



Sir Thomas Abney
PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Sir Thomas Abney
Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) Policy 2021**

April 2021

Review Date: September 2022

To be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy, Equality & Inclusion Policy, SEND Policy, Accessibility Policy and Teaching & Learning about LGBT+ Policy

Current PSHE & RSE Lead: Maxine Apcher
Link Governors for RSE: Lisa Neidich & Jo Macleod

PSHE = Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education
RSE = Relationship & Sex Education

Sir Thomas Abney Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) Policy 2021

INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out our school's approach to statutory Relationships Education and non-statutory Sex Education. It was produced by the Inclusion Team working with the Head of School and the Senior Leadership Team.

We have based our school's relationships and sex education policy on the statutory guidance document "[Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#)" (DfE, 2019) and the PSHE Association's supplementary guidance "Writing your school's relationships and sex education (RSE) policy" (PSHE Association, September 2018).

Department for Education guidance states that from September 2020, all primary schools must teach Relationships and Health Education. The teaching of Sex Education in primary schools remains non-statutory, with the exception of the elements of sex education contained in the science national curriculum including the main external body parts, the human life cycle (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. Other related topics that fall within the statutory requirements for Health Education, such as puberty and menstrual wellbeing, will be included within PSHE education lessons.

Within the statutory guidance document for RSE and Health Education, the DfE also encourages schools to deliver age-appropriate sex education if they feel their pupils need this information:

"It will be for primary schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. Many primary schools already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so, although it is not a requirement...."

"It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department continues to recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born"

Within this policy, as in the DfE guidance, Relationships Education is defined as teaching about the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. Our definition of Relationships Education includes all of those elements defined within this statutory topic – these are detailed below in the 'RSE Curriculum' section.

Sex Education is defined as teaching children how human reproduction occurs, including how a baby is conceived. This draws on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science. For the purposes of this policy, we specifically identify any non-statutory Sex Education that falls outside of Science and those related elements (the physical changes associated with puberty) within statutory Health Education.

Our PSHE policy is informed by existing DfE guidance:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool](#) (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#) (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- [Equality Act 2010 and schools](#)

- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Alternative Provision](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (advice for schools, including advice on [cyberbullying](#))
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance](#) (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- [Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools](#) (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC))
- [SMSC requirements for independent schools](#) (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).

RATIONALE AND ETHOS

At Sir Thomas Abney, PSHE – including RSE - is underpinned by the inclusive ethos and values of our school. Our vision is to create a safe, positive and stimulating environment in which all members of the school community learn and grow in confidence, knowledge and skills.

Through our PSHE programme we aim to provide children with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active and responsible citizens. In providing children with an understanding of healthy and respectful relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider effective RSE to be a fundamental part of our approach to supporting pupils to grow into confident, caring, responsible and respectful young citizens.

RSE is lifelong learning about personal, physical, moral and emotional development. It is set in the context of clear values about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care, for family life. It should teach children and young people to develop and form positive values, attitudes, personal and social skills, and increase their knowledge and understanding of how to make informed decisions and life choices.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) forms part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education curriculum in our school. The RSE programme is led by the PSHE Lead (Deputy Headteacher, Maxine Apcher).

PSHE lessons are taught by class teachers, supported by expert visitors as appropriate and necessary. Teaching staff receive training in the delivery of the RSE curriculum through dedicated staff meetings, led by the PSHE Lead with the support of external experts as required.

As a school we are aware that the primary responsibility for providing children's RSE lies with parents and carers. We recognise the need to work with parents and carers to ensure a shared understanding of RSE and to deliver an effective programme that meets the needs of our pupils.

THE RSE CURRICULUM

Effective Relationships & Sex Education can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by pupils if they are to establish and maintain positive, healthy relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and well-being.

At Sir Thomas Abney we use the Jigsaw Scheme of Work for PSHE, which is accredited by the PSHE Association. We have selected this scheme in consultation with staff and governors as we feel it fulfils the needs of our pupils as well as meeting our obligations to provide statutory Relationships and Health Education. The content of this policy, as well as our PSHE curriculum, has been developed in relation to the needs of our pupils and in consultation with school staff and Governors. As is required by the new statutory guidance, parents have also been consulted on the

relevant content within the policy. We believe that this process ensures that the curriculum we provide for our pupils is reflective of the requirements placed upon us and also of the needs of our school community.

STATUTORY RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION

As part of our PSHE/Relationships Education programme of study, children will be taught what a relationship is; the different types of relationships they might have - e.g. with family members, friends, and other adults; the importance of healthy and secure relationships to wellbeing; what constitutes a healthy relationship, in person and online; how to set and observe appropriate boundaries in relationships; how to recognise when a situation is unsafe; strategies for dealing with situations that they find uncomfortable or that are unsafe; and sources of help and advice.

NON-STATUTORY SEX EDUCATION

As part of statutory Health Education, children are taught in an age appropriate way about puberty and the associated physical and emotional changes from Year 3 onwards. As part of the science curriculum, children learn in Year 5 about how reproduction occurs in some plants and animals. The DfE guidance 2019 also recommends that all primary schools have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of pupils, and this should include how a baby is conceived and born. Although Sex Education is not compulsory in primary schools, we believe children should understand the facts about human reproduction before they leave primary school. We therefore provide some non-statutory sex education, covering how human reproduction and conception occurs. This is included in the “Changing Me” Jigsaw Unit in the summer term. Children are taught:

- that for a baby to begin to grow, part comes from a mother and part comes from a father; that in most animals including humans the baby grows inside the mother (Year 3);
- that for a baby to be made, a sperm from the father and an egg from the mother must meet; that this can happen when a grown-up man and woman share an especially close and loving embrace that is a loving and very private part of a grown-up relationship (no detail on what this involves). (Year 4);
- that when a sperm and egg meet, this is called conception; that conception usually occurs as a result of sexual intercourse, and what sexual intercourse means (Year 5);
- how a baby develops in the womb and how babies are born (Year 6).

In each year group, lessons will recap on the content of previous years as a reminder and to allow for children to “catch up” if they were not present for the previous year’s lessons.

We recognise that children in younger year groups may ask questions that cannot be answered without reference to content from older year groups. Should this occur, we will respond by telling them that they will learn about that when they are older. [Please see the relevant section within this policy for further information on how teachers manage difficult questions in RSE.]

We believe that teaching this additional content to pupils will ensure that they are better prepared for transition to secondary school and also support their personal and social development as they grow into young adults. As is legally prescribed, parents/carers have a right to withdraw their children from these additional non- statutory sex education lessons – please see the relevant section within this policy in regard to this process.

DELIVERY

All elements of our Relationships & Sex Education programme will be delivered in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner as part of our regular weekly timetabled PSHE education programme. RSE is delivered predominantly by class teachers in mixed gender groups, other than when it is deemed more appropriate for topics to be covered in single sex groups; this will be decided by the class teacher after discussion with the PSHE lead.

Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE in school, for example the school nurse. All visitors will be familiar with and understand the school’s RSE policy and be expected to work within it.

An overview of our PSHE programme is included within the appendices of this policy for reference.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

We aim to provide an environment and atmosphere for RSE where pupils feel safe, relaxed, unintimidated, and focused; and where they have confidence and trust in the knowledge, ability and skills of staff in school. This ensures that both pupils and staff feel fully confident in engaging in age-appropriate discussions around potentially sensitive topics and themes.

To provide clarity and create a safe learning environment, at the beginning of each session, a set of ground rules will be agreed by the class based on a school-wide template. This is in line with the 'Jigsaw Charter' as part of our delivery of PSHE. As a minimum, ground rules are likely to include the following basic guidelines:

- Listen politely to each other.
- Everyone gets a turn - if they want one.
- Respect everybody's contribution.
- No personal information - no names.
- No personal questions.
- No making fun.
- An age-appropriate rule around confidentiality and safeguarding .

Children and teachers are free to suggest and agree further ground rules as appropriate to the topic of each lesson.

Other teaching and learning strategies utilised in RSE (and across the PSHE curriculum) to establish a safe learning environment include the following techniques:

- Using 'distancing' techniques such as role play, case studies, videos etc... to depersonalise sensitive issues.
- Anonymous question boxes. These can help children to have the confidence to ask sensitive questions, and they provide an opportunity for teachers to pre-empt questions that might not be age appropriate or that might raise safeguarding or child protection concerns.
- It will be emphasised to children that any voluntary sharing of information should be anonymous (for example "*someone I know...*" rather than "*I*" or naming names). Should personal questions be asked of either children or staff, children will be reminded that the ground rules for RSE prohibit personal questions. Although staff may draw on their personal experiences to answer certain questions, for example around menstruation, this should always be depersonalised and discussed in third person rather than first person

All staff teaching RSE will be supported and advised by the PSHE lead and senior leadership team on these matters as required.

MANAGING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

During both formal and informal PSHE/RSE sessions, pupils are encouraged to ask questions. Any questions from pupils are answered according to the age and maturity of the pupil concerned, and if the teacher delivering the session deems it appropriate to answer. Teachers will:

- use specific ground rules for this work which will clarify boundaries for children/young people, and mitigate disclosures in class
- clarify that personal questions should **not** be asked
- clarify that pupils should not give out personal information in class but speak to someone they trust after the lesson, e.g. school nurse, teacher, pastoral staff.

In some lessons, an anonymous question box may be used to allow children to ask questions about potentially sensitive or embarrassing topics.

Teaching staff will endeavour to answer questions as openly as possible but if faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, or that is not age-appropriate (or within the school's RSE policy), provision may be made to address the individual child/young person's requirements. The school believes that individual teachers must use their professional skill and discretion in this area and refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are concerned about any question from a safeguarding perspective.

If a teacher does not know the answer to a question or if a question is felt to be inappropriate, this should be acknowledged and, if considered necessary, this may be followed up outside of the classroom environment with individual pupils.

Children may also be signposted back to parents/carers who have ultimate responsibility in talking to their children about sensitive matters. We will also encourage parents/carers to talk with the school if they have any questions or queries, and if they would like advice on how to better support their child and continue learning outside of the classroom.

RECORDING AND ASSESSMENT

Pupils will have the opportunity to reflect on their learning within lessons and at the end of each unit. In addition to the pupils' self-assessment, teachers will assess through informal methods, such as observations and class or group discussions. Observations may have a particular focus, e.g. children's listening skills, empathy etc. Quizzes may be used before and after a unit of work to aid assessment.

Elements of RSE that occur in the science curriculum will be assessed through recorded work to establish age related expectations of knowledge and understanding.

RESOURCES

At Sir Thomas Abney we use the Jigsaw Scheme of Work for PSHE, which is accredited by the PSHE Association. Jigsaw is a comprehensive scheme of planning and resources, which is periodically updated to ensure it remains relevant and engaging to children and meets all statutory requirements of PSHE. Class teachers review the planning and resources for each lesson to ensure they are fully relevant and accessible to the needs of children in their classes and tailor them if necessary. Additional resources may be used if considered appropriate. The use of resources outside the Jigsaw scheme will be in consultation with the PSHE Lead and resources will be selected to ensure they are consistent with the school's ethos and values, support our aims and objectives, and meet the needs of our pupils.

SAFEGUARDING

In providing children with an understanding of healthy relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider RSE to be an important part of our school's approach to 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 take these matters seriously and speak to the child away from the class as a matter of priority. Teachers will report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy DSL) within the school, or if unavailable, a senior member of staff. This should be recorded using CPOMS. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then follow the school's procedures as set out in Sir Thomas Abney's Safeguarding Policy.

We occasionally engage the expertise of other appropriate external partners to work with us to provide advice and support to children with regard to RSE and Health Education. Such visits should be arranged through the PSHE Lead. These sessions are in addition to, and intended to complement, our existing RSE provision. Where external partners

are involved, teachers will have discussed and shared the planning and content of the sessions with visitors in advance. A class teacher will always be present and responsible for classroom management. Visitors supporting the delivery of RSE will follow the agreed ground rules and the protocols set out above regarding any safeguarding or child protection concerns.

INCLUSION

Special Educational Needs and Neuro-diversity

All pupils have different needs based on their emotional and physical development, life experiences, and learning differences, but we aim to ensure that all pupils are properly included in RSE. Teachers will plan and deliver work in a variety of ways, in order to meet the needs of individual pupils with SEND or Neuro-diversity. We focus on activities that increase a pupil's assertiveness, communication and relationship skills, their self-esteem and understanding. Visual resources are used where possible, and these should reflect the needs and diversity of our school community.

Equalities and diversity

Schools, like all public institutions, have specific responsibilities in relation to equality and protected characteristics. Planning and resources are reviewed to ensure they comply with equalities legislation and Sir Thomas Abney's Equality and Inclusion Policy.

All RSE is taught without bias and in line with legal responsibilities such as those contained within the Equality Act (2010). Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect others that may have different opinions. We strive to ensure that the personal beliefs and attitudes of staff delivering RSE will not influence the teaching of the subject in school. All staff have had Unconscious Bias Awareness training.

In our school we seek to recognise and embrace the diverse nature of our community. We aim to value and celebrate religious, ethnic and cultural diversity as part of modern Britain. We will explore different cultural beliefs and values and encourage activities that challenge stereotypes and discrimination and present children with accurate information based on the law. We will use a range of teaching materials and resources that reflect the diversity of our community and encourage a sense of inclusiveness. For example, photographs and images used in lessons and assemblies should always ensure representation of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority people, people with a range of disabilities, variety of different families – including LGBT families, and representative of different roles that are non-gender specific. They should also avoid and challenge stereotypes.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS – INCLUDING THE RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

We recognise that parents and carers are the primary providers of RSE for their children. Our RSE curriculum is designed to support and complement this. We aim to build a positive and supportive relationship with parents and carers through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation.

In promoting this we will:

- Inform parents/carers about the school's RSE policy and practice;
- Provide opportunities to view videos, lesson plans and resources used in the RSE programme;
- Answer any questions that parents/carers may have about RSE for their child;
- Take seriously any issues or concerns that parents/carers raise.

We believe that all of the content within our school's PSHE curriculum, including RSE, is of the utmost importance and relevance to all pupils. However, parents have the legal right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all **non-statutory** sex education, other than that which is part of the National Curriculum for Science.

Please note there is no parental right of withdrawal from Relationships Education or Health Education content within the school curriculum, or from any statutory Sex Education that forms part of the National Curriculum for Science. These are statutory requirements which the DfE mandates schools to teach.

We will inform parents of the right to withdraw by letter in the first part of Summer Term in advance of non-statutory sex education lessons being taught. Parents and carers who wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child from non-statutory sex education should talk with the class teacher, the PSHE Lead or the Head of School who will explore any concerns and discuss resources being used.

If parents/carers still wish to withdraw their child from non-statutory sex education lessons, this request will be recorded, and suitable alternative arrangements made for pupils during relevant lessons. The issue of withdrawal will be handled as sensitively as possible. Parents/carers should also understand that the decision to remove their child from these lessons means that they themselves will assume responsibility for talking to their children about any related sex education themes covered outside of National Curriculum Science.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Our aim is to provide RSE that is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our pupils, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason, we regularly review the RSE curriculum to evaluate its effectiveness and will inform parents of any revisions to the school policy or curriculum as required.

Teachers will continually reflect on the effectiveness of our PSHE provision, and the PSHE Lead will gather staff views through regular staff feedback. Pupil Voice exercises will also be used to inform reviews and updates to planning, resources and activities.

The Curriculum Committee of the governing body monitors our RSE policy on a regular basis. This committee reports its findings and recommendations to the full governing body, as necessary, if the policy needs modification. The Curriculum Committee gives consideration to any feedback from parents/carers about the RSE programme and makes a record of all such comments. Governors require the Head of School to keep a written record, giving details of the content and delivery of the RSE programme that we teach in our school.

LOCATION AND DISSEMINATION

Copies of this policy are held by the PSHE Lead and the Head of School. Further copies are available on the school website and from the school office on request from parents/carers.

STAFF SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Sir Thomas Abney School believes in the importance of appropriate staff training to enable staff to deliver effective RSE. The PSHE Lead will access courses or INSET opportunities to assist staff involved in the delivery of RSE in accordance with the School Improvement Plan.

Signed by:

Lynn Willis

Head of School

Date: May 2021

Lisa Neidich

Co-Chair of Governors

Date: May 2021

[Next review date: September 2022]