



Relationships and Sex Education Policy 2026

This policy outlines Spire Junior School's approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). It has been developed in consultation with staff, governors, parents, and pupils.

Our RSE policy supports the school's ethos of creating a safe, caring, and respectful environment where every pupil is valued. RSE is a statutory requirement in all primary schools in England, as outlined in the DfE statutory guidance "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Guidance" (2025)

Rationale

At Spire Junior School we believe that effective Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is essential for young people to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives and to recognise happy and healthy relationships. The RSE programme is integrated as part of the PSHE curriculum (see separate PSHE policy) and is delivered as such that it meets the National Healthy Schools Standard.

Relationships Education and Health Education are taught in this school as statutory subjects. Elements of sex education, though non-statutory are also part of an integrated PSHE programme of work. For the purposes of this policy, we will refer to Relationships Education and Sex Education as combined subjects, as any learning about the physical and sexual aspects of growing up is taught in the context of positive healthy relationships.

Relationships and Sex Education make a significant contribution to the school's legal duties to

- prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, and
- promote the spiritual, moral, social cultural mental and physical development of pupils

Intentions

The focus at Spire Junior School will be on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. The intention of Relationships and Sex Education in our school is to equip children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and take responsibility for their health and well-being.

The aim of our RSE programme is:

- to provide pupils with the knowledge, understanding, and skills they need to form healthy, positive relationships
- to help pupils develop self-respect, confidence, and empathy for others
- to prepare pupils for the changes of puberty and growing up
- to support children to stay safe, both online and offline
- to promote equality and respect in all relationships

- and to ensure RSE is taught sensitively and inclusively, reflecting our diverse community.

We recognise the central importance of relationships in supporting children and young people's mental health and well-being, academic achievement and future success. Our programme also aims to support pupils in their personal development about attributes such as kindness, consideration, respect, integrity, generosity, and the importance of honesty, truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy. These approaches support our wider work of building resilience in our pupils.

At Spire Junior School, we deliver age-appropriate sex education as an integrated part of our PSHE programme. We support children to learn about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. From the beginning of primary school, building on early education, pupils should be taught how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy. Establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact - these are the forerunners of teaching about consent, which continues to develop at secondary. We recognise the prevalence of information and attitudes about relationships and sex that children and young people are exposed to and aim to provide an environment where they can receive reliable information about their bodies, and feel comfortable to ask questions, rather than turn to inappropriate sources. We take a rights-based approach to relationships and sex education.

We focus on attitudes and values, skills and knowledge and understanding. This will include developing self-esteem, the skills to manage relationships and most importantly keep themselves safe in all their relationships.

The focus for primary relationships education should be on teaching the skills and knowledge that form the building blocks of all positive relationships, supporting children from the start of their education to grow into kind, caring adults who have respect for others and know how to keep themselves and others safe.

Building children's understanding and skills at primary is essential for preparing them for more complex content at secondary. For example, in primary, children will learn skills for managing difficult feelings in their friendships, like disappointment or anger. This prepares them to reflect on how to behave with kindness in more complex or challenging relationships at secondary.

Primary relationships education should be anchored in an understanding of positive relationships, but should also equip children to keep themselves and others safe, and to recognise and report risks and abuse, including online. This can be delivered by focusing on boundaries, privacy, and children's rights over their own bodies and personal information. Pupils should be able to recognise emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Even very young children can be equipped to understand what counts as abusive behaviour and to trust their instincts about behaviour that doesn't feel right. In addition, pupils should understand about bullying, and that this can include the use of derogatory terms relating to sex, race, disability or sexual orientation.

Pupils should know how to report concerns and seek advice. While teaching children how to stay safe, including online, teachers should be clear that being a victim of abuse is never the fault of the child.

Primary children should be introduced to protective and preventative content in a way that does not cause unreasonable alarm and does not appear to normalise risky behaviours or activities. For example, in late primary, schools may decide to discuss the pressure to share naked images if this is affecting pupils in the school. There may also be cases, such as when they know that pupils have seen pornography, in which schools may feel the need to discuss online sexual content. Teaching should be age appropriate and respectful of all children, including those who may have no familiarity with the topics under discussion. Schools should also inform parents of any deviation from their published RSE policy in advance and share any relevant materials with them on request.

Teaching and Learning

The DfE recognises 5 elements to Relationships Education. These are:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful, kind relationships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe

The PSHE Matters Scheme Overview

In Years 3 & 4 pupils learn about change in friendships, relationships and families; how to be a good friend online and offline; managing conflict in friendships; how and why their bodies are changing and the associated feeling; staying safe online (understanding how to become digitally responsible); gender stereotypes and their impact; making informed choices; feelings and how to cope with them; understanding good and not so good feelings; recognising conflicting emotions; recognising what constitutes a healthy relationship and develop skills to form positive, healthy relationships; recognising ways in which a relationship can be unhealthy and whom to talk to if they need support; recognising the different types of relationship; understanding that actions affect themselves and others; understanding when it is right to 'break a confidence' or 'share a secret'; that a male and a female are needed to make a baby; what a baby needs; about privacy, boundaries and secrets and who to talk to if they feel anxious or unhappy; the right to protect our bodies; about differences and similarities between people, but understand everyone is equal; about the difference between acceptable and unacceptable physical contact and knowing the names of the body parts.

In Years 5 & 6 pupils learn about the important relationships in their life; how to show love to others; about marriage and stable loving relationships and their importance for having babies and bringing up children; how to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships; identifying how to make informed choices and developing skills to make their own choices; the different types of bullying, why they are unacceptable and how to respond; understanding the correct use of the terms sex, gender identity and sexual

orientation; the impact of social media on self-esteem, body image, health and safety and ways to manage this; developing strategies to resolve disputes; deepening their understanding of good and not so good feelings; recognising what a healthy relationship is; recognising ways in which a relationship can be unhealthy and whom to talk to if they need support; recognising the different types of relationship, including those between acquaintances, friends, relatives and families; understanding the true meaning behind civil partnerships and marriage; resolving conflicts; recognising that forcing anyone to marry is a crime; understanding about confidentiality and about times when it is necessary to break a confidence; exploring and managing the difficult emotions; acknowledging and managing change positively; managing transition to secondary school; exploring and managing loss, separation, divorce and bereavement; practising asking for help and knowing where to go for help; understanding changes that happen at puberty; understanding what puberty and human reproduction is.

Some elements of sex education are statutory. Learning about 'the changing adolescent body' is part of statutory Health Education. Children will learn key facts about puberty including physical and emotional changes, about menstruation and the key facts about the life cycle.

National Curriculum Science is also statutory and links with the PSHE scheme. This includes:

Key Stage 2

- Describe the differences in the life cycle of a mammal, an amphibian and insect and a bird
- Describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals
- Describe the changes as humans develop to old age
- Recognise the impact of diet exercise drugs and lifestyle on the way their bodies function

Equal Opportunities / Inclusion

At Spire Junior School we deliver RSE with regards to the Equality Act 2010 and observance of the protected characteristics of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership and sexual orientation. We recognise that children have varying needs regarding RSE depending on their circumstances and background. To achieve this, the school's approach to RSE will take account of:

- Research concludes that girls typically engage easier in RSE. Therefore, we will consider the particular needs of boys, as well as girls, and use approaches that will actively engage them. We shall also be proactive in combating sexism, misogyny, sexualised behaviour and sexist bullying.
- Some pupils may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) that result in particular RSE needs at times which we will support. It may also mean that they have difficulty accessing the RSE curriculum. We will ensure that RSE is accessible to all pupils through high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised.

- We recognise that our pupils may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. We will take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances and deliver the curriculum sensitively and inclusively.

Online

The principles to positive relationships also apply online, especially as by the end of primary school, many children will already be using the internet regularly. When teachers cover relationships content, we will also address online safety and appropriate behaviour in a way that is relevant to our students' lives. We will include content on how information and data is shared and issued in all contexts, such as sharing pictures, understanding many websites are businesses and how sites use information provided by users in ways they might not expect. Students will know that people sometimes behave differently online, including pretending to be someone they are not; the principles apply to online relationships, including the importance of respect of others online including when we are anonymous; the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them; how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met; how information and data is shared and used online.

How is RSE Provided?

Spire Junior School will provide a curriculum with the following key principles in mind:

1. Engagement with pupils. There is an inclusive and well-sequenced RSHE curriculum which has meaningful engagement with pupils to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and engaging.
2. Engagement and transparency with parents. We will always engage with parents on the content of RSHE and be transparent with parents about all materials used in RSHE. All materials will be available to parents. Parents have a right to request that their children are withdrawn from sex education (pupils can opt back in from three terms before they turn 16) and schools should ensure parents are aware of sex education content within lessons in advance.
3. Positivity. We will focus on building positive attitudes and skills, promoting healthy norms about relationships, including sexual relationships where relevant, and about health, including mental health. We will avoid language which might normalise harmful behaviour among young people – for example gendered language which might normalise male violence or stigmatise boys.
4. Careful sequencing. We will cover all statutory topics, recognising that young people can start developing healthy behaviour and relationship skills as soon as they start school. Furthermore, sequence teaching so that pupils are supported and equipped with the knowledge to navigate different experiences in a positive way before they occur, and to prevent harms.
5. Relevant and responsive. We will develop the curriculum to be relevant, age and stage appropriate and accessible to pupils in their area, where appropriate working with local partners and other bodies to understand specific local issues and ensure needs are met.

6. Skilled delivery of participative education. The curriculum will be delivered by school staff. Staff will be trained in safeguarding and offering support, recognising the increased possibility of disclosures.
7. Whole school approach. The curriculum is best delivered as part of a whole school approach to wellbeing and positive relationships, supported by other school policies, including behaviour and safeguarding policies.
8. This school has a caring ethos that models and supports positive relationships between all members of the school community.
9. Children within Spire Junior School can also learn about RSE within Science as stipulated by the national curriculum and/or as negotiated with the PSHE coordinator, through other curriculum areas for example Drama, English etc, through assemblies, during circle time discussions, as role play and scenarios, through storybooks and videos, there will be question boxes for anonymous questions, through pastoral support, by the provision of appropriate leaflets and other information sources, via targeted intervention, where appropriate, with vulnerable individuals, will be delivered in response to incidents.

Staff will carefully assess each resource they propose to use to ensure they are appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils and sensitive to their needs. Where relevant, staff will use resources that are medically accurate, new content may be added to address emerging safeguarding concerns and that this will be shared with parents in advance.

Staff will also consult parents and provide examples that they plan to use. This can be reassuring for parents/carers and will help support them to continue the conversations started in class at home.

A Safe Learning Environment

In order for PSHE or RSE to be conducted safely the following will be in place:

- Class agreements or ground rules will be negotiated, explained, displayed and referred to wherever appropriate. (When receiving external visitors, they will have sight of and understanding of the ground rules/group agreement.)
- No one in the classroom will be expected to answer a personal question.
- Distancing techniques such as the use of scenarios, will be used to help keep pupils safe. There will be no need for anyone to discuss their own personal issues.
- Confidentiality will be clearly explained. Pupils will understand how disclosures will be handled.
- It will be discussed with pupils how their classroom is a safe place and if they feel anything applies to them that they wish to share with an adult, it will be handled with care to keep them safe.
- Pupils will be expected to engage and listen during lessons, however it is accepted that sometimes it is inappropriate for them to be expected to take part in the discussion.
- Teachers will use scientific terminology to describe body parts and encourage children to do the same, so that there is a common language within the classroom.
- The meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.
- Care will be taken not to use materials or approaches that may trigger trauma or distress. Pupils at risk will be identified and arrangements made for them to access the learning in a comfortable way.
- Signposting to sources of support when dealing with sensitive issues.

Asking and Answering Questions

Teachers will answer pupil's questions and concerns in a sensitive, age and development appropriate manner. Individual teachers will use their skill and discretion in these situations, and if necessary, refer to the PSHE coordinator for advice and support.

Teachers will apply the following principles:

1. Clear guidance will be established about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting - group agreement/ground rules will help to achieve this.
2. If a pupil's question is inappropriate to address the whole class, the teacher will acknowledge the question and attend to it later on an individual basis.
3. Through the development of ground rules, children will understand that personal questions are not appropriate and will not be answered in front of the whole class.
4. Teachers will set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that pupil's discuss issues in a way which encourages thoughtful participation.
5. If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk in any way, including sexual abuse or exploitation, the usual safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Teachers are aware that some topics may raise safeguarding concerns or disclosures. If this occurs, normal child protection procedures will be followed in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Resources

Teaching resources will be selected on the basis of their appropriateness to pupils and their impact. Most resources are taken from the PSHE Matters Scheme that the school follows.

Roles and Responsibilities

The teaching of RSE is the responsibility of all teachers within the school, supported by teaching assistants or external specialists where appropriate. Lessons are age-appropriate and differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. The head teacher and PSHE lead have responsibility for ensuring that the policy is used and updated when necessary and for the effective teaching and learning of science throughout the school.

The PSHE co-ordinator has responsibility for overseeing the teaching, for the purchase of resources and for ensuring progression and continuity through monitoring, planning and assessment.

Assessment and monitoring

Teachers assess pupil understanding through discussion, reflection, and feedback activities. The PSHE co-ordinator will monitor planning and delivering of RSE and reports annually to the governing body.

Training

Staff receive regular training on delivering RSE effectively and sensitively. Specialist support or resources may be accessed through the local authority or PSHE Association.

Parental engagement in RSE

We recognise the prime role of parents/carers in the development of their child's understanding about relationships and sex. We work in active partnership with parents/carers in the development and review of RSE. The school will ensure that parents/carers are: made aware of the school's approach and rationale for RSE through the policy.

Parents/carers have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated sex education lessons delivered outside the science curriculum. They do not have a right to withdraw their children from those aspects of RSE that are taught in national curriculum Science, Relationships Education or Health Education.

If a parent/carer has any concerns about the RSE provision, we will take time to address their concerns and discuss any fears they may have. If parents/carers decide to withdraw their child, we shall work with them and their child to explore possible alternative provision. In the event of a request to withdraw from RSE lessons, we will document this process and ensure a record is kept. We welcome parent's engagement with RSE and welcome feedback on the RSE delivered so we can amend and support our children.

Review

This policy and the associated PSHE & RSE curriculums will be reviewed by the PSHE co-ordinator and Headteacher every two years and updated if required. Parents will be consulted again at the time of review.

The needs of staff regarding the teaching of RSE, either expressed by the teachers directly or identified by the co-ordinator will inform the school development plan.

Date approved:

Next review date: October 2027

RSE Lead: Lauren Watkinson

Headteacher: Charlotte Vernon

Governor approval: Martin Lloyd