



Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Introduction

Cheam School is committed to the provision of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) based on the encouragement of social, emotional and moral considerations and with due regard for the value of family life, the diversity of family arrangements as well as stable relationships outside marriage.

This policy, supported by relevant training, aims to ensure that:

- RSE is delivered with safeguarding in mind.
- RSE is delivered by knowledgeable and confident staff.
- Staff are aware of the school's confidentiality arrangements.
- RSE is delivered in line with core principles that promote equality.
- Provision of RSE is within a clear values framework and states the aims and expected outcomes of the school's RSE programme clearly.
- Description is clear on how the programme is managed and organised.
- A clear outline is provided on how the programme is delivered.
- A description on how the RSE programme meets the needs of all learners
- A description on how school policies on safeguarding and child protection relate to RSE.
- RSE will be delivered within the context of the schools PSHE curriculum as well as in other curriculum lessons, particularly Science.

During the consultation process discussions were held with:

- Pupil focus groups;
- Matrons;
- Medical team;
- Heads of Year;
- The Governor responsible for Safeguarding;
- Parents.

Parents have received correspondence about the new policy and provided with information about their right to withdraw their child(ren). Parents are free to withdraw their children from RSE if they wish to do so. The only exceptions to sex education are the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction that are essential elements of National Curriculum Science. If a pupil is excused from sex education, we understand it is our responsibility as a school to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. If a parents wishes to withdraw a child, they must be sanctioned by the Headmaster after a consultation to discuss the best interests of the child.

Purpose

RSE is about physical, moral and emotional development. It emphasises the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the consideration of relationships and health against a background of respect for marriage, family life and respect for the diversity of family arrangements. It provides knowledge and skills which are intended to help students manage a healthy lifestyle including the reduction of harm to self and others. It aims to encourage positive self-esteem and body image to instil confidence to resist peer pressure.

The School has a commitment to ensuring that the programme is relevant to and inclusive of all students and is taught in a way that is age and stage appropriate. Within the programme, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning outcomes are recognised such as possessing empathy, dealing with feelings and expressing emotions. The purpose therefore is to create a culture that supports open and responsible discussions about relationships, health and well-being and provides a positive, holistic RSE programme that meets the needs of all learners.

Curriculum

We teach sex education through different aspects of the curriculum. Our curriculum is designed in conjunction with the advice from the PSHE Association and the majority of our resources are also endorsed by the PSHE Association.

While we carry out the main RSE teaching in our PSHE and Science curriculum, we also teach some RSE through other subject areas, e.g. PE and games, where we feel that the subject area contributes significantly to a child's knowledge and understanding of his or her own body, and show it is changing and developing. The school consists of a healthy boarding community which also provides opportunities to teach awareness of body health, changes and hygiene.

In PSHE great emphasis is put on the teaching of relationships and we encourage children to discuss issues. Opportunities are provided for pupils to be involved in activities to promote self-esteem and to manage and be supported in mental health aspects such as bereavement, family relationships and bullying (see PSHE curriculum). The children are also able to contribute to the mental health and well-being of the school community by volunteering as a wellbeing ambassador. The school counsellor and an independent listener support the children further when necessary.

In Science and PSHE lessons at age appropriate stages, we teach about how the body works and changes at puberty are discussed including how a baby is born (taught through Biology in Year 6).

We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it. Children are regularly signposted to reputable sources of help and advice. For this aspect of the school's teaching we follow resources produced and/or modified by our Science staff and material published by the FPA our endorsed by the PSHE Association.

Key Stage 1

In KS1 we teach children about how animals, including humans, move, feed, grow and reproduce, and we also teach them about the main parts of the body. Children learn to appreciate the differences between people and how to show respect for each other.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2 we teach about life processes and the main stages of the human life cycle in greater depth (Science, year 5 curriculum)

At Key Stage 2 we consider puberty in more detail (PSHE curriculum) as many children experience puberty at this age. We liaise with the matrons and boarding staff to ensure this is stage appropriate for each year group.

Teachers do their best to answer all questions with sensitivity and care. By the end of Key Stage 2, we ensure that both boys and girls know how babies are made and born, how their bodies change during puberty, what menstruation is, and how it affects women. We always teach this with due regard for the emotional development (as stated earlier in this policy).

We also teach about friendships, families (including different types of families, staying safe, respect, stereotypes, communication in friendships and relationships and managing conflicts).

Key Stage 3

In PSHE lessons children are taught about respectful relationships, rights in relationships, being a positive bystander, principles of healthy relationships, gender stereotypes, skills to foster friendship and communication and how to navigate conflict.

In RSE lessons in Year 8 we teach about sex in the context of relationships and discuss contraception, consent and peer pressure in detail. We also teach about sexual relationships and intimacy in the context of social media and privacy. We talk about different types of sexual relationships, including both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. We also teach about pornography and its impact on self-esteem and body image as well as the law surrounding the sharing of nude images. We begin to teach more about the law in relation to sex and introduce FGM and forced marriage if we feel the cohort of children is ready. By the time the children leave Cheam we feel they have an age appropriate education to prepare them for the next stage. The children know how to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. Children are encouraged to ask questions and teaching is responsive to the questions asked, if deemed appropriate for the specific group.

Parents receive communication at the start of each year in order to inform them about the content taught so they can answer questions from their children. This is supported by a leaflet which we send home for them to discuss with their children, should they wish.

Objectives of our teaching

- To discover what pupils know, understand, think and feel and to identify their needs.
- To dispel myths.
- To enable pupils to accept variation in rates of growth and development (physical, emotional, and social) and to provide reassurance that change is part of the life cycle.
- To discuss the importance of marriage and civil partnerships and the value and variety of family life, the implications of parenthood and the needs of the very young while respecting the varied cultural, religious and belief influences.
- To help the children to learn to manage and understand emotions and manage conflict.
- To help children affirm their rights.
- Providing children with a safe opportunity to ask sensitive questions.

Provision

The RSE programme of study is designed by the Heads of Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) and includes coverage by specialist Science and form tutors (through the delivery of PSHE). Children in Year 8 also receive one lesson of RSE per week delivered by trained specialists. .

The following ground rules will guide all RSE content and delivery.

- Biological terms will be used in all curriculum based RSE lessons.
- Meanings of words will be described in a sensible and factual way.
- Distancing techniques will always be used. Individual people will never be mentioned.
- The teacher will strive to provide active learning strategies, so that RSE is fun and interesting.
- If a teacher is asked a question that is classed as 'too sensitive' or 'too controversial' for a year group/child, they will tell the child/class that at this stage they do not feel that it is appropriate to discuss this topic.
- Teaching staff will mentally monitor pupil questions and refer any disclosures to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the school.
- Questions should not be directed at individuals. Nobody should be forced into answering.
- No personal comments or insults/criticisms are allowed.
- Pupils and staff are considered in the context of equal opportunities and to value cultural differences and diversity.
- Children are made aware of ground rules at the start of every lesson.

Ground rules

Cheam School PSHE Ground Rules:

- Everyone has the right to be heard and be respected.
- We will use language that will not offend or hurt anyone.
- We will use the correct terms. If we are not sure, we ask.
- We will not share our own personal experiences or those of our peers.
- We will use distancing techniques such as not using people names when we give examples.
- We will not judge anyone.
- We won't put anyone on the spot, and everyone has a right to pass.

RSE and SEN

Our human reproduction element of the teaching of RSE in the Science curriculum follows our academic policy and resources are differentiated in alignment with this policy. The elements of RSE that focus more of healthy relationships, consent, contraception, pornography and sexting are taught through the RSE provision in Year 8. The resources available to the form teachers include a variety so that the form tutor can differentiate effectively for their form or set, thus making the PSHE content accessible to all the children. In many cases a differentiated resource sits alongside the original, offering flexibility to the subject teacher.

Assessment

The parts of the RSE programme taught in Biology are assessed in line with the academic policy. The parts of the RSE programme taught in PSHE and in RSE lessons are assessed in line with the PSHE policy.

Confidentiality

Practice of confidentiality is consistent throughout the school. Learners, teachers and parents/carers are made aware of the school's confidentiality policy and understand how it works in practice to protect learners and staff.

The confidentiality policy:

- Ensures that learners know that teachers, and other professionals, cannot offer or guarantee unconditional confidentiality, particularly in relation to personal disclosures.
- Reassures learners that their best interests will be maintained.
- Encourages learners, where possible, to talk to their parents/carers and give them support to do so.
- Makes sure that learners are informed of sources of confidential help, for example the school matrons, school counsellor, GP or young person's sexual health services.
- Promotes the use of ground rules in lessons to establish boundaries.

- Instigates the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures if there is any possibility of abuse.

Disclosure of Personal Information

Staff must not disclose information about their personal relationships to young people. This could lead to a private information being made public to the whole community. Staff should maintain boundaries between their personal life and their work with young people. Boundaries emphasise the importance of privacy and encourage respect for oneself and other people.

Specific issues within RSE

Safeguarding Children

This policy complies with the Local Authority Safeguarding Procedures adopted by the School.

Parents

Parents and carers have an important role in RSE through instilling values, providing a framework for relationships and arranging structures for support. This RSE policy is made available to parents on request. Under the 1996 Education Act, parents have the right to withdraw their children from part or all of non-National Curriculum RSE i.e. the significant proportion which falls outside the Science curriculum.

Parents wishing to withdraw their children from PSHE lessons when RSE is being considered are asked to contact the Headmaster.

Ensuring inclusion

Everyone deserves equal access to RSE health information regardless of age, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

The RSE programmes meet the needs of all learners. Teaching is inclusive, helping all learners to understand their physical and emotional development and enabling them to make positive decisions about their personal relationships as well as health and well-being.

Looked after children will be supported as they often miss opportunities for learning at school due to disrupted lifestyles, periods of absence, or because they are frequently moving between schools. They may also lack parental guidance. Similarly young carers may also miss opportunities for learning at school. The school will make particular efforts to ensure that all learners with such needs receive RSE and that wherever possible teachers are aware of, and sensitive to the personal circumstances of individual learners.

The role of outside agencies

Occasionally we may ask for support in our teaching of RSE from an outside agency such as the NHS. The purpose and role of the outside agency education is clear.

- Outside agencies are clear about the boundaries of their input.
- Outside agencies are aware of the planned curriculum and relevant school policies, including confidentiality, and will abide by them.
- The aims and objectives of any session using outside visitors is clear, as well as the values framework within which they will work.
- The way they will work with staff is planned and agreed.
Lines of accountability between the agency and the school have been made explicit.
- Learning outcomes are identified.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RSE programme of study is monitored by the Heads of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and appropriate members of senior staff. The School carries out an annual self-evaluation of the RSE and will ensure procedures are in place to update published policies on websites etc.

Policy Owners

Staff: Deputy Head Academic and Head of Character Education
Governors: Teaching and Learning Sub-Committee

Latest Reviews

Staff Policy Owners: June 2024
Compliance: June 2024
Board of Governors: June 2024