



## **RSE Policy**

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## 1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at Woodfield are to:

- To support pupils to develop the skills to live safe, fulfilling lives.
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place with families and across agencies.
- Help pupils understand the importance of stable and healthy relationships, respect, love and care.
- Support pupils to form positive relationships with others, form friendships, understand the differences between one another, have happy and fulfilled lives and recognise that we all grow and change.
- To challenge sexism and prejudice and promote equality and diversity.
- Prepare pupils for puberty and help their understanding of sexual development (how their bodies will change) and the importance of health and hygiene.
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-agency, self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- Support pupils to gain an understanding of what is 'private' (carried out alone, without scrutiny) and what differentiates private spaces from public (shared) spaces and the different degrees of these.
- Help pupils know how to keep themselves safe, develop their skills in giving and withdrawing consent across their lives, know what is appropriate in different interactions and relationships, know how to share concerns and get help. Avoiding being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted behaviours.
- Teach and support pupils to be as healthy as possible.
- Create a positive culture around issues related to the development of a personal identity.
- Support pupils to understand the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.

## 2. Statutory requirements

At Woodfield we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

Below is listed what has to be taught (in developmentally appropriate ways) by law so families know what can and cannot be withdrawn from.

This policy and curriculum follows 'Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' Statutory Guidance (DfE 2020). In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

As a maintained all-age, special school, we must teach relationships education to all **primary**-aged learners as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017. We have to teach the elements of sex education contained in the Science National Curriculum.

For **secondary**-aged learners, we must provide Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSE) as per the Children and Social work act 2017.

We do not have to follow the National Curriculum, but we do have to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including requirements to teach elements of sex education that would typically be contained in the science National Curriculum as listed below in section 8.

This for our cohort must be differentiated to their specific learning and communicative profiles.

### 3. Policy development

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

- A. Review – a member of staff (RSE lead) pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
- B. Staff consultation – school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
- C. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting / reply to a survey about the policy
- D. Pupil engagement – we recognise student voice in the articulation of this policy and look towards how to best use it where possible
- E. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was ratified and placed on the school website

### 4. Definition

At Woodfield, the majority of our cohort work at a level where RSE is about building positive relationships with others, forming friendships, understanding the differences between one another and recognising that we all grow, bodies will change and developing skills for self-care and personal hygiene.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity and encompasses a broad and varied range of areas. We want our pupils to be able to know when the way someone is interacting with them is safe touch or inappropriate. For this reason, we feel it is important for pupils to be supported to have a degree of understanding of safe and unsafe touch with different people including some sexual acts so they can know and communicate if something is not appropriate.

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual development and health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information, exploring issues and values. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

This is not the task of the school in isolation, and we seek to work with parents and carers to ensure that the teaching of RSE reflects and complements teaching at home.

### 5. Curriculum

Our curriculum is built around each young person who attends Woodfield and the approaches we take to supporting understanding of RSE will be reflected by their specific learning and communication profile, age, needs and feelings of our pupils.

Integration with Education Health Care Plans: Specific individual targets can be drawn and reported on from the appendix of this document.

If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers may wish to seek guidance from a school leader before they respond.

The RSE curriculum guide and 1 page guide contain more information about the content of our curriculum.

### Key Learning Areas:

- **Consent:** Encouraging choice-making, learning you can agree or reject, learning what you do and don't want, respecting refusals, and understanding guidelines related to personal space.
- **Peer (and adult) Pressure:** Developing self-confidence, the ability to make simple choices, assert your will and change your mind.
- **Body Awareness:** Recognising body parts and their names, similarities and differences, sensory activities, and songs.
- **Gender:** Exploring own identity and familiarity with different people.
- **Changes and Development:** Building an understanding of how bodies change at different stages of life including personal changes.
- **Puberty:** Using social stories and visual resources and props to prepare for bodily changes and understanding why I feel how I do.
- **Managing Menstruation:** Developing tolerance to hygiene routines and sensory experiences.
- **Sexual Feelings & Masturbation:** Redirecting to appropriate touch, safe and private behaviours.
- **Being Clean:** Supporting independence: washing, personal care, dressing and toileting routines.
- **Being Healthy:** Supporting healthy choices and behaviours: Cleanliness, hair management, eating, hydration, being active, being in nature, helping others, mental health and well-being.
- **Keeping Safe:** Teaching awareness of safe and unsafe touch through structured interactions and modelling including the nuances of public and private. Learning to say no and share concerns.
- **Safe Talk and Touch:** Reinforcing who is safe to approach and who to seek help from. What is and isn't ok within interactions with different categories of people including strangers and different types of people we know. Who is in each category.
- **Interactions with Different People:** Supporting appropriate engagement with familiar and unfamiliar people in different scenarios.
- **Where I Belong:** Recognising key people and groups in their lives and their roles.
- **Similarities & Differences:** Noticing and accepting differences through sensory and visual activities.
- **Pregnancy, Birth & Parenthood:** Exploring basic concepts through dolls, pictures, and role play, understanding the basic biological processes in appropriate ways.
- **Sexual Health:** Supporting personal hygiene and body care, supporting awareness of (not encouragement of) sexual behaviours as part of being safe – within the context of appropriate and inappropriate interactions.

Parents / guardians / primary carers are to be informed if any of the formal Relationships and Sex Education described in this section below are being taught. This would be through an email home sent by the class lead prior to teaching this element.

In Primary: Before teaching about periods, erections and pubic hair or death so pupils can be supported at home as well as in school.

In Secondary: Before teaching about periods, erections and pubic hair, sex, sexual acts including masturbation, nocturnal ejaculation or death so pupils can be supported at home as well as in school.

More formal aspects for a few pupils:

Sometimes a few pupils of secondary age, that are able to understand, the following formal aspects of Relationships, Sex & Health Education will be taught, much will be in part, and all will be dependent on individual needs:

- Developing skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- Understanding the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual relationships.
- Communicating effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sexual issues.
- Developing awareness of their sexuality and understanding human sexuality
- Understanding the reasons for having protected sex.
  - Having sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.
- Being aware of sources of help and acquiring the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- Knowing how the law applies to sexual relationships. Developing understanding of what is appropriate in terms of safe, consenting, legal & private.

## 6. Delivery of RSE

RSE at Woodfield is primarily incorporated into the daily routines of all young people with some elements taught as discrete sessions.

Where developmentally applicable relationship education will focus on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships and respectful relationships
- Online / digital interactions and relationships
- Appropriate spaces and privacy

At Woodfield RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe

The focus is on supporting young people to understand public vs private spaces, build positive relationships with their team and families and help those who teach them feel confident to support them in understanding self-agency and safety, being ready for and managing changes in their bodies and how they feel.

Our young people are heavily reliant upon the team around them supporting the principles outlined above and this policy should be read in conjunction with our safeguarding policies.

## 7. Roles and responsibilities

### 7.1 The governing body

The governing board will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The governing board oversee approval of this policy.

### 7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from components of RSE (see section 8).

### 7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Informing parents / guardians / primary carers in a letter via email before, any of the formal parts outlined above are taught to a learner in the school.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring and reporting 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 RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher or the RSE lead. All teachers and teaching assistants in the school are responsible for teaching RSE.

### 7.4 Pupils

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

## 8. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE. Pupils cannot be withdrawn from overhearing peers (rare in our setting) or asking questions outside of focused teaching.

**In primary, pupils cannot be withdrawn from:** learning about puberty as part of development, the biological aspects of growth, reproduction, life cycles, that animals, including humans, have offspring and body changes.

### **In primary, pupils can be withdrawn from**

- ❌ learning about the emotional, social, or ethical aspects of the above.
- ❌ human sexual reproduction (how babies are made).

### **In secondary, pupils cannot be withdrawn from:**

**Relationships Education** – Including but not limited to:

- Friendships and families
- Respectful relationships, including online safety
- Consent, boundaries, and personal safety
- Recognising and reporting abuse (for this we need to teach pupils what is and isn't ok)

**Health Education** – Including but not limited to:

- Puberty and body changes (biological facts)
- Menstruation
- Mental health and wellbeing

**Science Curriculum** – Including but not limited to:

- Human reproduction, biological facts of sexual relationships (biological aspects only – they can be withdrawn from learning about emotions about these or moral choices)
- Puberty and body changes
- The menstrual cycle and pregnancy
- Contraception – facts (they can be withdrawn from learning about moral, ethical or relationship aspects in reality there are not currently pupils this applies to)

**In secondary pupils can be withdrawn from**

- ⊗ Moral, ethical or relationship aspects of Contraception (not covered under Science)
- ⊗ Sexual health and STIs (not covered under Science)
- ⊗ Sexual relationships outside of biological facts

**Parental withdrawal rules:** Parents can request withdrawal from non-statutory sex education up until three school terms before the child turns 16. At age 16, the child has the right to opt into sex education, even if their parents previously withdrew them. Schools should discuss the request with parents to ensure they understand the benefits of RSE. Schools may decline withdrawal requests in exceptional circumstances (e.g., safeguarding concerns).

Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing and addressed to the Headteacher. As appropriate alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from the non-statutory aspects of sex education. Please do call the office to ask to arrange to discuss your concerns with us first.

Parents do not have to give their reasons for withdrawing their children but will be made aware of the implications of removing them (in reality for what our pupils' need to learn there, the elements that can be withdrawn from are beyond the level our pupils are learning at).

- Increased vulnerability; vulnerable children have a higher chance of being unable to manage risk when and if they encounter situations. (NSPCC 2011)
- It will be the responsibility of parents to provide information on non-statutory aspects of Sex Education issues if they withdraw their child from school Sex Education.

## 9. Training

Staff are trained in the delivery of RSE and it is included in our continuing professional development. The RSE Lead liaises with the other Educational Psychology Team and other special schools to share good practice, will also invite specialists from outside the school, such as educational psychologists, school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE when appropriate. We will offer training to parents through parent groups and through a bespoke offer to families. This will support joined up working and thinking.

## **10. Monitoring arrangements**

The delivery of RSE at Woodfield is monitored by The RSE Lead, the Headteacher and Deputy Head teacher through planning, lesson observations, learning walks and progress meetings. Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. This policy will be reviewed by the RSE Lead bi-annually.