

*But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever.
Psalm 52:8.*

Edwinstree Middle School
A Voluntary Controlled Church of England School



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Adopted November 2022
Review: November 2024

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Introductory Statement

This policy covers Edwinstree Middle School's whole school approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

We believe that RSE is vital for the personal, social, and emotional development of our pupils. It equips children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, respectful and enjoyable relationships and empowers them to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

Edwinstree Middle School believes that all children and young people have a right to holistic, inclusive and needs-led RSE. We believe that through providing high quality RSE, we are upholding the ethos and values of our school and its commitment to equality and celebration of difference and that all students have the right and we have the responsibility to support them to flourish.

This policy was produced in consultation with our staff, board of governors, pupils and parents. We will ensure the policy is effectively communicated to staff and parents, including through publishing the policy on our school website.

The information below complies with our statutory obligations to deliver RSE under sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It will have due regard for the DfE's statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance and other relevant guidance.

We will review the policy on a regular basis to ensure that it is in line with current Government guidance and legislation and to ensure that our RSE programme continues to meet the needs of our pupils.

The policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies: *anti-bullying policy, behaviour policy, child protection and safeguarding policy, and our online safety policy,*

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Equality, inclusion and social justice

We believe that RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. Our RSE is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes and sexism and sexual harassment in schools. We take these issues seriously and ensure that we embed content on gender equality throughout the curriculum.

We are also committed to an RSE that makes every pupil feel valued and included and is relevant to them. This means we are committed to an LGBT+ inclusive and SEND inclusive curriculum and are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice 2014 when planning for this subject. We will also ensure that we take into account the religious and cultural background of all pupils when teaching RSE.

An inclusive RSE at Edwinstree Middle School will seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

Definition of relationships and sex education

We define relationships education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human relationships including friendships, intimate, sexual and committed relationships and family life.

We define sex education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections and sexual health.

We take the approach that Relationships and Sex Education are best approached in an integrated way and using a gender equity and human rights framework. We follow the guidance set out by the Valuing All God's Children 2019 Church of England guidance.

We will take care to highlight lessons that contain what we define as sex education so that we can respect the wishes of parents who have withdrawn their children from this content. Simultaneously, we will seek to nurture children's curiosity about the world around them, supporting their development and their respect for themselves and each other.

To cover the curriculum content outlined in the RSHE Guidance, we will equip our pupils to build positive and respectful relationships online and offline.

We seek to ensure that it gives pupils the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help them to:

- realise their health (including sexual health), wellbeing and dignity
- build self-esteem and self-worth
- explore and value their personal and sexual identity and the personal/sexual identities of others
- understand family structures, committed relationships and the legal status of different types of long-term relationships
- understand and make sense of the real-life issues they are experiencing in the world around them
- manage and explore difficult feelings and emotions
- consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others
- develop as informed and responsible citizens
- understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

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We believe that high quality, comprehensive RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation but in fact builds young people's confidence and self-esteem and helps them understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity.

Evidence shows that effective RSE plays a role in behaviour change, including reducing unprotected or unwanted sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Subject Content

The curriculum programme is developed by Tony Galanides in conjunction with the views of teachers, pupils and parents.

In Edwinstree Middle School we will meet the learning objectives and content outlined in the Relationships Education, Relationships & Sex Education and Health Education Guidance.

All content will be delivered in a timely way and will be age and developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of our pupils, including those pupils with SEND.

Our scheme of work is outlined in our appendix at the back of this document.

Subject delivery

RSE will be delivered in Edwinstree Middle School as part of our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all key stages, using a spiral curriculum approach.

Tony Galanides will work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas (science, computing, PE and citizenship) to ensure a holistic and joined up approach to what is taught in RSE.

We also supplement learning through using a whole school approach and utilizing time outside of the classroom, such as *collective worship*.

RSE will address aspects of relationships and sex in an integrated way within a single topic. We will take care to highlight lessons that contain what we define as sex education so that we can respect the wishes of parents who have withdrawn their children from this content. We commit to publishing in advance when and what topics in advance in our weekly parent newsletter and making sure parents know how to withdraw. Any parent taking this option will be met to discuss how to support their child during this period.

The programme will be delivered in a non-judgmental, factual way, using the correct medical terms where appropriate (for example when teaching about external body parts).

School staff will not express or be expected to express their personal views or beliefs when teaching RSE.

All staff who have responsibility for delivering RSE will undergo training on a regular basis to ensure they are up-to-date with the RSE policy and curriculum requirements regarding RSE.

In addition to ongoing training, CPD will also be scheduled in response to updates to our RSE scheme of work and any new development in terms of course content.

Monitoring

We regularly monitor our RSE scheme of work to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, that the curriculum is meeting the new national requirements under the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance, and that learning outcomes are reflective of pupil need.

This policy will be reviewed by the school's leadership team in conjunction with Edwinstree Middle School Lead for PSHE, Mr Galanides and Governors on a regular basis. If changes are needed, members of staff, parents/carers and pupils will be consulted and any subsequent changes made clearly communicated.

The School's Leadership Team monitors the implementation of the programme through:

- *Planning scrutiny*
- *Looking at samples of pupils' work*
- *Learning walks*

Evaluation

Evaluation of our programme is crucial to ensure that we can continue to improve on provision and teaching effectiveness.

The evaluation process involves structured and informal pupil and staff feedback including:

- *Teacher evaluation of lessons and the overall RSE programme*
Feedback and evaluation by pupils (for example, using pupil interviews, questionnaires/surveys, focus groups or using pupil question boxes.)
- *Sampling pupil work and portfolios.]*

Pupil assessment

Lessons are planned to ensure that pupils of differing abilities, including the most able, are suitably challenged.

Pupil voice

Pupil voice is central to the culture and ethos of Edwinstree Middle School.

We use pupil voice to evaluate how relevant and engaging RSE is to children's lives. Throughout our RSE scheme of work we embed pupil voice practices to enable students to express their views on the range of topics and issues that RSE covers and to ensure that they listen to other opinions and evidence, reflect on their own perspectives and take a broader view.

We want to ensure that all pupil voices are heard but that those views that are hurtful, offensive or exclusionary do not dominate and are addressed. We want to ensure a culture where human rights, social justice, inclusion and diversity are promoted.

Answering pupil questions

RSE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from pupils. We view questions as a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others.

As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group. There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class.

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Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way and take into account whether a parent/carer has requested their child to be removed from sex education lessons.

School staff will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their students that could make either party vulnerable.

We believe that an open approach to answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and older students. We believe exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSE. Importantly, we believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they are able to discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

Working with parents/carers

We believe that the successful teaching of RSE involves parents/ carers and schools working together. We also believe that parents/ carers can play an important role in the RSE of their children through exploring discussions at home that have taken place in school.

Our RSE policy has been developed through consulting parents and carers. We work with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of what we teach and when through the following methods:

- *Parents' evenings*
- *Sharing copies of the policy in face-to-face meetings and/ or through emails*
- *Letters to parents/carers giving information about when RSE will be delivered and when certain classes (including classes that involve sex education) will take place*

If parents/carers have any concerns or special circumstances the school should be aware of, or would like any further information about the curriculum, we will have a designated time for them to come into the school.

We may share examples of some of the key resources we use with parents/carers to reassure them of the content and to enable them to continue the conversations started in class at home.

Parental right to request their child be excused from sex education

As outlined within the Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSE.

Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education.

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of Relationships Education, it is our aim to encourage parents to see the value of RSE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice.

Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the headteacher to discuss their concerns. The headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum.

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If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this.

Except in exceptional circumstances, we will respect the parents' request to withdraw their child up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

We will remind parents annually that the request to withdraw is still in place and invite them to confirm whether they still want it.

Working with visitors and external agencies

From time-to-time Edwinstree Middle School may invite external experts and visitors to deliver parts of our RSE scheme of work.

External visitors will be selected in order to enrich and supplement our RSE by bringing particular skills, methods and expertise to the classroom and the whole school.

A teacher will always be present throughout these lessons so as to build on the pupil's learning after the session/s as well as answer any questions the pupils may subsequently have.

Any external visitor will be expected to comply with this policy and other related policies, including the school's confidentiality and child protection policy.

We will also ensure that:

- There is appropriate planning, preparatory and follow up work for the session.
- The visitor understands the cohort of children involved, including the different ability levels and diversities in identities across protected characteristics. They will also be made aware of any specific issues relating to child protection.

Safeguarding and child protection

Edwinstree Middle School acknowledges that RSE is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the school and for meeting our statutory obligations as outlined in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

RSE helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing abuse, or have experienced, abuse.

We recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSE covers, some pupils could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory training around child protection and will follow the schools safeguarding policy and procedures

We also recognise that some children may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes to their personal life. For those children, additional support will be given to prevent them being affected by the scenarios or topics in their planned lessons.

While Edwinstree Middle School wants to create a learning space that feels safe for children and young people to disclose, we also want to protect children's privacy.

At Edwinstree Middle School we do this by using a number of teaching techniques including the use of a working agreement, where rights respecting ground rules are created with pupils on what makes a safe and welcoming environment for all.

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Once ground rules have been set, we will check they are in place throughout the scheme of work and actively referred to. Through the use of ground rules and other approaches, such as distancing techniques, we believe the school can create a supportive environment for discussions that can be sensitive or difficult.

Statement by the Governing Body/Trust

In adopting this policy, the Governing Body/ Trust recognises its responsibility for ensuring the policy is implemented effectively, including that the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way the ensures that the school fulfils its legal obligations.