

Pathways School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Policy Monitoring

Date of last review: September 2022

Reviewed by: Saima Ali Majid, Chair of Trustees
Neil Jones, Headteacher

Date of next review: April 2023

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedures

1. Introduction

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) forms part of the wider Personal Social Health and Economic Education (PSHE) curriculum at Pathways School.

We believe that it is everyone's right to have relevant knowledge of their sexuality, regardless of whether they have special educational needs. Disability does not rule out sexual feelings, sexual needs or in many cases sexual capabilities. But it can sometimes cause sexual difficulty and, where this applies, the young person should be prepared for this. Certainly, he or she should be prepared for general sexual development, or this may come as a surprise to them as they get older. To deny young people sexual knowledge can make life exceedingly difficult for them. They may also be at a disadvantage as compared with more knowledgeable young people. We have a duty to see that this knowledge is passed on in a suitable form. Only in this way will our students become capable of taking over responsibility for their own bodies and obtaining the sexual enjoyment which is their right. Any education in sex must include education in responsibility. Young people must understand the risks which arise from irresponsible behaviour. Knowing these risks, they will also know how to behave with other people and they themselves will become less vulnerable.

2. Links to other school policies and practices

- PSHE Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- SEN Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

3. Curriculum

3.1 Content

The Pathways School Relationships and Sex Education curriculum is based on a spiral curriculum model, where students revisit key concepts and teaching areas more than once but at a level appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The RSE curriculum is designed around the following five key areas:

1. Knowing your own body
2. Recognising exploitation
3. Gender concepts and growing up (including physical and emotional changes)
4. How babies are made
5. Contraception and sexual health stages

This policy outlines how we provide planned learning experiences that promote the development of RSE within the wider PSHE curriculum, which helps provide a greater Quality of Life to all students. The policy establishes the importance of PHSE including RSE in ensuring that all students fulfil their individual potential and helps

students develop as individuals in a wider society. Students learn to understand themselves physically, emotionally, socially, and sexually and to understand their relationships with others.

This policy is available to all stakeholders via the Pathways school website. Should you require this policy in an alternative format please contact the school office.

RSE is taught within the context of a broad and balanced programme of PSHE. Teaching considers each student's prior learning, behaviour interventions, Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets and individual modes of communication.

Typical RSE Topics

Knowing your own body

- Sensory awareness.
- Self-awareness – including behaviour
- Appropriate behaviour – people, hygiene, privacy

Recognising exploitation

- Privacy, individual choices, and feelings
- Consent Saying 'No'
- Diversity
- Risk
- Safety
- Where to go for help/advice.
- Awareness of the importance of e-safety, e.g., using mobile phones or social networking sites

Gender concepts and growing up (including physical and emotional changes)

- Similarities and differences.
- Public and private language for body parts
- Identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense
- Puberty and body changes
- Menstruation
- Masturbation
- LGBT

How babies are made

- People around us including Family and friends
- Begin to recognise feelings of self and others.
- Emotional relationships, fancying, sexual intercourse
- Human Reproduction in terms of life cycle
- Childbirth and child development

Contraception and sexual health Stages

- Contraception
- Sexually transmitted infections

3.2 Entitlement and equal opportunity

We promote the needs and interests of all students in line with our Equality and Diversity policy. Teaching considers the age, ability, readiness, and cultural backgrounds of children to ensure that all can fully access PSHE including RSE provision. We will use PSHE including RSE education to address diversity issues and to ensure equality for all by including relevant content covering equality and diversity within our curriculum.

As far as is appropriate, students with special educational needs should follow the same PSHE including RSE education programme as all other students. We consider the level of differentiation needed, and content and delivery are always adapted to suit the needs of the students. Teachers will work with individual students where required, and if appropriate.

3.3 Inclusive curriculum

We will ensure that:

- All students are encouraged to develop and display attitudes of mutual knowledge, understanding and acceptance;
- Staff are aware of students' religious, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage;
- Teaching and learning methods take account of the diversity needs of our students and encourage positive attitudes to diversity and race equality;
- The resources, images and contexts used are inclusive and diverse, mirroring the students' own lives and offering insight into the lives of others;
- Schemes of work and lesson plans are based on diverse backgrounds, experiences, and cultural perspectives. In accordance with the Equalities Act 2010, issues related to gender stereotyping and sexual orientation discrimination will be addressed where appropriate.

4. Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

Because PSHE including RSE education works within students' real-life experiences, it is essential to establish a safe learning environment. We aim create a safe and supportive learning environment by having clear ground rules and confidentiality within lessons that is understood and applied by all teachers and students that have the cognitive ability to understand the importance of rules and confidentiality. We ensure that where students indicate that they may be vulnerable and at risk, they will get appropriate support by providing them with advice whilst always following the safeguarding/child protection policy. If a pupil makes a disclosure of sexual abuse or demonstrates behaviour that is concerning during a RSE lesson, the school staff will follow the guidelines laid down in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The Trustees and Headteacher consults parents in developing the sex and relationship education policy to ensure that the policy reflects parents' wishes and the culture of the community. Materials used in school must be in accordance with the PSHE framework and the law. Inappropriate images must not be used nor should explicit material not directly related to explanation. Pathways School ensures that students are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate, having regard to the age and cultural background of the students concerned.

The Trustees and Headteacher liaise with parents and take on board concerns raised on sensitive material to be used in the classroom.

At Pathways School we believe in collaborating closely with parents/carers and families to ensure the best outcomes for our students and we believe that a joint approach to learning about growing up, keeping safe, relationships and other areas of PSHE including RSE are highly beneficial.

PSHE including RSE is part of Pathways' universal curriculum offer but is also included in an individual student's personalised curriculum. This means that the balance of a pupil's personalised curriculum may be adjusted to give greater weighting to targets relating to the development of personal, social, health education. A range of settings and environments are planned and used.

Planning for each pupil's individual curriculum should consider:

- Student's prior learning;
- The strengths and weaknesses of each pupil;
- The individual targets for each student (refer to Education Health and Care Plan);
- Behaviour interventions;
- Issues relating to gender, race, culture, and disability, providing equality of opportunity;
- ICT opportunities;
- Specific individual modes of communication;
- Community groups for students and / or families.

Relevant specialist outside agencies can be consulted when planning for and teaching PSHE and RSE skills. This can be done via the progress review meetings which occur every term and at annual reviews. Like all children with autism, our students experience difficulties in the areas of socialisation, communication, and imagination – areas that are integral to PSHE.

Many of our students have additional learning difficulties which make these skills extremely hard to learn. Some parts of the formal curriculum framework, such as those requiring abstract understanding or detailed explanations may be too demanding for students in our school.

For example:

- Those that require recognition of future time;
- Issues affecting society, such as gender stereotypes, gender, and domestic violence;
- People in other times;

- Understanding why and how rules are made;
- Some aspects of independence, for example crossing the road;
- Planning for transitions between settings;
- Understanding financial risk and reward;
- The criminal justice system, political rights, central government, parliamentary characteristics, and global community.

The statutory inclusion statement of the national curriculum requires staff to modify the programmes of study to give all students relevant and appropriately challenging work at each Key Stage. We teach knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that match and challenge each pupil's abilities and support their development as individuals in wider society.

We may modify the PSHE curriculum by:

- Using the non-statutory guidance as a resource and discussion point for providing a context for planning and learning which is appropriate to the age and needs of the students.
- Focusing on one aspect or a limited number of aspects of the age-related guidance and programmes of study.
- Maintaining, consolidating, reinforcing, and generalising previous learning, as well as introducing new skills, knowledge and understanding. School routines and activities: Students have opportunities to gain experience and practice many skills relevant to their PSHE through daily routines and activities within school. For example:
 - Lunchtimes provide opportunities to gain experience about eating a healthy range of food and interact with peers.
 - Break times provide opportunities to develop play skills, leisure skills and to interact with peers and adults.
 - Toilet routines provide an opportunity to teach a pupil about private versus public behaviour and interactions.
 - Students are taught to play appropriately on the outdoor play equipment which includes bicycles, scooters, trampolines, climbing equipment, balls, water, and sand with a view to them developing the skills and interests that they need to occupy their own leisure time independently and appropriately
 - Through activities such as horse-riding and trips to local allotments, students have opportunities to gain experience how to care for living things and the environment
 - Vocational placements and leisure placements provide planned opportunities for students to practice the social skills necessary for employment interests and pursuits
 - Assemblies and school events such as sports day also provide a forum for sharing achievements, developing a sense of self-worth, interacting with new or different people, engaging in mini-enterprise activities.