pupils will be held in confidence; however, staff should share concerns with the safeguarding team if there is a child protection concern or they feel ill-equipped to deal with the issue at hand.

We ask pupils for feedback on the school's sex education provision *yearly* and expect them to take this responsibility seriously. Opinions on provision and comments will be reviewed by senior managers and taken into consideration when the curriculum is prepared for the following year's pupils. In this way, the school hopes to provide pupils with the education they need on topics they want to learn about.

Parents

The school expects parents to share the responsibility of sex education and support their children's personal, social and emotional development. We encourage parents to create an open home environment where pupils can engage, discuss and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through school PSHEE. Parents are also encouraged to seek additional support in this from the school where they feel it is needed. For information on accessing school support, see section 5.

3. Implementation and curriculum

It is important that we implement our RSE policy consistently throughout the school and provide effective provision throughout classrooms. We encourage teachers to provide classes that are specific to the needs of the pupils in that class, and responsive to their behaviour and development.

Through this aspect of our curriculum we aim to explore different attitudes, values and social labels, and develop skills that will enable our pupils to make informed decisions regarding sex and relationships. It is important that pupils know the difference between fact, opinion and belief.

Guest speakers

We may invite guest speakers into school to talk about topics including those related to sex and relationships. It may be the case that the subject under discussion is better coming from an expert or experienced health professional who can challenge pupil's perceptions. A teacher will be present throughout these lessons.

Terminology

Pupils will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang or everyday terms used in certain social circles will be discussed; this will surround discussion about what is and isn't acceptable language to use.

Dealing with difficult questions

Staff training will include sessions on how to deal with difficult questions. There may still be times when staff are faced with a difficult question in class that they feel uncomfortable or ill equipped to answer. In this case, they may wish to put the question to one side and seek advice from the *SMSC leader*.

Ground rules in class are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter. Strategies staff may use to support this might be making the classroom a zone of silence; this means that whatever is discussed in the classroom stays in the classroom and should not be brought up at any other time. We hope this will give pupils the sense that they are in a safe zone to speak freely about sex and relationships.

Pupils with special educational needs

The school works hard to ensure that all aspects of the school curriculum are inclusive and support the needs of pupils of all ranges of abilities. Staff should differentiate lessons to ensure that all members of the class can access the information fully, and this is no different when it comes to RSE.

For students that need further support due a learning need Matravers School may provide small group learning in the Inclusion unit with staff specialising in the need of the child, not the content.

The school will use a variety of different strategies to ensure that all pupils have access to the same information. Some of these include:

- interactive teaching methods e.g. contraceptive card game
- use of expert guest speakers
- practical activities
- using DVDs or video
- group and paired activities.

Withdrawal from RSE

The school aims to keep parents informed about all aspects of the RSE curriculum and urges parents to read this policy. Parents can request access to resources and information being used in class, and the school will do everything it can to ensure that parents are comfortable with the education provided to their children in school. It is, however, a statutory right of

parents or carers to withdraw the children in their care from RSE. This excludes withdrawal from the elements on human growth and reproduction which fall under the National Curriculum science.

Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from RSE should contact the *Progress Leader* who will arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns. RSE is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports child development and we strongly urge parents to carefully consider their decision before withdrawing their child from this aspect of school life. However, it is acknowledged that the final decision on the issue is for the parent to take. Following a meeting with the relevant staff member the parent must put the request in writing as a record of their wishes.

Parents are not able to remove their child from SMSC content, only the RSE aspect.

Complaints

Parents or carers who have complaints or concerns regarding the RSE curriculum should contact the school and follow the school's complaints policy.

Equal opportunities

RSE lessons provide a good background for talking openly and freely about the diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences. Prejudiced views will be challenged, and equality promoted. Any bullying that relates to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be dealt with swiftly and seriously. This is the case for bullying of any kind and the procedures regarding this are outlined in the **school's behaviour and bullying policies**.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

We hope to provide a safe and supportive school community where pupils feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at school or at home. Training around confidentiality will be provided to all teachers.

It may be the case that discussion around what is acceptable and not acceptable in relationships may lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. If this is the case, the school's **child protection and safeguarding procedure** should be followed. This policy is readily available online and a flow chart for concerns can be found in every classroom.

Personal information about pupils who have approached a teacher for discussion should not be shared in another forum. If there is a child protection concern, the information must *only be shared with the Safeguarding Team*, as is outlined in the school child protection and safeguarding procedure. Staff members that breach the right to a child's privacy by disclosing or sharing confidential information with no reason to do so will be dealt with under the school's **staff discipline, conduct and grievance procedures**.

If a staff member is approached by a pupil under 16 who is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, the teacher should:

- Ensure that the pupil is accessing all the contraceptive and sexual health advice available and understands the risks of being sexually active.
- Encourage the pupil to talk to their parent or carer. Pupils may feel that they are more comfortable bringing these issues to a teacher they trust, but it is important that

children and their parents have open and trusting relationships when it comes to sexual health and the school will encourage this as much as possible.

- Pass on all relevant information to the Safeguarding Team. If a member of staff is informed that a pupil under 13 is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, this will be dealt with as detailed in the child protection policy.

Pupils with special educational needs may be more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to protect themselves from harmful influences. If staff are concerned that this is the case, they should seek support from *the safeguarding team* to decide what is in the best interest of the child.

Advice and treatment

Staff who are approached by pupils with a concern about having contracted or possibly contracted a sexually transmitted disease should refer them immediately to *the safeguarding team*. Providing advice on contraception and practising safe sex is a key part of the school's RSE provision. We also encourage parents to engage their child in open discussion about practising safe sex.

There is no reason for staff to expect to be made aware of a pupil or colleague's HIV or hepatitis status, and no person will be discriminated against because of this if there is a disclosure of this type of information.

The school's **Medical conditions policy** covers protection for all school members against infection from blood-borne viruses. This can be found online.

Support for pregnant teenagers

Our aim is educate students to avoid cases of teenage pregnancy, however should such a student find themselves in such a situation Matravers School will seek to support the individual. A support plan will be developed with a relevant member of staff, each plan will be unique to the individual and reflect their situation.

4. Monitoring, review and evaluation

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and economic change. 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, we review the RSE curriculum yearly, and will inform parents of any revisions to the school policy or sex education curriculum.

We aim to monitor the effectiveness of our sex education provision through:

- Yearly feedback from pupils
- Yearly feedback from parents at parents' evenings
- feedback from staff
- analysis of safeguarding reports
- Classroom observations.

The school will review its provision annually, evaluating its effectiveness by taking into account feedback from pupils, staff and parents, as well as what has come to light through classroom observations and information we receive from national reports and curriculum reviews.

5. Support

We hope that pupils will feel safe in the school environment to talk to any member of staff in confidence about any areas of concern regarding their personal, social and emotional development, including matters raised by or relating to sex education. We promote the school ethos as one of inclusion and acceptance throughout all areas of school activity and hope that pupils respond to this by feeling comfortable to ask questions and continue their learning both in and outside of the classroom.

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