



Oaklands School

"The best for all, the best from all"

Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Policy (RSHE)

Date reviewed:	Review Cycle	Policy Review Date:
11 th Feb 2025	Annual	Spring 2026

Rationale and ethos

Relationship and Sexual Health Education (RSHE) is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care in family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

RSHE supports children and young people's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It aims to help children and young people deal with the real-life issues they face as they grow up and encounter as adults. Their learning will support them both online and offline, to make informed choices about their safety, physical and mental health, enabling them to live positive and fulfilled lives.

At Oaklands, RSHE is enhanced by a supportive school ethos where everyone is valued, positive relationships are promoted, and there is a safe learning environment.

Aims

- To be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life.
- To be an entitlement for all young people.
- To help students make informed choices.
- To encourage every student to contribute to our community and support individuals as they grow and learn.
- To prepare students for the next stage of education and adulthood.
- To encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity, without the promotion of any particular family structure. The essential values are love, respect and care for each other.
- To develop positive and inclusive attitudes to everyone, particularly those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- To generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can occur without any stigma or embarrassment.
- To recognise that parents/carers are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents/carers and students, consulting them about programme content.
- To recognise that the wider community has much to offer, we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.
- To provide accurate and age-appropriate information and resources.

Inclusion

We intend for our curriculum to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic and cultural groups. Class teachers will be aware of ethnic and cultural diversity within their classes and will ensure that lesson content is relevant and culturally appropriate. Any concerns around topic areas can be communicated to the pupil's RSHE teacher, the RSHE lead or the headteacher. Adjustments can be made on an individual basis as required.

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with topics of sexual orientation and gender identity, answer appropriate questions and offer support where needed. Whatever their sexuality or gender identity, young people need to feel that sex and relationships education is relevant to them. We do not use RSHE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation or gender identity over another and we also explain in lessons that we understand that some pupils may question their gender identity / sexuality and we signpost to specific support services. Pupils are not grouped by gender in RSHE lessons – for example, trans and non-binary pupils access lessons in mixed groups alongside their peers. Adjustments can be made on an individual basis as required.

We actively celebrate the diversity of our pupils, their families and the wider whole-school community. RSHE will always be taught in a non-judgmental, non-biased and fully inclusive manner through clear, impartial information as well as covering the law to ensure all pupils have equal access to our RSHE curriculum.

Roles and responsibilities

An effective programme of RSHE requires support from the whole school community, and the following people have specific roles and responsibilities:

Governors

To ensure that:

- Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Policy is regularly monitored and reviewed.
- Support the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team (as necessary) to ensure that the Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Policy is effectively implemented.

Headteacher

To ensure that:

- All pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- The subject is well-led, effectively managed and well planned.
- The quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation.

- Teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND.
- Clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.
- The subject is resourced, staffed, and timetabled to ensure that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.
- Staff are provided with the opportunity to contribute to the development of RSHE
- Training is provided for the subject leader and staff, as required
- The Subject Leader is supported to liaise with parents and carers

RSHE Lead Teacher

- Lead the development and delivery of effective RSHE
- Keep up-to-date with the development of RSHE
- Support colleagues as required
- Monitor and evaluate RSHE and providing necessary reports including the Subject Annual review document
- Liaise with parents and carers
- Keep subject information up-to-date, including on the school website
- Oversee external visitors and resources used in RSHE

All staff

- Understand and implement the policy of RSHE
- Teach RSHE in line with the agreed curriculum
- Assess and monitor the progress of children
- Respond to the needs of individual children
- Provide a safe space and promote inclusion

Legislation (statutory regulations and guidance)

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 make Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education, including SEND pupils. Parents/carers have the right to excuse their children from all or part of sex education except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (i.e. in Science lessons) and that which is in Relationship and Health education.

This RSHE policy also supports legal requirements relating to the following:

- The Equality Act (2010)

- The Education Act (1996)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Relationships and Health Education policy:

- Anti-bullying
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Oaklands SEND Policy

Curriculum design

We are committed to the provision of RSHE for all our pupils. Our whole school and curriculum provision aim to respond to the diversity of all pupil's cultures, faiths, sexuality and family backgrounds. We will strive to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, without discrimination or bullying on the grounds of race, religion, colour, language, culture, social circumstances, appearance, sexuality, gender, ability or disability. Therefore, RSHE aims to provide balanced, factual information and consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of relationships, sex, and sexual health. Our RSHE programme prepares students for an adult life in which they can:

- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgments and behaviour
- Have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and have the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want
- Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships
- Avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex
- Communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues
- Develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity
- Understand and celebrate diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity
- Understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity
- Understand the reasons for having protected sex
- Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV
- Be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- Know how the law applies to sexual relationships

Oaklands School delivers Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education through its RSHE programme at KS3 and KS4. It is taught around three main themes:

- **Respectful Relationships**

This includes encouraging pupils to understand and identify the characteristics of a positive relationship, online relationships and consent and gives pupils the tools and knowledge to keep themselves safe in their current and future relationships with others.

- **Feelings and Attitudes**

This includes exploring how feelings can change as we grow, celebrating diversity and knowing how to manage prejudice and discrimination. This theme also includes learning around safe sex, reproductive health and pregnancy for older pupils.

- **Families and Growing Up**

This includes learning around puberty, types of relationships, diversity of families, how to manage break-ups and conflict, online and media influences and parenting skills.

All year groups will access learning from all three themes each year. Topic and lesson content is always ensured to be age appropriate and adapted for the needs of pupils. The PSHE Programme and Science National Curriculum are taught in every year group alongside RSHE lessons.

Much of the Sex and Relationship Education at Oaklands School takes place within RSHE lessons. RSHE lessons are set alongside the PSHE curriculum's broader context and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships. However, the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction may be referenced where appropriate. The Science National Curriculum is delivered by staff in the Science department. These lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten.

Formal assessments do not take place within the RSHE curriculum. However, teachers will assess pupil understanding using a range of formative assessment methods.

Curriculum outlines can be found on the school website for more information regarding specific lesson content.

Safe and Effective practice

Any RSHE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons, ground rules are established, including confidentiality, respect for others, privacy and boundaries. When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the rest of the students' development, the question may be dealt with individually at another time. Distancing techniques, including de-personalised discussions and role play, are used to ensure content respects boundaries. Learning and content are also differentiated to ensure it is appropriate and accessible for all students.

The subject lead will support all staff teaching RSHE, designated safeguarding lead and Headteacher, and specific training may be identified and undertaken as needed.

Safeguarding

Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. Teachers will follow school safeguarding procedures and consult with the designated safeguarding lead as appropriate.

Teachers cannot offer complete confidentiality. In a case where a teacher learns from a pupil that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

- The young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary, to seek medical advice.
- Child protection issues will be considered and referred to the designated safeguarding lead under the school's procedures.
- The young person will be appropriately counselled about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

We may invite guest speakers to talk on sex and relationship issues, particularly experts or experienced health professionals. A member of Oaklands staff will be present throughout these lessons. The school will check the content of sessions delivered by visitors to make sure that it fits with the school's ethos and meets legal requirements. Visiting speakers will be given a copy of this policy and expected to comply with the guidelines outlined within it and undergo the necessary checks as required by the school safeguarding policies.

Engaging parents/carers

We are committed to working closely with parents/carers. This RSHE policy will be available to read and download from the school website, and copies can be requested from the school office. Parents/carers are welcome to discuss any policy or curriculum aspect, particularly where there are concerns.

Parents/carers have the right to excuse their children from all or part of sex education except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (i.e. in Science lessons) and Relationship and Health education. We would make alternative arrangements in such cases.

The right to withdraw applies up to and until three terms before a child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education, they can request to do so. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Headteacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

Parents are encouraged to discuss any decisions involving the right to withdraw with the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

It is the responsibility of the RSHE Coordinator to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of RSHE, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The RSHE programme will be treated as a subject department in this exercise, under which all departments undertake self-evaluation. Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RSHE through learning walks, self-evaluation and work scrutiny.

Ofsted is required to evaluate and report on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The evaluation includes assessing and commenting on the school's sex and relationship education policy and supporting and staff development, training and delivery.

While the school cannot provide it, we must ensure that young people know where to seek confidential advice, counselling and treatment. Pupils are guided towards health professionals and specialist agencies as required.