



## **Gargrave CE (VC) Primary School**

### **Relationship and Sex Education Policy**

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## Introduction:

This policy covers our school's approach to Relationship and Sex Education, not only in lessons but through the attitude of our staff and students alike, our ethos and approach and commitment to equality both within and outside of the classroom. It is important that we approach this subject with a clear and unified voice, and it is equally important that we provide unambiguous guidance for the benefit of our staff, parents and carers, and ultimately, our children. At Gargrave CE (VC) Primary School we recognise all relationships that are founded in mutual and consensual love as being equal and valid in all respects. We recognise that individuals may identify with genders that differ from that assigned at birth, and we celebrate people's right to do so. In short, we promote a culture where the breadth of relationships, sexualities and genders are not merely tolerated but are celebrated as being integral to the tapestry of society. We believe that this culture will help allow children to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their personhood: physically, academically, socially, morally and spiritually.

This policy was produced following guidance from the Department for Education (Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2019) and through consultation with our staff, governing body, and most importantly with our pupils and parents.

It will be reviewed on a regular basis (in one year in the first instance and then every two years thereafter) to ensure that it reflects the attitudes and belief of the school population and remains up to date with both current guidance from the Government and the DfE but also remains relevant to the experiences of our pupils.

To ensure its use, this policy will be available for staff to refer to by April 2021 and to parents through the school website.

This policy reflects our school's overarching vision and values for our pupils by striving for all children to flourish and reach their maximum potential through valuing love, peace and hope. Positive relationships are a curriculum aim of our school.

We recognise that as a school we have a legal responsibility under The Relationships Education, Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 & 35 of the Children & Social Work Act 2017, to provide comprehensive Relationship Education and Health Education for all pupils receiving primary education.

We recognise that we have a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure the best for all pupils irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, maternity, religion, sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children. As a result RSE needs to be sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and may need to adapt and change as the pupils of the school change. Not only does the teaching need to be sensitive of these needs, but also to help the pupils realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours or prejudice-based language. Delivery and content may be adjusted in specific instances in order to include those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Whilst as a school we are aware we need to be mindful of and respectful to a wide variety of faith and cultural beliefs, and we will make every attempt to be appropriately sensitive; equally it is essential that young people still have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. This must include clear, impartial scientific and factual information on matters such as; naming their body parts, puberty, menstruation, masturbation, the variety of family structures, gay marriage, gender identity, gender equality, sexuality, contraception, forced- marriage and FGM. Furthermore, all teaching should reflect the law as it applies to relationships, marriage, adoption and care.

We acknowledge that all young people deserve the right to honest, open and factual information to help better form their own beliefs and values, free from bias, judgement or subjective personal beliefs of those who teach them.

## Defining Relationships Education:

The Department for Education defines relationships education as, teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships and relationships with other peers and adults.

However, we believe relationships education is designed to help children to develop the skills to recognise and manage healthy relationships both online and in the real world. For our children to have self-belief and self-confidence (aim of school).

It is about helping children understand and make sense of the world they are growing up in; to recognise the differences and similarities between their peers and their families; to understand the fact every human being is unique and has the right to be respected. There are many different family structures and all children have the right to feel safe.

At Gargrave, we teach our pupils about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) when they are in Year 5 and Year 6. We ensure that this is fully integrated into our programmes of study for PSHE rather than deliver it as a standalone unit or lesson. Whilst we usually introduce LGBT to our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, we will introduce it earlier if we think it is necessary. All of our teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in both our approach and content of lessons.

Relationships education has been shown to help keep children safe by allowing them to understand appropriate and inappropriate touching, to realise that their body is special and belongs to them. It is about building the foundations of an understanding of consent and personal boundaries; in that no one has the right to touch them in a way they don't like but also the difference between public and private behaviours.

It is important for children to know the names and functions of their body parts and to be reassured it is natural to be curious about them. Indeed, by teaching children the correct terms for their private body parts, children are proven to be safer from abuse.

In addition, we believe that relationships education helps children to develop their vocabulary and emotional literacy to enable them to talk about and manage their feelings. It helps children build their own support networks and the confidence to ask for help when they feel unsafe. This is a required element of the Health Education Guidance.

## Defining Sex Education at Primary School:

Although The Relationships Education, Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made Relationship Education compulsory in all primary schools, Sex education is currently **not** compulsory. However, the Department for Education continues to recommend that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and maturity of the pupils.

As set out in the guidance it is up to individual schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. We, like many other schools already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so. Our Sex Education lessons, which are supplementary to the statutory learning outcomes set out in the Key Stage 2 Science curriculum, are solely for children in Year 6 and are delivered through the **BBC Active – Focus: Growing Up** and **HSE Busy Bodies** materials. These sessions answer the question: How are babies made? In an age-appropriate way, they explain sexual intercourse, how conception occurs, pregnancy and birth. Parents are always invited to view these materials prior to the lessons starting.

We recognise that some parents may be uncomfortable with the thought of their children receiving sex education in primary school. Equally, we recognise it is completely natural for children to have questions about sex, their bodies and to be curious about where they came from. In the age of information where children in primary school have access to the internet through mobile technology we believe it is better that children receive age appropriate answers from us than it being left to their peers or the internet.

In our school, sex education is an opportunity to answer children's questions about where they came from, an opportunity to explore their own stories and to be clear about how a baby is conceived and formed as set out in human life cycle which is covered through the national curriculum for science. Furthermore, it should ensure that all children are prepared for both the physical and emotional changes of puberty including menstruation. Children need to understand how both girls and boys' bodies function and change as they grow into adults.

We believe that sex education should allow children a safe space to ask the questions they may have without shame or judgement. Starting learning in primary school is the best way of preventing the topic of sex, reproduction and private body parts of becoming taboo and children from becoming embarrassed by the topic.

We believe it is the duty of our school to give our young people the learning that will enable them to live safe, fulfilled and healthy lives. This includes ensuring that they have the skills to keep themselves safe from harm and develop positive and healthy relationships, free from exploitation pressure or abuse.

## **Subject Content:**

In school we meet the learning objectives as set out in the Relationships Education, Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 for primary schools with a whole school approach, following the North Yorkshire PSHE and Citizenship Entitlement Framework (September 2019).

Relationships Education covers:

- Families' and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

Health Education covers:

- Mental wellbeing
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Health and prevention
- Basic First Aid
- Changing adolescent body (puberty)

Sex Education covers:

- Sexual intercourse
- How conception occurs
- Pregnancy
- Birth

Relationship, Sex and Health Education is delivered by classroom teachers (Sex Education is led by Mrs Dawson, Year 6 Teacher). The local authority delivers ongoing support and training to ensure that RSE leaders are confident and competent in supporting class teachers to deliver lessons appropriately and safely. This includes training around safeguarding and answering children's questions age appropriately.

We believe it is important that lessons are delivered by classroom teachers as it highlights to the children that relationship and sex education is something we can all talk about. Our classroom teachers know our children.

This means they are more likely to be aware of any additional needs, support or particularly sensitive topics that may make a child in their form vulnerable due to some of the sensitive nature of the topic. We believe this makes them ideally placed to deliver the material sensitively to all children in their class.

We believe that by tackling children's questions around sex as part of a wider programme focused around relationships, family, self-awareness, emotional literacy, consent and personal boundaries, children will feel better able to engage in discussion and ask questions without embarrassment. Equally, tackling sex and reproduction in this way helps to promote positive messages and values around sex as well as children's relationship with their own bodies without shame or guilt and will develop respect for other people's body autonomy.

We do not separate our classes into girls and boys for any of the sessions, including lessons around puberty. We believe it is important for both girls and boys to learn about each other's bodies, changes and experiences. By keeping children together in mixed groups, children will learn to talk openly without embarrassment in front of each other and we can foster better understanding, break down gender stereotypes and build positive relationships and respect for each other, regardless of gender. This ensures that any non-binary or transgender children are included without feeling vulnerable.

There are regular opportunities to learn about E-safety and healthy relationships online. This is because the framework integrates online behaviours as it explores relationships, secrets, personal boundaries, rights & responsibilities etc. It does not tackle online and offline as two separate entities. For children, growing up in a digital world there is an ever increasing blurring of the lines between the two.

### **Answering Children's Questions:**

We are aware that children are likely to have many questions that may occur at any time. Children tend to ask whatever is on their mind. We see this as a positive point and a sign that we have created a safe environment where children feel empowered to feed their natural curiosity and learn about themselves, their bodies and the world around them. However, we acknowledge that some parents may feel uncomfortable about how particular questions may be dealt with in class.

We believe children are better off receiving honest, open answers from safe adults in their lives, rather than it being left to the internet or older children with a smart phone. In the age of information, where children in primary have access to tablets, smart phones and the internet (often unsupervised) it is essential that we help children to recognise they are able to ask questions without judgement rather than searching for answers on the internet.

By tackling the topic in a matter of fact manner, without embarrassment means that we take the mystic allure out of the topic, making sex no longer the secret taboo. However uncomfortable a proposition that may be it is far better than the alternative. For children these questions are not rude, they are simply signs of a healthy and natural curiosity. We can stop the topic becoming taboo and embarrassing and removing the stigma before it has had chance to form.

We believe that if children ask a question they deserve an answer. If ignored they merely build unnecessary barriers, making children think they have done something wrong; they are unlikely to ask again, and are instead left to seek their answers from less reliable or child friendly sources, due to shame. However uncomfortable the question may be, the thought is already in their head. It is much better that we, as safe adults, take responsibility and tackle the question safely and age appropriately.

Dealing with children's questions age appropriately will be done as follows:

- Children will be praised for asking questions. We wish to encourage children to seek answers from safe adults.
- If a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group.
- However, as with any other subject, there may occasionally, be the need to differentiate depending on children's knowledge and experience. Some children may need additional information or support compared to others.

- If a child asks a question that is not necessarily suitable for the entire class, we will respond, by saying: “that is fantastic question, hold that thought, I am going to set everyone some work and I will come and talk to you and answer your question in a minute when everyone else is working.”
- If the member of staff doesn’t have an answer or doesn’t know, they will say so. There is no shame in not knowing the answer but the member of staff should make an effort to help the child to find the answer later.
- If the member of staff is not sure how best to answer a particularly tricky question, our suggested response is: “That is a brilliant question, I would like to give you an equally brilliant answer, so let me have a think about it and once I know the best way to explain it clearly I will come back to you”
- This will allow teaching staff time to think, seek help, advice or support from colleagues, or to speak to senior management.
- If a child asks a question we know parents may be uncomfortable with, staff may choose to delay answering the question (as above) until they have spoken to the parent/carer if possible and talk through their response.
- Teachers will answer questions, openly, honestly, scientifically and factually without relying on their own personal beliefs. Teachers will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their students that could make either parties vulnerable.

### **Parents and parental rights to withdraw:**

We believe that successful teaching around RSE can only take place when parents and school work together. Especially, considering we both want children to grow up safe and happy in healthy relationships, with the ability to manage their emotions and speak up when they feel unsafe. Therefore, we are committed to working together with parents.

We endeavour to be transparent and give parents information about all the programmes and lessons we deliver around RSE as we recognise it can be a sensitive subject for some families for a number of reasons.

We recognise the importance of parents knowing about the content of the lessons so they can carry on the conversations at home and have an opportunity to talk to their children about their own families, beliefs and values. Long term plans showing which content is to be covered when, will be available on the school website for parents to access. Parents should talk to classroom teachers for more information about the lessons to be taught.

We recognise under the new draft guidance for Relationship Education, Relationship & Sex education and Health Education (DfE 2018), parents retain the right to request their child is removed from some or all of the elements of sex education which go beyond the national curriculum for science. Maintained schools are required to teach about the main external body parts and changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age, including puberty. **There is no right to withdraw from the national curriculum.** Any parents who wish to discuss this should ask to speak to Mrs Dawson (Year 6 teacher).

Should a parent decide that they do not wish for their Y6 child to take part in any of the supplementary Sex Education lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the classroom teacher to discuss their concerns. We will happily show parents all of the teaching materials and context of any of our lessons and explain the reasons why any material is included. We will also highlight that whilst parents have the right to withdraw their child from these lessons, they do not have the right to withdraw other children from receiving these lessons. We believe it is better for children to hear from safe adults than to hear second hand from their class-mates at break-time.

If parents do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the head who will find other provision for the child to engage in during the lesson. Currently, headteachers must comply with requests to withdraw from any non-statutory lessons in the RSE programme.

### **Policy on Menstruation:**

We recognise that the onset of menstruation can be a confusing or distressing time for children if they are not prepared. As a school we acknowledge we have a responsibility to prepare children for menstruation and make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help children manage their period. Especially children whose family may not be able to afford or will not provide sanitary products.

We recognise that period poverty exists in the UK and that some children are forced to avoid attending school if they are on their period, when they are unable to manage it sensitively. We do not want that to be the case in our school and will make every reasonable effort to support children to access their education and enjoy school.

Puberty is occurring earlier than ever before, and it is now not uncommon for children to start their periods whilst in primary school. For this reason, we deliver puberty lessons to all children in years 5 & 6.

As part of these lessons all children will be told about menstruation and there will be discussion of what periods are, explanation of other symptoms associated with periods, how they can be managed hygienically, and sensitively.

Menstruation is a healthy biological function. It should not be something that a person is made to feel embarrassed, shameful or be teased about. As a school we need to treat each other with respect and empathy and this includes changes that take place during puberty such as menstruation.

During lessons where puberty and menstruation are discussed, we will take the opportunity to highlight the location of sanitary bins available in school, and how these are to be used.

In school we always have menstruation essentials available, such as sanitary products, spare underwear and plastic bags to wrap up underwear should there have been any accidents. Children will be made aware of where these are kept and how they can be accessed through designated members of staff, including lunchtime supervisors.

When school trips or residential visits are arranged (especially for years 4, 5 & 6), provisions to deal with a child's period needs to be considered and added to the risk assessment and planned for.

### **Safeguarding Children:**

The school is committed to the safeguarding responsibilities as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. To teach pupils so that they are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable, how they can keep themselves safe, how to share a concern and complain. All pupils are informed that we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for child protection and who this is. We inform pupils of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm. (Please refer to our Child Protection Policy for further details.)

When teaching any sensitive topic, such as RSE which deals with family life, safe and appropriate touching, personal body parts and healthy relationships, we recognise the potential to uncover incidents of abuse through children's disclosures.

All members of staff who deliver any of our Relationship or Sex Education Programme, have statutory training around safeguarding children and are all aware of our school's safeguarding policy and procedures in the case of a disclosure or suspicion of a safeguarding concern.

We recognise that for children who may be vulnerable due to past or present abuse or changes in family situations, this type of work, whilst it may be sensitive, there may be needs to adapt the programme or offer additional support. It is also a protective factor in preventing further abuse, to help them make sense of their experiences and essential to help them develop skills and resilience to keep them safe in future.

### **Assessment and Evaluation:**

Assessment of PSHE and Citizenship, which includes RSE is not about assessing someone's 'character or behaviour' but the extent to which they are progressing in their learning, their on-going learning needs and the impact the learning is having on the pupils. It is important that the children's learning is assessed because assessment increases "motivation and improves learning; it provides feedback about pupils' progress and achievements, and how their learning might be improved; it helps pupils to reflect on and identify what they have learned and what they need to do to continue their learning; it allows the leadership team, governors and school inspectors to see the impact the provision is having for pupils and whole school outcomes" (PSHE association 2016).

Assessment in RSE needs to establish: What children already know and understand? What they have misunderstood? What gaps they have in their knowledge and what preconceptions/prejudices may have to be challenged. The Growing up in North Yorkshire Survey (every 2 years) gives evidence of impact of lessons and learning and provision can be adjusted according to school and local issues.

The PSHE association argues that the model of assessment that is most meaningful for PSHE / RSE is 'ipsative assessment' when a pupil compares their own results against their previous results in a similar way to an athlete measuring today's performance against their own previous performance.

Assessment for Learning (formative assessment) - regular assessment of pupils' progress against the intended learning outcomes is important to ensure that learners are making expected progress and to inform planning for subsequent lessons and units of work. The children are continually assessed against the intended learning outcomes. The NY Entitlement Framework is structured in such a way that each concept is revisited at least on an annual basis, in an age appropriate way (a spiral approach) which allows for all children's needs to be addressed effectively based on previous assessment information.

Class teachers update assessment spreadsheets at the end of every unit to help other teachers plan effectively for future learning.