



FOREST SCHOOL

Relationships, Sex Education (RSE) Policy Senior School

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Owner (Name, Title):	Head of RSHE
Classification:	Statutory from September 2020
Comment:	Minor updates / curriculum changes. Awaiting approval of draft government guidance issued May 2024 under Conservative government. Will review once again once the Labour government has decided what is statutory.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy was developed in response to Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education regulations and guidance published for implementation in 2020.

1.2 Please read this policy in conjunction with;

Anti-bullying Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

PSHEE Policy

Online Safety

Personal Development Policy (in development)

Mental Health Policy

Transgender Policy

Behaviour Policy

Responsible User Agreement – Pupil and Parent/Carer

1.3 The consultation process for the original development of this policy has involved:

- Appointment of Grace Green as Assistant Head of RSHE
- Pupil focus groups / school councils
- Review of RSHE curriculum content with staff and pupils

- Consultation with wider school community e.g. School nurses, DSLs
- RSHE Link governor, Steven Berryman
- Prep School consultation
- Parent/Carer surveys*

*(*further strategy of this will be included in due course – e.g. Insight Evening Webinar)*

2 What Is Relationships and Sex Education?

Definition: RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural developments of pupils and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE does not promote sexual activity either directly or indirectly.

The term Relationships and Sex Education RSE- is used in this policy rather than sex education. This is to stress that we go beyond the provision of biological information and also focus on attitudes and values, developing self-esteem and helping to provide the skills needed to manage relationships.

According to the latest DfE guidance (2019),

“Today’s children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

We are clear that parents and carers are the prime educators for children on many of these matters. Schools complement and reinforce this role.

In Secondary school, teaching will build on knowledge acquired at Primary school and develop further pupils’ understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs, alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex.

Teaching mental wellbeing is central to these subjects.

In all schools, teaching should reflect the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.”

RSE is taught through a combination of timetabled RSHE lessons and speakers, as well as sitting within the sphere of Personal development.

3 Principles and Values

Our School Values of Growth, Wellbeing, Learning, Hard Work, Diversity, Responsibility and Community are reflected in the Behaviour Policy and additional policies noted above. These are reflected throughout our RSHE provision.

Forest School believes that RSE should:

- Address grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour sensitively and clearly.
- Not encourage early sexual experimentation. It will teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.
- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people.
- Encourage every pupil to contribute positively to our community and support others within the community.
- Be set within a wider school context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.
- Encourage the respecting of different views. We as a community are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure. The important foundations are healthy relationships, respect and support for each other.
- Generate an honest and open atmosphere where questions and discussions on relationship matters can take place without any stigma, judgment or embarrassment.
- Recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, healthy relationships and guiding the journey into adulthood. We aim to work in partnership with parents and pupils, to ensure we are constantly reviewing what we do, how we do it and most importantly why we do it.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer, and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, external organisations, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

Relationships and Sex Education in this School has three main elements:

3.1 Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of personal values, individual conscience and moral choices;
- learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships, and marriage;
- learning the values of respect, love and care;
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour.

3.2 Personal and Social Skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;

- learning about the importance and power of self respect and respect for others
- developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice;
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- managing conflict;
- empower pupils with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter)

3.3 Knowledge and Understanding

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- Learning and understand what is and what is not acceptable in terms of behaviour in all relationships not just intimate relationships;
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay;
- the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

4 Aims

- 4.1 Research has shown that young people who feel good about themselves and are knowledgeable and confident about sex and healthy relationships, are more likely to be discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviours and are more likely to have fulfilling, nurturing and healthy relationships.
- 4.2 There is no evidence to suggest that RSE makes pupils more likely to enter into sexual activity.
- 4.3 Forest School believes that pupils have an entitlement to age and circumstance appropriate RSE.
- 4.4 The aim of RSE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSE programme aims to prepare pupils for an adult life in which they can:
 - 4.4.1 develop positive and healthy personal and social values and a moral compass that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what healthy relationship they want.
 - 4.4.2 pupils should understand that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
 - 4.4.3 avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
 - 4.4.4 communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.
 - 4.4.5 develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity
 - 4.4.6 understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity.
 - 4.4.7 understand the reasons for having protected sex.
 - 4.4.8 have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
 - 4.4.9 be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary.
 - 4.4.10 know how the law applies to sexual relationships.
 - 4.4.11 understand how there may be links to other issues in RSHE (Relationships, Sex, Health Education, including PSHEE) and to be able to manage social and peer pressures that may be present in their journey into adulthood.

5 Organisation and Content of Sex and Relationship Education

At Forest School we are aware of how important RSE and personal development, which includes PSHEE, is. We have chosen to teach both RSE and PSHEE through our combined and dedicated RSHE Programme (Relationships, Sex, Health Education). RSHE is delivered through RSHE lessons with suitably trained RSHE teachers delivering the RSHE Curriculum with support from professionals where appropriate, as well as specific RSHE training.

- 5.1 Form Tutors and Heads of House work closely with their tutees over a number of years and we believe that they are usually the best people to work with the students on many of the RSHE topics as they are aware of each student's individual circumstances. Therefore in Year 7, we endeavour to ensure that Form Tutors provide RSHE education in RSHE lessons. RSHE lessons are set within the wider context of the RSHE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty are also included. The Science National Curriculum is largely followed 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.
- 5.2 In Years 7 and 11, pupils have one RSHE lesson a week. In Years 8 & 9 pupils have one RSHE lesson a fortnight, with this due to change to one lesson a week from September 2025. In Year 10, RSHE is delivered through RSHE mornings which have been scheduled for throughout the year as well as through the tutor time programme. In years 12 and 13 RSHE lessons are included as part of their PDM (Personal Decision Making) lessons which happen once a week.

6 RSHE Programme

Term	Y7	Y8	Y9
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Michaelmas Term	Self Esteem and Confidence	Mental Health: Developing Coping Strategies	What are GB Values? How do they fit in with my own?
	Mental Health: Talking about our emotions		
	Mental Health: Developing Coping Strategies	Mental Health: Getting Support for Mental Health	What does Tolerance in wider world look like?
	Mental Health: Getting Support for Mental Health		

	Healthy Lifestyles: Achieving Balance	Healthy Lifestyles: Diet and Exercise	What are my own rights and how do they compare with Human Rights?
	Healthy Lifestyles: Diet and Exercise		
	Healthy Lifestyles: Taking Care of Ourselves	Risk, Safety and Life Online	What should I do when things go wrong? (PDM)
	Managing Risk: Looking after your Personal Safety		
	Safety and Social Media	Growing up and Managing Puberty	What is stress and when is it good or bad?
	Growing up and Managing Puberty		
	Growing up: Menstruation	Growing up: Menstruation	How does what I've looked at this term add to my own and wider world's wellbeing?
Health: What have we learned?			

Term	Y7	Y8	Y9
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Lent Term	Family life & Parenthood	Gender & Sexuality	Capacity and freedom re consent
	Marriage		
	Dealing with Change		
	Forming healthy relationships	Understanding choice	Pornography
	Sustaining healthy relationships	Healthy relationships on and offline	Contraception
	Spotting unhealthy relationships		
	Online grooming	Spotting unhealthy relationships	STIs and how they spread
	Consent		
	What consent looks like online	Understanding sexual harassment	Sexuality & Gender
	Ask it basket		
Relationships: What have we learned?		Ask it basket	

Term	Y7	Y8	Y9
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Trinity Term	Recognising and preventing bullying	Consent on and offline	Addiction
	Recognising and preventing discrimination		
	Online's not real: body image and beauty standards	Nude images	Stereotypes
	Online's not real: Clicks and Algorithms		
	Online's not real: Fake news, hate, division and bias	Practising safe sex: The risks	Healthy eating
	Recognising and dealing with Extremism online		
	Supporting our friends	Practising safe sex: contraception	Money
	What to do when things go wrong		
	Living in the wider world: What have we learned?	Relationships: what have we learned?	Ask it basket

RSHE Curriculum	Y10	Y11	6F
	Mental Health Resilience Sexual Health and STIs Pornography Rape Culture Sexual Violence Sexual Wellbeing Addiction (carried out by a series of vetted external speakers)	Mental Health: Weathering Storms Mental Health and Mental Illness Managing your Health: Services and Support Managing your Health: Being Influenced Managing your Health: Achieving Balance Inside the Brain: Risk Taking Illegal Drugs: Risks, Consequences and Support Alcohol: Risks, Consequences and Safety Gambling: Risks, Consequences and Safety Sexual Health: Fertility and Pregnancy Sexual Health: STIs Health: what have we learned?	PDM – sessions on Sex, family and changing circumstances. Managing relationships, harmful substances

- 6.1 Any RSHE lesson may consider questions or issues that some pupils may find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons safe space expectations are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When pupils ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the safe space expectations 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 development of the rest of the pupils, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

It is important to note that Forest School recognises that pupils' lives exist seamlessly online and offline, so topics that are taught will also reflect and inform pupils regarding how these topics, where relevant, can manifest online as well as offline.

6.2 Online

The online world develops and changes at great speed. New opportunities, challenges and risks are appearing all the time. This can make it difficult for schools to stay up to date with the latest devices, platforms, apps, trends and related threats.

It is therefore important to focus on the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help pupils to navigate the online world safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform or app. This teaching will be built into existing lessons across the curriculum, covered within specific online safety lessons and/or school wide approaches. Teaching will always be age and developmentally appropriate.

- 6.3 **Online behaviour** – This will enable pupils to understand what acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour look like. We will teach pupils that the same standard of behaviour and honesty apply on and offline, including the importance of respect for others. We will also teach pupils to recognise unacceptable behaviour in others.

We will help pupils to recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by:

- looking at why people behave differently online, for example how anonymity (you do not know me) and invisibility (you cannot see me) affect what people do,
- looking at how online emotions can be intensified resulting in mob mentality,
- teaching techniques (relevant on and offline) to defuse or calm arguments, for example a disagreement with friends, and disengage from unwanted contact or content online; and
- considering unacceptable online behaviours often passed off as so-called social norms or just banter. For example, negative language that can be used, and in some cases is often expected, as part of online gaming and the acceptance of misogynistic, homophobic and racist language that would never be tolerated offline.

7 Methodology and Resources

- 7.1 A wide range of teaching methods are used so that pupils can participate actively in their own learning. Quizzes, case studies, scenarios, role plays, guest speakers, group discussion are all utilised throughout the RSHE Programme. Teaching resources are kept up to date and are selected carefully for their appropriateness to the pupils and topic content.
- 7.2 If a teacher is uncomfortable with delivering part of the curriculum, support is offered by the Head of RSHE Education or by more experienced teachers/HoHs.

RSHE specific teacher training is also offered throughout the academic year, with the aim of role playing scenarios such as how to manage difficult questions, to more specific training relating to content, to ensure all RSHE teachers are comfortable with the curriculum they are delivering.

Informal assessment is carried out during RSHE lessons and comprises of questionnaire feedback and summary sheets. We do not formally assess in RSHE lessons, however, this is something that we are looking to change and include. Similarly, we plan to report on progress within RSHE lessons annually.

8 Monitoring and evaluation

The programme is regularly evaluated by the Head of RSHE, and the views of pupils and teachers are used to make changes to the programme on a regular basis. Current issues/news items are also incorporated into the curriculum to make it relevant to pupils.

Learning walks occur where the Head of RSHE can monitor the delivery of lessons, as well as opportunities for RSHE teachers to observe experienced RSHE teachers in the classroom.

The Head of RSHE sits on Academic Strategy Group as well as the Pastoral Strategy Group in order to oversee how RSHE can best be interwoven throughout both contexts.

The Head of RSHE also meets fortnightly with the Deputy Head Pastoral as well as RSHE Link Governor twice a year.

9 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

9.1 9.1 We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different religious backgrounds including complying with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The topics that are included in the core guidance will be appropriately handled to ensure sensitivity for all. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items in mixed groups and if this is the case we will try our best to ensure we adapt our teaching provision where and when possible. However, in Years 10 and 11, when deemed appropriate, there may be guest speakers/presentations which will be to a whole year group. Under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief (collectively known as protected characteristics).

9.2 Pupils with Special Educational Needs

We will ensure that all young people receive Relationships and Sex Education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our pupils, taking specialist advice where necessary.

9.3 Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

We aim to deal sensitively, respectfully and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them. Our pastoral support will also take into account the needs of gay, lesbian, transgender or -bi-sexual pupils. We shall actively tackle any homophobic bullying.

9.4 Gender

Both boys and girls and non-binary pupils have the right to equal RSHE at Forest School and we consider topics and approaches that actively engage both. We shall also be proactive in combating sexism and sexist bullying.

10 Working with Parents/Carers and the wider community

Forest School works closely with parents/carers when planning and delivering RSHE sessions and aims to inform parents in advance of what will be covered in RSHE lessons. Parents are given opportunities to fill in surveys and participate in forums when necessary. Parents will also have access webinars and presentations relating to RSHE, which are signposted in communications home. Parent/Carer surveys will also be distributed so that they can feedback which topic areas they would most like to have guidance on regarding the RSHE webinars that will be on offer.

11 Right of Withdrawal of Students from Sex Education within RSE

Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their children from some or all of the sex education (RSE statutory element) delivered as part of RSHE. This does not include those parts which are taught as part of RSHE that does not concern sex education (RSE) or those parts that are taught in the wider statutory curriculum (i.e. Science lessons). Parents/carers are informed of the 'right to withdraw' during initial Parent/Carer Engagement Evenings, and subsequently in

writing during Michaelmas 1, by Week 3. Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss their decisions with the Head of RSHE and the Warden at the earliest opportunity. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, Forest School will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education (RSE) rather than be withdrawn, Forest School will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education (RSE) during one of those terms.

If a pupil is excused from sex education (RSE), Forest School will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education, which is taught as part of RSHE. The process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Head of RSHE or the Warden may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

Parents are welcome to review any RSHE resources the school uses.

12 Safeguarding, reports or abuse and confidentiality

12.1 At the heart of these subjects there is a focus on keeping children safe, and schools should and can play an important role in preventative education. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) sets out that all schools should ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

12.2 Good practice allows young people to discuss potentially sensitive issues safely and in a secure environment. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding disclosures. All pupils in the Senior School are made aware of how to raise concerns. This should include when they have a concern about a friend or peer. Please read the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further information on these processes and staff's responsibility within this.

12.3 If external organisations and agencies are brought in to support the delivery of these subjects they will be pre-approved and discussed beforehand to ensure they following the expectations outlined in this policy.

12.4 There are important points for teachers in terms of how they approach this content. Teachers delivering this programme must be informed that if a pupil discusses or raises topics including self-harm and suicide, they must not give instructions or methods and avoid using emotive language, videos or images. If teachers' delivering this content have concerns about a specific pupil in relation to self-harm or suicidal ideation, they must follow the safeguarding procedures.

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Teachers must follow our internal safeguarding procedures.

12.5 We work closely with our Digital Partners and ensure signposting regularly for further support; these are the following: Place2Be which is in partnership with Shout and Crisis Textline, Kooth; free online counselling through instant chat messaging, Tellmi; a fully moderated app for young people, providing peer support, expert help and links to UK charities and helplines, must be 13 or over. and Papyrus Hopeline; confidential support to young people with thoughts of suicide and anyone worried about a young person.

13 Support available to pupils

The school takes its role in the promotion of pupil welfare seriously. Staff endeavour to make themselves approachable and provide caring and sensitive pastoral support to pupils. The school nurse offers a health and support service to pupils and where appropriate pupils can be referred to Tutor, HOH, HOS, DHP, Deputy Head of Safeguarding, or Place to Be or Place to Talk, as well as signposting to our digital partners. The school will keep up to date with the development of local services and national agencies/helplines. There is also a designated role in the school titled the Deputy Head of Safeguarding who oversees equality, diversity, inclusion, mental health and safeguarding across the community and will support pupils directly or consult with pastoral leads to support with specific questions or developments of the RSHE programme.

14. Sexual harassment and misogyny statement:

Forest School is committed to the personal development of their pupils in the widest possible sense. The school promotes a culture of mutual respect and equality and celebrated diversity. We are working to support the pupils in our care and to share best practice in order to establish an environment in which pupils can develop positive relationships.

The issues of sexual harassment, misogyny and sexism have been brought to the forefront by the testimonials shared on the Everyone's Invited website and by the subsequent Ofsted review and report published in June 2021. We are committed to addressing these issues and to implement the recommendations of the report. We are working to strengthen the measures we have in place in terms of training staff and support for pupils. We have an ongoing review of curriculum, safeguarding processes and PSHEE and RSHE to ensure that they meet the needs of the pupils in our care.

We foster strong messages of respect throughout everyday school life, through assemblies, chapel talks, lectures and discussions as well as RSHE. We are looking to increase opportunities for our pupils to learn how to navigate the complex landscape of relationships.

The school have a zero-tolerance approach to the sexual harassment and misogyny and will always investigate any allegations that are raised. There are mechanisms in place at Forest School for pupils to raise any concerns and they are encouraged to make full use of them. The school have extensive support networks for pupils through independent school counsellors and their pastoral care systems. We appreciate that we, alongside society as a whole, have a lot more to do to address the issues of sexual harassment and misogyny in our wider community.

We recognise that navigating teenage years can be very difficult for some pupils, particularly with the additional pressure they feel as a result of social media. But that said, we expect high standards of conduct in all areas of school life, including collaboration beyond the curriculum and travel to and from school via the Bus Service.

The safety and wellbeing of our pupils is at the core of this mission. We want our pupils to be able to enjoy their teenage years, to develop as individuals in a community where they are respected and they respect others. We fully appreciate our responsibility to guide our pupils, and together with parents, to make sure they understand the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and mutual

respect. We look to all members of our communities to embrace the shared responsibility that we carry for the welfare of one another.

15. It is worth noting that a governmental review is currently taking place regarding what is statutory for RSE. This is due to be concluded by the end of 2023. Once completed and new guidance has been issued, Forest School will ensure that we have reflected on any changes made and incorporate into the RSHE policy as well as the RSHE curriculum and provision.