Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Agreed by Standards & Performance Committee

Summer 2024

Version 1

Company Number: 07728828
Registered Office: Wroughton Junior School, Inverary Road, Swindon SN10 6DL

Version Control

Version	Date	Status	Author (AU) / Approver (AP)
1	04/07/24	To be ratified by the S&P committee	AW (AU)
	July 24	Ratified by S&P	S&P (AP)

Review

Next Review	July 2025 – or sooner if statutory guidance changes from the DfE.

Updates

Page	Updates
This is the first version of a central RSE policy. All GLT schools follow the same RSE curriculum.	
5 - 7	Added in details of the current government consultation to make statutory changes to the RSE policy.
7	Changed from *'It's the responsibility of the governing body'* to *'It is the trustee's responsibility to ensure that the policy is developed and consulted on and the local academy committee's responsibility to monitor its implemented.'*
10	*'The school will then either phone the parent to discuss their concerns or arrange a meeting to discuss the request further.'* added to the section on withdrawing from RSE lessons.

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1. Rationale

Effective relationship and sex education (RSE) can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by pupils if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables children and young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and well-being.

This policy takes full account of the school's legal obligations and the latest DfE guidance.

Our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme, across all Grove Learning Trust schools, is taken from the Jigsaw scheme of work developed by the Jan Lever Group.

2. Aim and Objectives

RSE in schools as a whole contributes towards pupils:

- building self-esteem and making positive health choices
- learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations
- learning the value of respect, love and care
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- developing critical thinking
- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- developing self-respect and empathy for others
- learning to make choices based on understanding of difference
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- managing conflict with peers

The aim of the Relationships and Sex Education Policy across Grove Learning Trust schools is to help support pupils through their physical, emotional and moral development as stated above. The programme is firmly embedded within our school's PSHE curriculums.

Young people may have varying needs regarding RSE, depending on their circumstances and background. Grove Learning Trust strongly believes that all pupils should have access to RSE that is relevant to their particular needs.

To achieve this our schools, we will consider:

- the needs of both boys and girls
- ethnic and cultural diversity
- varying home backgrounds
- special educational needs
- any individual circumstances that occur

3. Department for Education RSE Consultation

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is a subject taught at both primary and secondary school.

In 2020, Relationships and Sex Education was made compulsory for all secondary school pupils in England and Health Education compulsory for all pupils in state-funded schools.

Last year, the Prime Minister and Education Secretary brought forward the first review of the curriculum following reports of pupils being taught inappropriate content in RSHE in some schools.

The review was informed by the advice of an independent panel of experts. The results of the review and updated guidance for consultation has now been published.

We are now asking for views from parents, schools and others before the guidance is finalised. You can find the consultation here.

What is new in the updated curriculum?

Following the panel's advice, we're introducing age limits, to ensure children aren't being taught about sensitive and complex subjects before they are ready to fully understand them.

We are also making clear that the concept of gender identity – the sense a person may have of their own gender, whether male, female or a number of other categories – is highly contested and should not be taught. This is in line with the cautious approach taken in our guidance on gender questioning children.

Along with other factors, teaching this theory in the classroom could prompt some children to start to question their gender when they may not have done so otherwise, and is a complex theory for children to understand.

The facts about biological sex and gender reassignment will still be taught.

The guidance for schools also contains a new section on transparency with parents, making it absolutely clear that parents have a legal right to know what their children are being taught in RSHE and can request to see teaching materials.

In addition, we're seeking views on adding several new subjects to the curriculum, and more detail on others. These include:

- suicide prevention
- sexual harassment and sexual violence
- loneliness
- the prevalence of 'deepfakes'
- healthy behaviours during pregnancy, as well as miscarriage
- illegal online behaviours including drug and knife supply
- the dangers of vaping
- menstrual and gynaecological health including endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and heavy menstrual bleeding.

What are the age limits?

In primary school, we've set out that subjects such as the risks about online gaming, social media and scams should not be taught before year 3.

Puberty shouldn't be taught before year 4, whilst sex education shouldn't be taught before year 5, in line with what pupils learn about conception and birth as part of the national curriculum for science.

In secondary school, issues regarding sexual harassment shouldn't be taught before year 7, direct references to suicide before year 8 and any explicit discussion of sexual activity before year 9.

Do schools have to follow the guidance?

Following the consultation, the guidance will be statutory, which means schools must follow it unless there are exceptional circumstances.

There is some flexibility within the age ratings, as schools will sometimes need to respond to questions from pupils about age-restricted content, if they come up earlier within their school community.

In these circumstances, schools are instructed to make sure that teaching is limited to the essential facts without going into unnecessary details, and parents should be informed.

When will schools start teaching this?

Schools will be able to use the guidance as soon as we publish the final version later this year.

However, schools will need time to make changes to their curriculum, so we will allow an implementation period before the guidance comes into force.

What can parents do with these resources once they have been shared?

This guidance has openness with parents at its heart. Parents are not able to veto curriculum content, but they should be able to see what their children are being taught, which gives them the opportunity to raise issues or concerns through the school's own processes, if they want to.

Parents can also share copyrighted materials they have received from their school more widely under certain circumstances.

If they are not able to understand materials without assistance, parents can share the materials with translators to help them understand the content, on the basis that the material is not shared further.

Copyrighted material can also be shared under the law for so-called 'fair dealing' - for the purposes of quotation, criticism or review, which could include sharing for the purpose of making a complaint about the material.

This could consist of sharing with friends, families, faith leaders, lawyers, school organisations, governing bodies and trustees, local authorities, Ofsted and the media. In each case, the sharing of the material must be proportionate and accompanied by an acknowledgment of the author and its ownership.

Under the same principle, parents can also share relevant extracts of materials with the general public, but except in cases where the material is very small, it is unlikely that it would be lawful to share the entirety of the material.

These principles would apply to any material which is being made available for teaching in schools, even if that material was provided subject to confidentiality restrictions.

Do all children have to learn RSHE?

Parents still have the right to withdraw their child from sex education, but not from the essential content covered in relationships education.

You may also be interested in:

- Education Secretary's letter to parents: You have the right to see RSHE lesson material
- Sex education: What is RSHE and can parents access curriculum materials?
- What do children and young people learn in relationship, sex and health education

Grove Learning Trust will make adjustments to this policy, and consult on the policy following any review, so that the policy complies with any statutory changes whilst also providing parents and carers with a broad understanding of how our RSE curriculum is delivered across the trust.

4. Teaching and Learning

Compulsory aspects of RSE

Maintained primary and secondary schools, and academies, are legally obliged to have an up-to-date RSE policy that describes the content and organisation of RSE taught outside science in the National Curriculum. The policy should be made available to parents on request. It is the trustee's responsibility to ensure that the policy is developed and consulted on and the local academy committee's responsibility to monitor its implemented.

The sex education contained in National Curriculum science (Key Stages 1–4) is compulsory in maintained schools and academies. All state-funded schools must have 'due regard' to the Secretary of State's guidance on RSE (DfE, 2000). This states that:

'All children, including those who develop earlier than average, need to know about puberty before they experience the onset of physical changes' (1.13)

Children should learn 'how a baby is conceived and born' before they leave primary school (1.16)
Grove Learning Trust schools has a statutory duty to teach the following as part of the National Curriculum Science Orders.

Key Stage 1

- Notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults.

Key Stage 2

- 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. o Describe the changes as humans develop to old age.
- Recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents.
- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child/children from these above aspects of the Science curriculum.

The Learning and Skills Act (2000) and the model funding agreements for academies and free schools require that state-funded schools ensure that within sex education children 'learn the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children', and 'are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate'.

The guidance includes some specific information about meeting the needs of young people, whatever their sexuality, including boys and girls and those with special educational needs. It also has advice about addressing specific issues in RSE such as menstruation.

RSE plays a very important part in fulfilling the statutory duties all schools have to meet. RSE helps children understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships and equips them with the skills to get help if they need it. State-funded schools have responsibilities for safeguarding and a legal duty to promote pupil well-being (Education and Inspections Act 2006 Section 38).

Jigsaw RSE Content

The grid below shows specific RSE learning intentions for each year group in the 'Changing Me' part of the Jigsaw curriculum. As a trust, our schools will teach 'human reproduction' in PSHE lessons. The content in red on the grid below shows when this is and children can be withdrawn from part of these lessons.

Puberty and Human Reproduction in Jigsaw 3-11		
FS	Growing Up	How we have changed since we were babies
Y1	My changing body	Understanding that growing and changing is natural and happens to everybody at different rates
	Boys' and girls' bodies	Appreciating the parts of the body that make us different and using the correct names for them
Y2	The changing me	Where am I on the journey from young to old, and what changes can I be proud of?
	Boys and girls	Differences between boys and girls – how do we feel about them? Which parts of me are private?
Y3	Outside body changes	How our bodies need to change so they can make babies when we grow up – outside changes and how we feel about them
	Inside body changes	How our bodies need to change so they can make babies when we grow up – inside changes and how we feel about them (animations used – shorter version Female and Male Reproductive Systems)

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Puberty and Human Reproduction in Jigsaw 3-11		
Y4	Having a baby	The choice to have a baby, the parts of men and women that make babies and – in simple terms – how this happens (animations used – the Female Reproductive System)
	Girls and puberty	How a girl's body changes so that she can have a baby when she's an adult – including menstruation (animations used – the Female Reproductive System)
Y5	Puberty for girls	Physical changes and feelings about them – importance of looking after yourself (animations used – the Female Reproductive System)
	Puberty for boys	Developing understanding of changes for both sexes – reassurance and exploring feelings (animations used – the Male Reproductive System)
	Conception	Understanding the place of sexual intercourse in a relationship and how it can lead to conception and the wonder of a new life (animations used – the Female and Male Reproductive Systems)
Y6	Puberty	Consolidating understanding of physical and emotional changes and how they affect us (animations used – the Female and Male Reproductive Systems)
	Girl talk / boy talk	A chance to ask questions and reflect (single sex) (animations used – the Female and Male Reproductive Systems)
	Conception to birth	The story of pregnancy and birth (animations used – the Female and Male Reproductive Systems)

© Jigsaw PSHE

Dealing with Difficult Questions

Ground rules are essential to provide an agreed structure to answering sensitive or difficult questions. Teachers will not answer personal questions but will endeavour to answer other questions as honestly as possible. However, questions they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom or ones which are not age appropriate and beyond the Key Stage 2 objectives, will not be answered or explored. Across Grove Learning Trust, all teachers use an anonymous question box when appropriate as a distancing technique.

Confidentiality
Teachers need to be aware that effective relationships and sex education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, may lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.

The staff member will inform the head teacher or a designated safeguarding lead in line with the school safeguarding policy.

Role of the Co-ordinator and other members of staff
The RSE co-ordinator in each trust school is responsible for ensuring all staff are able to access the teaching materials for the RSE programme. They must also keep up to date with developments and good practice, developing the provision to meet children's needs, providing support and resources for staff, arranging staff training, liaising with outside agencies and monitoring and evaluating.

Complaints Procedure
Complaints about content and/or delivery of the RSE programme will be dealt with in line with the trust's complaints policy.

Training
The RSE co-ordinator will be responsible for organising any training that is needed before the delivery of RSE lessons. All staff will be issued with guidance for the delivery of the programme and informed about where to access resources.

Advice and support will be sought from the school nurse, safeguarding leads and others as applicable and necessary.

Partnership with Parents and Carers
Parents/carers of all pupils are informed in writing of the general content and timings of RSE sessions and can ask to view the resources and materials by request.

Parents /carers have the right to withdraw their child from certain aspects of RSE, apart from the relationship education and statutory content in the science national curriculum. The procedure for this is for the parent to send an email to the school to request withdrawal from the RSE session, give the date of the session they want to withdraw their child from and state the reason for the withdrawal. The school will then either phone the parent to discuss their concerns or arrange a meeting to discuss the request further.

It is each school's responsibility to ensure that parents are aware that schools are legally required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

5. Related Policies

Links with other policies:
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- PSHE policy
- Science Policy