

# Relationships and Sex Education

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## Introduction

Discovery Special Academy caters for children from 4-16 years who have differing degrees of learning difficulties and associated disabilities. We have children from different cultures and religious backgrounds.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of relationships and sex education taught in our academy. It should be read alongside the PHSE policy and Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing Policy.

In line with legal requirements (Education Act 1996, Learning and Skills Act 2000, Statutory Guidance 2020, KCSIE 2020) the TVED Trust Board has overseen the production and development of a relationships and sex education policy which will be made available to parents on our academy website and has decided to deliver a relationships education programme in addition to that which is part of the statutory science curriculum.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/805781/Relationships\\_Education\\_Relationships\\_and\\_Sex\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

The academy recognises the contribution that RSE can make to government health targets. Relationships education in the primary phase builds the foundations of knowledge, skills and attitudes which help young people to make positive, informed, and safe choices about their health and well-being both now and in later life. Relationships education continues into the secondary phase and a sex education programme is also introduced from year 7. Some aspects of the RE and RSE programmes will be covered through:

- Science
- Computing
- Assemblies
- Stories
- PE in the context of health and hygiene

Review of the policy will be led by the PSHERE Co-ordinator and will be informed by:

- staff and pupil evaluation of the programme;
- any relevant local/national issues;
- relevant changes in the law/good practice guidance;
- the results of parent questionnaires;
- new resources becoming available; and
- pupil needs.

RSE is learning about the emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up. RSE at Discovery will be stage-appropriate, building knowledge and life skills over time in a way that prepares pupils for issues they will soon face.

They will likely focus on:

- different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships and dealing with strangers;
- how to recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, including self-respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent, and how to manage conflict, and also how to recognise unhealthy relationships;
- how relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health; and
- healthy relationships and being safe, including safety online.

## **Aims**

A comprehensive RSE programme provides accurate information about the body, reproduction and relationships. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and off line. The aims are to:

- equip children with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to manage the responsibilities associated with adult life and to form and maintain positive and fulfilling relationships;
- ensure effective delivery of RSE at a level appropriate to each child; and
- follow the science national curriculum- where appropriate and relevant.

## **Objectives**

- To develop an awareness of the importance of relationships and enable children to practice skills that will help them to build and maintain them.
- To provide factual information on human reproduction and birth.
- To encourage respect for difference and diversity.
- To prepare young people for the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty.
- To ensure that all young people know who can support them and how to access this support.
- To work in partnership with, and support the role of, parents.
- To model positive relationships throughout the academy.
- To actively challenge stereotypes, prejudice and sexual exploitation and give children the skills to critically analyse media messages.
- To give opportunities for pupils to develop and practice decision-making skills with regard to the range of possible consequences.
- To promote, and encourage children to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- To use agreed terminology to discuss body parts throughout the academy.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The PHSERE Co-ordinator has the following responsibilities:**

- To lead the bi-annual review of the RSE policy.
- To ensure that resources used are relevant and appropriate to the needs of the children.
- To lead on the evaluation of the RSE policy and programme.
- To ensure that staff have the necessary skills, confidence, knowledge, and resources in order to deliver effective relationships education.

### **Trustees have the following responsibilities:**

- To ensure that an up-to-date RSE policy is in place and is made available to parents and for inspection.
- To ensure that the RSE policy and curriculum are in line with the DfE relationships education Statutory Guidance 2020.
- To ensure that the policy and programme reflect a whole academy approach particularly in relation to consultation.

### **Teachers have the following responsibilities:**

- To ensure that they, or anyone working in their classroom to deliver/support RSE, is doing so in line with the academy's relationships education policy, and other relevant academy policies.
- To contribute to the evaluation of the programme.
- Assessing children's progress against the agreed learning outcomes.
- Communicating the year group content with parents via the newsletters.

### **Working with Parents/Carers**

- We recognise that parents/carers are key partners in our delivery of a comprehensive RSE programme for pupils at the academy. The RSE we deliver is designed to support the important role of parents in this area.
- If parents/carers have concerns about any of the content to be covered, we ask that these are addressed to the headteacher.
- Parents and families have been consulted on the RSE policy.
- We work with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of what we teach and when through the following methods:
  - Coffee morning workshops
  - Welcome packs
  - Sharing copies of the policy/content in face-to-face meetings and/ or through emails/on the website

We may share examples of some of the key resources we use with parents/carers to reassure them of the content.

### **Parental right to request their child to be excused from sex education**

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the sex education components of RSE. That means the lessons that cover physical aspects of sexual development and intimate relationships, and sexual health.

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

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from sex education, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the pupil wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will plan to provide the pupil with sex education during one of those terms. There is no right to withdraw from other parts of Relationships and Health Education including reproduction in science.

- 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 Relationships or Health Education.

### **Moral and Values Framework**

Through the RSE curriculum, both formal and informal, and the modelling of positive relationships throughout the academy, we aim to promote and foster morals and values important to the development of relationships education. These are as follows:

- Everyone has a right to express their views and be listened to.
- Everyone in the academy should behave in a way that shows care, consideration and respect for themselves, other people and things, and the environment.
- All members of the academy community are equally valued.
- Disputes and disagreements will be resolved peacefully.
- The diversity of individuals, families and relationships will be accepted and celebrated.
- Love, commitment, trust, loyalty, respect are important attributes needed in close relationships.

### **Equality and inclusion**

Discovery Special Academy encourages respect for all regardless of gender and gender identity, ethnicity, ability, faith, culture, sexuality, sexual orientation, disability, home background or other personal circumstance. Within our provision of RSE we will ensure that resources used, and teaching styles employed reflect and support the diversity of our pupils and wider society. All members of the academy community will feel safe, valued and respected (see Equality Policy).

Throughout the academy there will be consistent challenging of homophobic attitudes, behaviour and language and our curriculum is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes and sexism and sexual harassment in schools. We seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

**\*\*We recognise that children at the academy come from a range of family backgrounds, these include:** children whose parents are not married; children whose parents have divorced or separated; children in public care; children living with foster parents, grandparents, parents of different ethnicities, disabled parents, same-sex parents and single parents. We will endeavour to ensure that children see these family groupings and relationships represented and affirmed within the relationships education curriculum, academy resources and displays.

In planning the relationships education programme we have used learning outcomes from the Statutory Guidance (2020), and suggestions by Ofsted in their report on SRE (2002). These incorporate the statutory elements of sex education that come within the Science curriculum. We have also given due regard to the SRE guidance issued by the DfE in 2000 and Sex and Relationships Education for the 21st Century - PHSE Association and Sex Education Forum 2014.

Planning has taken account of the diverse needs of pupils and sessions will be differentiated as appropriate fully acknowledging the SEND code of practice 2014.

## **Provision**

RSE will be delivered to all pupils at an appropriate level through the following themes:

- Similarities and differences
- Feelings
- Keeping safe
- Keeping yourself clean and healthy
- Someone to talk to
- Friends
- Families of all kinds
- Growing and changing
- Male and female/body parts, reproduction and birth
- Choices and consequences

Content and delivery will be matched to the age, maturity, understanding and needs of the pupils in each year group. We will use various methods at the beginning of each year to assess children's current knowledge, understanding and skills in order to ensure that the content of the programme is relevant.

In order to promote common understanding amongst the children, we make use of the correct terminology to discuss sexual body parts in the academy. Whilst we acknowledge that children have different family names for sexual parts we teach and encourage the use of the scientific names. Children need to learn the correct biological/medical names for the genitalia and reproductive organs. Having the right language to describe the private parts of their body – and knowing how to seek help if they are being abused – are vital for safeguarding. The words we will use include: penis, vagina, clitoris, testicles, breasts, nipples. This language is reflected in the resources used to deliver relationships education.

In November 2013, the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) completed an inquiry into child sexual exploitation (CSE) which has raised awareness of the prevalence of this issue and the urgent need to tackle it. Younger pupils should learn that their body belongs to them and that they can say who has access to it. This is a key element in the academy's approach to safeguarding. Learning to respect boundaries – their own and other people – helps children to understand the need to obtain consent and that everyone has the right to offer or withhold their consent for any activity, sexual or otherwise. (Sex and Relationships Education for the 21st Century - PHSE Association and Sex Education Forum 2014).

## **Delivery**

RSE should ensure that all children:-

- Develop confidence in thinking and communicating about feelings and relationships
- Are aware of parts of the body and describe how their bodies work where appropriate
- Can protect themselves and ask for help and support where appropriate
- Are made aware of puberty.

Puberty and menstruation will be taught in year 5/6 where appropriate. Children will be taught in small groups of mixed or single gender, covering topics appropriate to their ability. There may also be occasions when an issue arises that has to be dealt with on an individual basis, in line with the safeguarding policy.

Adults involved in the teaching of RSE will have had guidance and will feel comfortable in their ability to teach the subject.

The formal RSE programme will be delivered in each year group through PSHERE sessions. It will also be delivered through other curriculum subjects, for example Science, PE, English and Religious Education. There will also be opportunities for more informal teaching through assemblies, circle-time, story-telling, pretend play. Children will be encouraged to recognise and apply the knowledge and skills they learn in PSHERE to other contexts both within, and outside of, the academy setting.

We recognise that RSE sessions require the use of a range of teaching and learning strategies in order that children have the opportunity to develop skills, explore attitudes and values and acquire knowledge. The range of teaching and learning strategies employed in the delivery of relationships education at Discovery include watching videos, discussion, role-play, quizzes, drama, case studies, matching exercises, drawing, and debates. Individual teachers will ensure that all pupils are able to access the activities to be employed. Appropriately differentiated activities will be provided.

Children will be made aware of the intended learning outcomes of each lesson/topic so that they can assess their own development and make progress.

Relationships education will be delivered by class teachers. We ensure that both male and female pupils receive information on the emotional and physical changes of the onset of puberty in both genders. This information will be taught in class groups. In Year 5 and 6 whilst most sessions will be delivered to class groups, some of the sessions on puberty may be delivered to gender groups so that the children have the opportunity to ask questions that they might feel less comfortable asking in a mixed gender group.

## **Resources**

Resources are chosen by the PSHERE Co-ordinator who ensures that they reflect the needs of children within the academy. The PSHERE Co-ordinator consults national and local guidance on appropriate relationships education resources and then judges their suitability for use with our children.

We will remain flexible in our choice of resources and teachers will adapt resources to fully address the needs of all children within their class.

## **Answering Children's Questions**

Children are naturally curious and we believe that if a child asks a question they require an honest and factual answer. This is true of questions asked in all curriculum areas and at other times during the academy day.

All staff in the academy will answer children's questions around relationships issues in line with the following guidance:

- Questions will be answered in a factual manner without any personal bias and with reference to the age and understanding of the child / children.
- If the answer to a question isn't known the class teacher will suggest that the class do some research to find out the appropriate information
- In some situations, staff will sensitively turn the question back on the pupil to establish what they already know, for example "that's a very interesting question, I wonder why you are asking that" or ask the rest of the class whether they know the answer "Does anyone else know the answer to that question?"

- Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way and consider whether a parent/carers has requested their child to be removed from sex education lessons.
- If it is felt that it is not appropriate to answer a question in a whole class setting the teacher will explain this sensitively and will give an answer to the child individually at the end or refer the child to their parents.

### **Assessment, recording and reporting**

Assessment on the science elements of RSE will be evident through curriculum books and electronic learning journals. Assessment within other areas of the RSE programme can be difficult.

However a range of methods, including class learning journals, have been produced to record pupils' responses and development within the different areas. Where appropriate and dependent on the topic, photographs and pupil statements will reinforce these. As part of the child's annual report the activities covered and progress made in science are reported to parents.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

At the end of each lesson teachers will use a range of informal methods to give pupils the opportunity to reflect on their learning and development.

Throughout each topic a range of methods will be used to assess the extent to which pupils are achieving the intended learning outcomes. Pupils will be assessed on the following three areas: knowledge acquisition; clarification and exploration of attitudes and values; skills development.

We regularly monitor our curriculum 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 academy's leadership team in conjunction the PSHERE coordinator as required (at least annually). If significant changes due to updated national guidance are needed, members of staff, parents/carers and pupils will be consulted and any subsequent changes made clearly communicated.

### **Staff development**

Staff training on relationships education is co-ordinated by the PSHERE Co-ordinator. Training requirements will be identified through the policy review process or through a teacher expressing individual needs to the headteacher. Appropriate training will then be sought to fulfil the needs of the staff member. Anybody who attends training will be required to provide an outline of any relevant information to other staff members via a future staff meeting.

### **Safeguarding children, confidentiality and child protection**

All staff members at Discovery have a duty to safeguard the well-being of children.

At Discovery we recognise that the open discussion associated with RSE education may lead to children making disclosures about things that they are worried about or about abuse. There may also be occasions when a teacher may hear things or observe activity/behaviour that may raise concerns of a child protection issue. In these situations, the teacher will consult the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). DSL will then work in line with the relevant academy policies in terms of any further action that may be taken. This includes the mandatory reporting duty regarding Female Genital



Mutilation (FGM). Staff should use safeguarding procedures if they suspect a child is at risk and should personally report to the police cases where they discover an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. FGM is illegal under the FGM Act 2003 and is a form of child abuse. Under Section 5B of the 2003 Act (as inserted by Section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) a mandatory reporting duty was introduced for Teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM from 31st October 2015 – please see the Child Protection Policy for more information.

Where a staff member has to disclose information to another party, this will be done following discussion with the pupil if this is possible and appropriate. Sensitive information is only disclosed internally or externally with careful attention to the rights and needs of individuals.

For more detailed information on the processes for child protection please consult the academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies which are available on the academy website.

### **Provision for young women's menstruation needs**

Sanitary disposal units are available in the staff and in some pupils' toilets in upper Key Stage 2. All female pupils from Year 5 upwards and their parents are informed that sanitary protection and spare underwear can be obtained from the office and from teachers in the event of a pupil starting menstruation when at the academy. Supplies are kept within the academy to deal with emergencies. However, parents are expected to send pupils to the academy with adequate sanitary protection for the day and these can be kept in a private agreed place. Both male and female pupils are educated about periods through the relationships education curriculum to encourage empathy and understanding.

### **Working with visitors and external agencies**

From time-to-time we may invite external experts and visitors to deliver parts of our RSE curriculum.

External visitors (such as nurses) will be selected to enrich and supplement our RSE by bringing skills, methods and expertise to the classroom and the whole school.

Any outside agency or speaker will be DBS checked and supervised. A teacher will always be present throughout these lessons 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.

### **Information for parents**

It is hoped that pupils will feel able to approach parents or staff with any concerns or worries that they may have regarding relationships. Academy staff will always encourage pupils to discuss issues with parents.

It is our policy to answer children's questions as they occur, naturally and at a level appropriate to the child. As outlined in this policy, consideration is given to the needs of individual pupils regarding their cultural and/ or religious background.

When pupils are at an appropriate stage to be taught about puberty and menstruation as set out in the science curriculum (usually in years 5 or 6), a letter will be written to parents so that they are aware and can support their children at home, e.g. answer any questions children may ask.

### **Complaints**

If you have a question regarding the delivery or content of RSE, please speak to your class teaching team in the first instance.

For all complaints regarding RSE, please refer to the trust complaints policy which can be found using the following link.

<https://www.teesvalleyeducation.co.uk/policies>

### **Equal Opportunities**

All children have equal access to the curriculum regardless of their gender, ethnicity or learning difficulty. This is monitored by analysing pupil performance throughout the school to ensure that there is no significant disparity between groups.

### **Links to other relevant policies**

The relationships education policy links to the following academy policies:

- Equality
- PSHCE
- Physical health and mental wellbeing
- Safeguarding (Including Child Protection)
- Curriculum
- Trust general complaints policy