

RSE Policy



Date: May 2024

Reviewed September 2025

Review Date: August 2026

Responsible Person: Hayley Winstanley

1. Statutory Guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Education Act (1996)

2. Rationale

In line with DfE Statutory Guidance, Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning teaching for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities who represent a large minority of pupils. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility. Schools should also be mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcome, as set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching these subjects to those with SEND.

Schools should be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education and RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some pupils; for example, those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors should be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects.

In special schools and for some SEND pupils in mainstream schools there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages. As with all teaching for these subjects, schools should ensure that their teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.

More Than Ed Independent Special School's (MTE) policy on sex and relationship education (RSE) is based on the requirements of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 and the DfE document 'Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education' in which Relationships Education for primary pupils, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is statutory for secondary pupils.

In the DfE document, RSE is defined as 'learning about physical, moral, cultural, mental and emotional development'. The guidance states that in order to create a happy and successful adult life 'pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficiency'.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the ways in which our school's provision for relationships and sex education will support pupils through their spiritual, moral, social, emotional and physical development, and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. In accordance with the principles of the Equality Act (2010), we believe that every child is entitled to receive RSE regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, cultural heritage, disability, sexuality, language needs or special educational needs. We use an inclusive, whole school approach to ensure RSE can be accessed in an age-appropriate way throughout a child's school career.

As the guidance states, schools are able to determine how to deliver the content set out in the DfE guidance, in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff are fully aware that the delivery of RSE lessons for some of our children may trigger experiences of past childhood trauma. This alone or in addition to a lower developmental age and understanding mean that when teaching RSE; close partnerships with the school's wellbeing team, parents, carers, social workers and virtual schools may be called upon to support the RSE work with the child/ young adult.

3. Aims and Objectives.

We teach students about:

- scientific anatomical names
- puberty and the physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults.
- having respect for and being in control of their own bodies.
- body satisfaction and self-concept.
- the way humans reproduce.
- the importance of sexual activity as part of a committed, long-term, and loving relationship between adults; healthy relationships
- that there are different types of families, all of which have equal value.
- discrimination and stereotypes; inclusion
- respect for the views of other people.
- moral questions.
- relationship issues including keeping safe online and seeking help.
- relationships and the media
- unwanted contact and consent
- sexual abuse, and what they should do if they are worried about any sexual matters.
- decision making, risk management and support seeking skills

4. Guiding principles for relationships, sex and health education

- We offer an inclusive and well-sequenced RSE curriculum, informed by meaningful engagement with pupils to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and engaging.
- We engage with parents on the content of RSE and are transparent with parents about all materials used in RSHE. All materials are available to parents on request.
- Parents have a right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education (students can opt back in from three terms before they turn 16), however, Relationships and Health components are still mandatory in our school.
- We ensure that parents are aware of sex education content within lessons in advance, and the RSE syllabus is shared on the website.
- We focus on building positive attitudes and skills, promoting healthy norms about relationships, including sexual relationships where relevant, and about health, including mental health.
- Staff avoid language which might normalise harmful behaviour among young people – for example gendered language which might normalise male violence or stigmatise boys.
- We cover all statutory topics, recognising that young people can start developing healthy behaviour and relationship skills as soon as they start school.
- We sequence teaching so that pupils are supported and equipped with the knowledge to navigate different experiences in a positive way before they occur, and to prevent harms.

- We have developed our curriculum to be relevant, age and stage appropriate and accessible to students in our area.
- The curriculum is delivered by Nicola Etherington (Head of RSE/PSHE) and Sam Kitchen (Head of PE). They have the knowledge, skills and confidence to create a safe and supportive environment and to facilitate participative and interactive education which aims to support and not to alarm pupils.
- These member of staff are trained in safeguarding and offering support, recognising the increased possibility of disclosures.
- The curriculum is delivered as part of a whole school approach to wellbeing and positive relationships, supported by other school policies, including Relational and Safeguarding policies.

5. Context

High quality sex and relationships education helps create safe school communities in which pupils can grow, learn and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life. We teach RSE on the understanding that:

- it is taught in the context of family life.
- it is part of a wider process of social, personal, spiritual and moral education.
- children should be taught to have respect for their own bodies.
- children should learn about their responsibilities to others and be aware of the consequences of sexual activity.
- children develop respect for diversity, risk management and support seeking skills.
- it is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect, both in person and online.
- it makes a significant contribution to our duty to safeguard and protect all children.
- it plays a key role in improving health outcomes for children and young people, enhancing their decision making and support seeking skills and reducing teenage pregnancy and risk-taking behaviour.

We teach about relationships through different aspects of the curriculum. RSE, however, is taught discreetly due to the past life experiences of our young people. We believe RSE lessons are extremely important as they contribute significantly to children's knowledge and understanding of their own bodies, and how they are changing and developing. Parents/carers can, however, withdraw their child from RSE lessons, or any particular topic within RSE.

Our RSE programme is one of the most important ways we act on our responsibility to safeguard and protect our children, as set out in our Safeguarding/Child Protection policy. We also refer to guidance from the government and expert organisations on specific safeguarding issues, which are relevant to our cohort of children, as listed in Keeping Children Safe in Education. To safeguard children effectively it is vital that opportunities are created in the curriculum to teach about healthy behaviour, caring relationships, online safety and when and how to get help. At our school we encourage children to develop skills in these areas so that they are equipped with strategies to help themselves in preventing or reporting harm or abuse.

6. Confidentiality

Two specific teachers conduct all RSE lessons. All RSE lessons are delivered in a sensitive manner, and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved) in sexual activity, then the teacher will deal with it as a matter of safeguarding/child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse, grooming or exploitation. They will not try to investigate but will immediately inform the named person for child protection issues about their concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals and other relevant agencies, as set out in our Safeguarding/Child Protection policy.

7. Reviewing

All policies are very much working documents. This allows amendments to be made based on the needs and abilities of our future cohort.

RSE Syllabus

Year 5
Human Reproduction
Changes in Boys
Changes in Girls
Changing Emotions
Relationships and Families
Where Do I Come From?
Year 6
Changing Bodies
Changing Emotions
Just the Way You Are
Relationships
Let's Talk About Sex
Human Reproduction
Year 7
Puberty and emotional changes.
Menstrual well-being.
Healthy and unhealthy relationships.
Managing family conflict.
Introduction to consent
Catch up/revisit/questions
Year 8
Relationship values.
Influences on relationship expectations.
Sexual orientation and identity.
Consent – avoiding assumptions.
Introduction to contraception.
Catch up/revisit/questions
Year 9
Respectful relationship behaviours.
Freedom and capacity to consent.
Sexual health.
Contraception.
Managing the end of relationships.
Catch up/revisit/questions
Year 10
The role of intimacy and pleasure.
The impact of pornography.
Pressure, persuasion and coercion.
Managing relationship conflict and breakups.
Addressing relationship abuse.
Catch up/revisit/questions

Year 11
Family conflict.
Long term commitments.
Sexual health, fertility and routes to parenthood.
Pregnancy outcomes.
Pregnancy choices: abortion.