



## **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy**

**Date policy approved by Governing Body:** 24/09/2020

**Date of policy review:** June 2022

**Name of RSE Coordinator:** Ellie Sayer

**Name of RSE Senior Leader:** Luke James

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 According to the statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), as of September 2020 all secondary schools are required to deliver Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

1.2 This policy covers NUSA's approach and commitment to provide effective RSE for all pupils in line with these statutory requirements. It has been written with full regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance for RSE<sup>1</sup>, along with other relevant guidance documents.

1.3 It was produced by the Head of PSHE, through consultation with members of the Senior Leadership Team and head teacher, the full staff body, Governors, parents and pupils.

### **2. Rationale and Ethos**

2.1 Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) can be defined as 'learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health.'<sup>2</sup> Through RSE, pupils learn about:

- Different families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online rights, responsibilities, risks and relationships
- Keeping themselves safe in relationships

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Education (2019), *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers* (p.8) Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/908013/Relationships\\_Education\\_Relationships\\_and\\_Sex\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

(Accessed: 16 June 2020)

<sup>2</sup> Sex Education Forum <https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/frequently-asked-questions/1-what-relationships-and-sex-education> (Accessed: 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021)

- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

2.2 We believe RSE is vital for our pupils and our school, because it provides an opportunity to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills that they need to help keep them safe, whilst preparing them for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

2.3 We view the partnership of home and school as fundamental in providing the context to teach pupils about issues associated with relationships, sexuality and sexual health. We affirm that parents and carers have a significant role to play in this education and will aim to work collaboratively with them as outlined in section 9 below.

2.4 The intended outcomes of our RSE programme are that pupils will:

- Know and understand the key features of healthy relationships;
- Develop the knowledge and skills required to communicate effectively in relationships and keep themselves and others safe;
- Develop the attributes that enable them to form and maintain positive relationships, both now and in the future;
- Explore attitudes and values around relationships and sex, helping to develop positive morals and values to guide their future choices and behaviour;
- Understand that they have a right to be treated with respect in all relationships that they are part of, and that in turn they have a responsibility to treat others with respect;
- Be empowered to make informed choices in relation to sexual activity and take responsibility for their own sexual health;
- Be aware of the support that is available if they experience unhealthy relationships or sexual health issues, both now and in the future.

### **3. Curriculum Design**

3.1 Our RSE programme is an integral part of our whole school Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education provision. As of September 2020, the terminology used within school changed, with PSHE lessons replacing what used to be referred to as Personal Development lessons. This was to make it clear to staff, students and parents as to where the new statutory content is delivered.

3.2 All year groups have weekly timetabled PSHE lessons. All of the statutory RSE content will be delivered in these lessons, embedded as part of a broader curriculum. PSHE lessons will also cover the statutory Health Education content, along with other key topic areas such as careers and financial education.

3.3 Teaching will normally be delivered in mixed sex groups, but where appropriate or necessary may be provided to single sex groups for certain topics. Pupils will be made aware of these changes in advance if this is to occur.

3.4 Each year group will have two allocated half-terms throughout the year where their PSHE lessons cover RSE content. An overview of the RSE content covered with each year group and when is given in the '2021-22 Curriculum Overview,' which can be found on the Curriculum page of the PSHE section of the school website.

<https://www.nusa.org.uk/page.php?d=pshe&p=curriculum>

3.5 A full list of the statutory RSE content for primary and secondary schools can be found in the *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers* (2019) document.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/781150/Draft\\_guidance\\_Relationships\\_Education\\_Relationships\\_and\\_Sex\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781150/Draft_guidance_Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education2.pdf)

3.6 All RSE content is delivered in an age-appropriate manner. The PSHE programme is designed as a spiral curriculum, which enables pupils to revisit and build on prior learning throughout their school journey. At each stage, additional information and depth is provided which is relevant to their development and level of emotional maturity. Content is organised in accordance with the PSHE Association recommendations along with liaison with the NUSA Safeguarding team, to see when certain issues need addressing to best meet the needs of our pupils. Local data is also used to shape our curriculum overview and long-term plan, again to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our pupils by covering issues that they may be more at risk of.

3.7 Some of the statutory RSE content will also be delivered through the Science curriculum, including:

- The facts about reproductive health;
- The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices;
- The facts around pregnancy;
- How sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are transmitted and how risk can be reduced.

3.8 Our RSE programme will be taught through a range of teaching methods and interactive activities, which include but are not limited to class discussion and debate, group work, videos, quizzes and personal reflection time.

3.9 Lessons will be differentiated to include both support and challenge activities, to ensure that all pupils are able to access and engage with the content effectively.

3.10 High quality resources will be used to support our RSE provision and will be regularly reviewed. These will include resources created by the subject lead along with resources provided by specialist organisations. All external resources will be carefully reviewed before use to ensure they are appropriate for the age and background of the pupils they are intended for. They will be adapted where necessary to meet the needs of our pupils. Samples of teaching resources can be provided upon request.

3.11 Pupils will be encouraged to reflect on their own learning in every PSHE lesson through a range of both independent and collaborative tasks. A clear routine and structure will be established in lessons to enable pupils to recognise the progress that they have made. Progress will also be assessed over time, through a variety of forms that enable pupils to express prior knowledge on a subject, then revisit this at timely intervals during the unit to reflect on the knowledge and skills that they have gained.

3.12 At times we may use outside agencies to enhance our RSE (and PSHE) provision. We plan these inputs carefully to ensure pupils receive the most relevant and engaging sessions for the required content. All external providers will:

- Be suitably qualified to deliver sessions;
- Be aware of the school RSE policy and work within this at all times;
- Be supervised by NUSA staff;
- Be directed to alert NUSA staff to any safeguarding concerns that may arise;
- Understand their contribution to the wider RSE and PSHE programme.

3.13 Along with PSHE lessons, aspects of RSE content may be delivered through tutor time sessions and assemblies. Again, all content will be age-appropriate and form part of a wider PSHE programme. Learning in RSE will also be supported through cross-curricular approaches where possible and appropriate.

3.14 The RSE and wider PSHE curriculum will be evaluated and reviewed by teachers and pupils on an annual basis.

3.15 For more details on the full RSE and PSHE curriculum, you can visit the school website or speak to the Head of PSHE Education.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

4.1 The RSE programme will be led in the first instance by the Head of PSHE. They will be responsible for:

- Designing the RSE curriculum (as part of the wider PSHE curriculum);
- Planning RSE lessons and providing the resources to class teachers;
- Regularly reviewing the curriculum to ensure its effectiveness;
- Engaging with staff, students, parents, senior leaders and Governors to ensure that PSHE and RSE provision is relevant to the context of NUSA as well as meeting statutory requirements.

4.2 The Senior Leader responsible for PSHE will meet regularly with the Head of PSHE to ensure that the statutory requirements for RSE and Health Education are being met. They will support the subject leader in reviewing the curriculum and communicating effectively with all parties at timely intervals.

- 4.3 The head teacher will liaise with the line leader to ensure that the statutory requirements for RSE and Health Education are being met by a wide and engaging curriculum. They will also form part of the working group to review the RSE policy. In addition they will help to deal with requests from parents/ carers to withdraw their child from Sex Education (see section 10).
- 4.4 PSHE lessons (which will include RSE) will be taught by timetabled class teachers, enabling them to build positive working relationships with pupils which will help when delivering more sensitive content. Class teachers will be responsible for ensuring that the designated content for each lesson is delivered appropriately, feeding back to the subject coordinator at timely intervals regarding the progress of their group and any follow up that is needed. The personal beliefs and attitudes of teaching or support staff will not influence their delivery of RSE. A balanced, factual and non-judgemental approach will be taken by all involved.
- 4.5 All staff who are due to deliver PSHE lessons (including RSE content) will receive relevant training and professional development where necessary, to enable them to do so confidently and effectively. Where possible external agencies will be utilised to support with this process. If a staff member has additional development needs in terms of teaching RSE, these will be supported in a range of ways, which could include mentoring from a more experienced staff member or additional training. Training on specific RSE issues will take place as and when required throughout the year at planned CPD sessions.
- 4.6 Everyone involved in the delivery of RSE will have a clear understanding of their legal and professional role and responsibility. All staff involved will follow the school RSE policy at all times.

## **5. Equality and Inclusion**

- 5.1 As with all public institutions, as a school we have specific responsibilities in relation to equality and the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. It is imperative that our RSE provision is fully inclusive and meets the needs of all our pupils, regardless of their ability, sex, gender identity, sexuality, race, religion or family background.
- 5.2 All pupils at NUSA will receive RSE, including those with special educational needs (SEN). For those pupils in our Nurture groups in year 7, 8 and 9, a differentiated curriculum has been developed for them to follow. This reflects the mainstream curriculum and includes statutory content, but enables teachers to fill gaps in understanding and focus explicitly on the main messages. For lower ability pupils in other year groups, the subject coordinator will ensure that differentiation is included within lessons to both support and stretch pupils. Class teachers will be responsible for any further differentiation that is required based on the individual needs of their groups. For pupils with more specialist

needs, a more targeted approach may be necessary to meet the learning outcomes, which may involve smaller group or one-to-one work with a teaching assistant or support worker.

5.3 It is important that all pupils, whatever their developing gender identity or sexual orientation, feel that RSE is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. We will ensure that our RSE provision fosters gender equality and LGBTQ+ equality by including a range of different characters and relationship choices as examples within lessons. Lessons will explore gender identity, sexual orientation, gender stereotypes and different forms of discrimination as part of the wider RSE curriculum.

5.4 There are many different religious and cultural perspectives on aspects of RSE. As a school we will deliver RSE in a factual and impartial way, always clearly referring to the law where relevant. We will ensure that teachers do not promote one faith or cultural viewpoint, but rather provide a balanced approach that acknowledges the wealth of views and opinions of our society and promotes tolerance. We will use a range of resources that reflect cultural diversity and encourage inclusiveness. Parents and carers can then contextualise the learning within their own faith and values framework in their discussions with their children following the school lessons. If parents/ carers have any specific cultural needs then these should be raised with the Head of PSHE.

## **6. Safe and Effective Practice**

6.1 It is vital that within all PSHE lessons- including those that cover RSE content- pupils feel comfortable to enable them to best engage with the content. Teachers will ensure a safe learning environment by:

- Establishing ground rules with pupils which apply in all lessons;
- Using 'distancing' techniques such as case studies and role play, to depersonalise situations and allow pupils to explore and express their feelings more objectively;
- Providing the opportunity to ask anonymous questions using 'question slips';
- Dealing with questions in an age-appropriate manner as outlined below;
- Using appropriate resources as outlined above;
- Managing and structuring discussion to help pupils respond respectfully;
- Encouraging pupils to reflect on their own learning.

6.2 All staff involved in the teaching of RSE will be mindful of their safeguarding role and will follow the relevant school procedures if a pupil's question or work raises concerns of this nature.

## **7. Dealing with Questions**

7.1 As with any subject or topic, pupils will ask questions during RSE lessons to further their understanding and address any misconceptions that they have. Due to the potentially

sensitive nature of some issues, teachers will use strategies to ensure that questions are asked and answered in an appropriate way.

7.2 It will be established as part of the lesson ground rules that personal questions or the sharing of personal examples is not appropriate. Pupils will be signposted to places where they can discuss personal examples if they feel they would like to, including speaking to the teacher privately after the lesson or pastoral support services within school.

7.3 Pupils will be given the opportunity to ask anonymous questions through 'question slips', in case pupils are not comfortable asking their question in front of the group. It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure that these questions are then answered appropriately in a timely manner, liaising with the subject coordinator where necessary for support or to share common questions that need addressing at a wider level.

7.4 Where class teachers are able to answer questions that they deem appropriate 'live' in a lesson, they should do so as they normally would in their main subject. If a class teacher is unsure of how to answer a question, or feels that it is not appropriate to answer in front of the whole group, the question will be addressed on an individual level, in some cases with the involvement of parents or carers.

7.5 If pupils ask questions about issues that are not part of the planned programme, this will be fed back to the subject coordinator as part of the evaluation and monitoring process to ensure that the curriculum is meeting their needs.

## **8. Safeguarding**

8.1 The teaching of RSE at NUSA contributes to our statutory duty to safeguard our pupils.

8.2 Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and is not appropriate in a healthy relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. In this instance, teachers will follow the school's safeguarding procedure to report the disclosure.

8.3 Teachers will also consider questions that pupils ask in lessons from a safeguarding perspective, as well as being directed to check written work for any concerns on a regular basis. Again, teachers will be expected to report any concerns that arise via the standard whole school procedure.

8.4 For topics that may be sensitive for certain pupils depending on their previous experiences, the subject coordinator will ensure that the Safeguarding team and Pastoral team are aware of which topics are coming up. This will allow them to identify potentially vulnerable pupils and make necessary arrangements. These may include:

- Liaising with the class teacher to make them aware of the pupil's needs;

- Speaking to the pupil in advance of the lesson to prepare them of the upcoming content;
- Having a strategy such as a 'time out card' or safe place to go to if they become distressed by any of the content.

8.5 All visitors and external agencies who are utilised to support the delivery of RSE will be required to have the relevant credentials to do so. Visitors will be made aware of the safeguarding policy upon arrival and directed as to what to do if they have any concerns. They will always be accompanied NUSA staff in sessions that they deliver.

8.6 As per the safeguarding policy, teachers know that they cannot offer or guarantee confidentiality. Teachers will reassure pupils that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed and supported as necessary.

8.7 It will be made clear to pupils that if a teacher becomes aware that a pupil under 16 years old is participating in (or contemplating participating in) sexual activity, then they will have to pass this on in line with the safeguarding policy. Teachers will use the standard safeguarding procedure to do this.

8.8 Each RSE (and PSHE) lesson will also include signposting to a range of relevant support services within school, locally and nationally for the issues raised, such as the school nurse, sexual health clinic, GP, domestic abuse charities etc.

## **9. Working with Parents**

9.1 We believe that RSE should be delivered in partnership with parents and carers. Parents will be consulted and informed about RSE through different methods of communication.

9.2 At the start of the academic year, parents will receive a letter providing an overview of the PSHE curriculum, which will include when different RSE topics will be taught for each year group throughout the year. This will also be displayed on the school website.

9.3 As part of updating this policy in 2020, parents were invited to participate in a parent consultation about the draft policy and proposed curriculum overview. They were invited to give their feedback on both documents, along with any other issues or concerns regarding their child's RSE provision.

9.4 Parents will be consulted again when the policy is due for renewal, being invited to provide their feedback on the document and RSE as part of the review process.

9.5 The RSE policy and curriculum overview will be available for parents to access on the school website. Here, parents will also be able to access resources and support documents that have been published by organisations such as the Department for Education, which provide up to date information about the statutory guidelines as well



as support for discussing RSE content with their child at home. Additionally, parents will be directed to the contact details for the subject coordinator in case they have any questions or concerns.

9.6 Based on the responses from parents and their expressed preferences, curriculum events will be planned to meet these needs. Additionally, the subject coordinator will look at how existing events such as parents' evenings can be utilised to communicate with parents about the school's RSE provision and give them the opportunity to view teaching resources.

9.7 This current policy was approved by Governors on 24/09/2020. Governors will be updated about the school's PSHE and RSE provision and new developments through termly Governors reports by the subject coordinator.

9.8 We will always aim to work closely with parents/ carers, welcoming their views and incorporating them to shape our PSHE and RSE provision. However, ultimately the school will make the final decision around the RSE curriculum and delivery, in line with statutory guidance and the best interests of our pupils.

## **10. Right to Withdraw**

10.1 As stated by the DfE statutory guidance, as of September 2020 'parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.'<sup>3</sup>

10.2 Parents will not be able to withdraw their child from Health Education or the Relationships Education aspects of RSE.

10.3 There is no right to withdraw from the science curriculum which includes some of the RSE statutory content as outlined in section 3.7 of this policy.

10.4 If a parent would like to withdraw their child from some or all of the Sex Education elements of RSE lessons, they should initially contact the Head of PSHE to express their wishes. The subject coordinator and head teacher will consider this request and make contact with the parent or carer to discuss their concerns and clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. As a school we will keep a record of this process.<sup>4</sup> Please see the diagram below which clearly outlines this process.

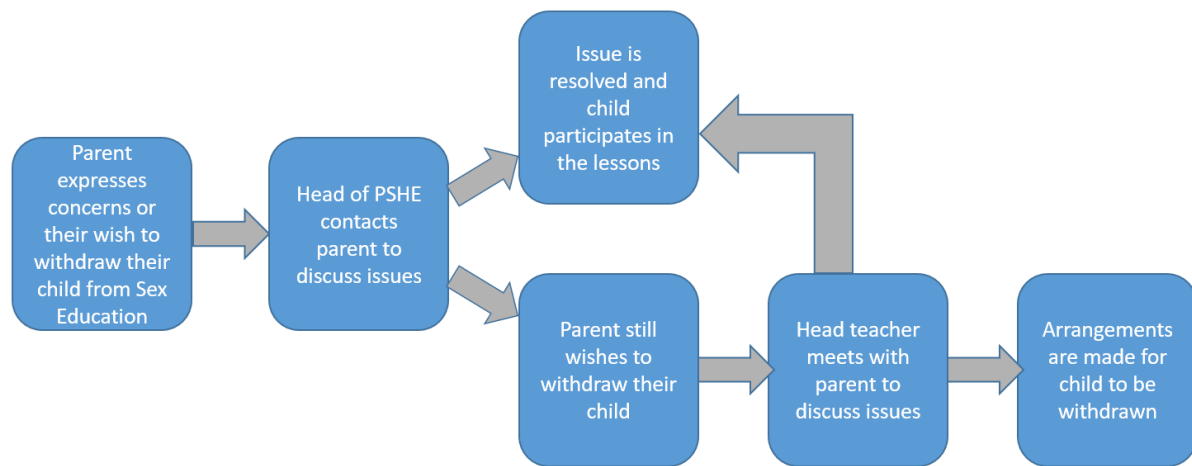
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<sup>3</sup> Department for Education (2019), *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers* (p.8) Available at:

[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)

(Accessed: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020)

<sup>4</sup> As above, p.17-18



10.5 A parent has the right to withdraw their child up until three school terms before they turn 16. Once pupils reach this age they are able to opt back in to receive Sex Education if they choose to. As a school we shall make arrangements for this to happen in these circumstances.<sup>5</sup>

10.6 If a pupil is withdrawn from some or all of the Sex Education content, arrangements will be made to ensure that they still have purposeful education during this period, in line with the statutory guidance.

10.7 The withdrawal process is the same for pupils with SEN, although ‘there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a pupil’s specific needs arising from their SEN into account when making this decision.’<sup>6</sup>

10.8 Whilst parents/ carers do have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education content, we believe that this content is extremely valuable and that all pupils should be included in these lessons. There are many benefits to pupils receiving good quality RSE, which include acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to form their own healthy relationships and keep themselves safe, along with empowering them to make informed choices about their own relationships and sexual health. There are also possible detrimental effects of being withdrawn. ‘This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers’ version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher.’<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Department for Education (2019), *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers* (p.17-18) Available at:

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(Accessed: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020)

<sup>6</sup> As above, p.18

<sup>7</sup> As above, p.17

## **11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

- 11.1 Assessment in PSHE and RSE will mostly happen through a range of formative assessment for learning techniques in lessons. This will help class teachers to establish prior knowledge, correct misconceptions and develop understanding.
- 11.2 Whilst there will be no 'formal' assessment in RSE, summative assessment opportunities will be provided at the end of units and topics. This will allow class teachers and the subject lead to measure the extent to which the required learning has occurred, which will inform future planning.
- 11.3 The PSHE and RSE curriculum will be reviewed annually. The review will be informed by:
- Feedback from teachers and pupils on the content and delivery of sessions;
  - Consultation with parents;
  - An evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme based on assessment of pupil progress;
  - Current issues of concern within the school, local area and/ or nationally;
  - Quality assurance protocols, e.g. learning walks and book looks.
- 11.4 The contribution of visitors and external agencies to RSE provision will be evaluated through pupil voice and teacher feedback, along with the impact that subject teachers feel this has on pupils' understanding and engagement within lessons.
- 11.5 Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering PSHE and RSE through their use of their teacher planner. Class teachers will also be given regular opportunities to give feedback to the subject coordinator about their experiences of delivering lessons.
- 11.6 We will ensure that pupils are given regular opportunity to effectively contribute to the content of PSHE lessons and the PSHE curriculum where appropriate. Pupil voice will be used to review and tailor our PSHE and RSE programme to match the different needs of our pupils. Methods of pupil voice will include anonymous surveys and focus groups, such as the PSHE Ambassadors or Student Council.

## **12. Policy Review Date**

- 12.1 The current RSE policy will be reviewed in June 2022 to assess its implementation and effectiveness, and to ensure that it remains in line with statutory guidance.
- 12.2 It will be reviewed by the Head of PSHE, their SLT line lead, the head teacher and the school governors. Parents, pupils and teaching staff will also be invited to give feedback about the policy as part of the review process.