

RELATIONSHIPS AND HEALTH EDUCATION (RHE) POLICY

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Staff Responsible	Tanya Cassidy	Next review	July 2027

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1. Aims

The aims of relationships and health education (RHE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

At Maple Tree Primary School, our Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) and Relationship, Health Education (RHE) curriculum is based on the Kapow Programme and adapted where needed to meet the needs of all of our pupils. We are confident that the Kapow Programme covers all aspects of RHE within the context of a full PSHCE programme in an age-appropriate way. When the government makes changes to these curriculum areas in the future, Kapow will provide its schools with materials to ensure all statutory duties are fulfilled. At Maple Tree, we have made the decision not to include Sex Education within our PSHCE/RHE programme of learning. However, this policy reflects the changing world in which children are growing up has become complex, both online and in the day-to-day.

2. Statutory requirements

This policy has been written with the Department for Education's statutory guidance for [Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health education \(2019\)](#). As a maintained primary school, we must provide relationships education to all pupils under section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#). We are not required to provide sex education, but we do need to teach the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum. 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](#).

We must also have regard to our legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At Maple Tree Primary School, we teach Relationships and Health Education (RHE), and not sex education (RSE). Our RHE is as set out in this policy.

3. Definition

RHE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. It involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. This includes primary aged children learning about the 'changing adolescent body', included in the expected outcomes for primary Health Education, (Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education, DfE, 2019).

4. Delivery of and compulsory aspects of RHE

4.1 Curriculum Content

End of primary expectations and curriculum content is given in the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education DfE guidance (2019). It is up to schools to determine how this is taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Where a school delivers this as part of a whole programme of PSHCE, such as Kapow, they are free to continue with this approach. Biological aspects of sex education are taught within the science curriculum and our compulsory in maintained schools, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

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

It helps children understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships and equips them with the skills to get help if they need it. It also teaches them about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and positive mental health, about online and offline safety. Schools have responsibilities for

safeguarding and a legal duty to promote pupil well-being (Education and Inspections Act 2006 Section 38).

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers, amongst other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children or young carers).

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

4.2 Ground rules and distancing techniques

Teachers are careful to ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes do not influence the teaching of sex and relationships.

To this end ground rules have been agreed to provide a common values framework within which to teach. There are clear parameters as to what will be taught in whole class setting and what will be dealt with on an individual basis. The ground rules teachers will follow are:

- No one (teacher or pupil) should be expected to answer a personal question.
- No one will be forced to take part in a discussion.
- Only the correct names for body parts will be used.
- Meanings of appropriate words will be explained in a factual way.
- Teachers will establish clear parameters about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting.

4.3 Managing questions

It is important that for the effective teaching of RHE there must be a trusting relationship between the class teacher and pupils, but it is important for pupils and parents to understand that staff cannot always maintain confidentiality in light of safeguarding procedures. Any concerns staff may have should be discussed immediately with the designated safeguarding lead. The safety of our children is of paramount importance and the school is legally obliged to refer concerns regarding safeguarding issues, including sexual abuse to external organisations.

Pupils will have the opportunity at the end of each session to write down questions anonymously and post them in a question box. The teacher will then have time to prepare answers to all questions before the next session, and will choose not to respond to any questions which are inappropriate.

- Sometimes an individual child will ask a question which is not age-appropriate. In a situation like this, teachers will direct them to their parents.
- Questions do not have to be answered and can be addressed later.

4.4 Menstruator's understanding of sanitary products and disposal in school

As part of lessons on puberty in years 5-6, menstruators will be made aware of the procedures in place for accessing and the safe disposal of sanitary products. The school is aware that period poverty can be an issue for some pupils, and will to the best of its ability, ensure that menstruators have access to

appropriate sanitary products during school time. Upper Key Stage Two staff have taken part in Continued Professional Development provided by the charity *Rethink Periods*.

5. Inclusivity and Equality

The Equality Act 2010 covers the way the curriculum is delivered, as schools and other education providers must ensure that issues are taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Schools have a duty under the Equality Act to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT).

Inclusive RHE will foster good relations between pupils, tackle all types of prejudice – including homophobia – and promote understanding and respect. The Department for Education has produced advice in The Equality Act 2010 and schools (DfE, 2014b).

Schools have a legal duty to promote equality (Equality Act, 2010) and to combat bullying (Education Act, 2006) (which includes HBTbullying - homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and sexual bullying). Section 4.2 of the national curriculum (2014) states that “Teachers should take account of their duties under equal opportunities legislation that covers race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender identity/reassignment.” (Known as the Protected Characteristics).

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all pupils’ experiences
- During lessons, makes pupils feel: safe and supported and able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that’s appropriate for them, including: whole-class settings, small groups or targeted sessions, 1-to-1 discussions and digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The Governing Body

The governing body will approve the RHE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation. The Governing Body will:

- Seek the advice of the Head teacher on this policy, while ensuring the programme is suitably monitored and evaluated by the subject leader;
- Ensure that the policy is available to parents/carers and that they know of their right to withdraw their children;
- Ensure that RHE is provided in a way that encourages pupils to make appropriate and safe life decisions.

6.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RHE is taught consistently across the school, for sharing resources and materials with parents and carers, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-science components of RHE.

The Head teacher will ensure that:

- The governing body is advised about the nature and organisation of RHE and how it reflects the aims and values of the school;
- RHE is provided in a way that encourages pupils to make safe and appropriate life decisions;
- Pupils are protected from inappropriate teaching materials;
- Parents are informed about the school's RHE policy and practice.

6.3 Staff

Every member of staff has a responsibility to contribute to the formation of the right attitudes in our pupils through our Values Based Education. This will be demonstrated through the teacher's confidence and understanding of effective RHE learning, with PSHCE. Staff are expected to:

- Provide RHE in accordance with this policy;
- Participate in training to provide RHE in line with the school curriculum policy;
- Use a range of appropriate resources and strategies to stimulate students' interest and active participation;
- Deliver content in a sensitive way
- Model positive attitudes to RHE
- Respond appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the non-science components of RSE
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RHE of their child.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE and all class teachers are expected to do so in line with their year group's curriculum. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

The subject leader will ensure that:

- RHE is well resourced in terms of curriculum time, staff training, management time and leadership training;
- The statutory requirements of RHE are fully met by monitoring teaching and learning and informing the School Development Plan;
- Provide opportunities for sharing good practice;
- Maintain links with parents and carers and external agencies, i.e. NSPCC.

6.4 Parents and Carers

We seek to work with parents/carers to ensure that the teaching of RHE reflects their expectations and compliments teaching at home.

Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)

Parents/Carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education. However, parents/carers do have the right to withdraw their children from any Sex Education provided at school in addition to those parts included in statutory National Curriculum for Science.

Notification of when RHE is being taught within each class is stated on the termly overview. Additionally, letters will be sent out at the beginning of the summer term to ensure parents/carers have been forewarned and can prepare for conversations and questions at home.

If parents/carers have concerns regarding the content of any learning, they should firstly address this with the class teacher or subject leader. If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their child from specific elements of the RHE curriculum, this should be conveyed in writing to the Head teacher using Appendix 2.

6.5 Pupils

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

7. Safeguarding and Child Protection

All RHE at Maple Tree is taught by the class teacher. It is important that a trusting relationship between the class teacher and pupils is built and maintained, but it is important for pupils and parents to understand that staff cannot always maintain confidentiality in light of safeguarding procedures. Any concerns staff may have should be discussed immediately with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The safety of our children is of paramount importance and the school is legally obliged to refer concerns regarding safeguarding issues, including sexual abuse to external organisations.

- If a verbal question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupils of the ground rules. Teachers model appropriate behaviour and ensure that pupils discuss issues in a way which does not encourage inappropriate or immature behaviour.
- If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher will acknowledge it and pass it on to a DSL. Teachers will not be drawn into providing more information than is appropriate to the age of the child.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

The programme is regularly evaluated by the PSHCE subject leader as part of the school curriculum monitoring schedule. The views of all will be used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis. Parents/carers will also be consulted on the RHE policy and have the opportunity to express their views. This policy is approved by the full governing body every 2 years.

9. Links to other policies

RHE has clear links with other school policies aimed at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- IT Policy and Safe Internet Use Policy
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy

Copies of these policies can be found on the school website.

Appendix 1: The teaching programme for Relationship and Health Education

Early Years

Children learn about the concept of male and female and about young animals. In ongoing PSHCE work, they develop skills to form friendships and think about relationships with others.

Key Stage 1

Through work in science, children learn about life cycles of some animals, understand the idea of growing from young to old and learn that all living things reproduce. They learn about the importance of personal hygiene to maintain good health. In PSHCE and Relationships and Health Education children reflect on family relationships, different family groups and friendship. They learn about rituals and traditions associated with birth, marriage and death and talk about the emotions involved.

They begin to co-operate with others in work and play and begin to recognise the range of human emotions and ways to deal with them.

They are introduced to the correct scientific names for body parts.

They also learn about personal safety.

Key Stage 2

In science children build on their knowledge of life cycles and learn about the basic biology of human reproduction including birth of a baby in year 5 & 6.

Children are taught about the physical, emotional and social changes at puberty, which include personal hygiene. In PSHCE and Relationships and Health Education they continue to develop an understanding of relationships within a family, between friends and the community and that there are different patterns of friendship. They will develop skills needed to form relationships and to respect other people's emotions and feelings. They will consider how to make simple choices and exercise some basic techniques for resisting pressures.

Relationship and Health Education should focus on the development of skills and attitudes not just the acquisition of knowledge.

Children in year 5 and 6 will learn about menstruation and be introduced to period products.

Appendix 2: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within Relationships and Health Education

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and health education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			
TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL			
Agreed actions from discussion with parents			