

RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) Policy

ABBOTSWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Reviewed by Senior Leadership Team:

Approved by the Full Governance Board: 02 February 2026

Review date: Spring 2027

Aims

We believe that our Personal Development and RSE learning help to give pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives, in order to become informed, active and responsible citizens. Personal Development also flows through all other curriculum areas.

Under the guidance issued by the DfE, by September 2021, Relationships Education at primary school is compulsory. We believe that, to be effective, RSE should always be taught within a broader Personal Development education programme.

RSE enhances, and is enhanced by, learning related to topics including anti-bullying, keeping safe on and off line, keeping physically and mentally healthy, learning about drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and the development of skills and attributes such as communication skills, managing peer pressure, risk management, resilience and decision making.

The aims of PDL and RSE at Abbotswood are to:

- Promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all pupils
- Prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life
- Encourage pupils to value themselves and others
- Allow pupils to acknowledge and appreciate difference and diversity
- Teach pupils how to make informed choices
- Prepare pupils to be positive and active members of a democratic society
- Teach pupils to understand what constitutes a safe and healthy lifestyle
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Promote safety in forming and maintaining relationships
- Provide pupils with a toolkit for understanding and managing their emotions
- Provide pupils with the opportunities to consider issues which may affect their own lives and/or the lives of others
- Help pupils to identify the characteristics of healthy relationships, how relationships may affect mental and physical health; and how to stay safe online
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

Statutory Requirements at Abbotswood Junior School

We teach RSE and Health Education as set out in this policy. Through these subjects, we want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe – we want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society.

At Abbotswood, we have committed to retaining our current choice to continue to teach age-appropriate sex education alongside relationships education. In doing so, we have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State as outlined in Section 403 of the Education Act 1996. We also have regard for the Equality Act 2010 and have a public duty to 'eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality and opportunity and foster good characteristics between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it'. This includes tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Policy Development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of the leadership team pulled together all relevant information, including relevant national and local guidance.
2. Staff and family consultation – school staff and pupils' families were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
3. Approval – the policy was shared with and approved by the Governance Board.

Definition

RSE is part of lifelong learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. RSE, within Personal Development, aims to give children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitive relationships and the skills to stay safe both on and off line. It enables pupils to explore their own and others' attitudes and values and builds their self-esteem and confidence to view their own sexuality positively. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Delivery of Personal Development and RSE

RSE is taught within the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum. Some biological aspects of sex education are taught within the science curriculum. At Abbotswood, we believe that pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. These subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships.

In accordance with DfE guidance (Relationships Education Guidance, updated July 2021), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-education-primary> we believe that RSE should meet the needs of all pupils. This should include age-appropriate teaching about different types of relationships in the context of the law. Objective 3 of the document for primary pupils in the section entitled 'Families and people who care for me' states 'Pupils should be taught that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.'

Extract from DfE: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs>): 'Pupils should receive teaching on LGBT content during their school years. Teaching children about the society that we live in and the different types of loving, healthy relationships that exist can be done in a way that respects everyone. Primary schools are strongly encouraged and enabled to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families.' At Abbotswood, this is delivered through teaching about different types of family, including those with same sex parents.

Pupils with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)

As far as is appropriate, pupils with special educational needs should follow the same PSHE education programme as all other students. Careful consideration is given concerning the level of differentiation needed, and in some cases the content or delivery will have to be adapted. Teachers and/or learning support assistants work with individual pupils where required, and if appropriate. It is not the school's policy

to withdraw pupils with special educational needs from PSHE or RSE education to catch up on other national curriculum subjects: these aspects of personal and social development are as important to all pupils as their academic achievement.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governance Board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that PSHE and RSE are taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from components of RSE.

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering PSHE and RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the [non statutory/non-science] components of PSHE and RSE
- Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching PSHE or RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

Pupils are expected to engage fully in PSHE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

Parents' Right to Withdraw

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's relationships and sex education lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we:

- Make available online, via the school's website, this RSE Policy.
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RSE education of their child.
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSE in the school.
- Inform parents about the best practice known with regard to RSE, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home. We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing responsibilities. We have committed to retain a parent's right to withdraw their child from sex education within RSE (other than sex education in the National Curriculum as part of science). There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at primary school as we believe the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from the sex education elements of RSE, they should discuss this with the headteacher, and make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. For RSE curriculum objectives, which follow The Medway Scheme (accredited by The PSHE Association), please refer to the PSHE Medium Term Overview..

Parents should be aware that schools are legally required to provide a broad, balanced curriculum. Sex education topics can arise incidentally and overlap with relationships education lessons and it is not possible to withdraw pupils from these relatively limited and often unplanned discussions. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the headteacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from these lessons.

The headteacher may also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the PSHE Leader and the Senior Leadership Team through: lesson observations, learning walks, feedback from staff, families and children. This policy should be read in conjunction with our policy for Personal Development Learning, including PSHE and Drug Education.

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the PSHE Leader, Senior Leadership Team and approved by the Governance Board.