



# **Thistly Meadow Primary School RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION POLICY**

**Approved by Governors (date) .....**

**Signed on behalf of the Governing Body .....**

**Chair of Governors**

# Thistly Meadow Primary School

## RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION POLICY including Sex Education Policy

### Rationale

We believe Relationships Education is learning about emotional, social and physical aspects of our lives, about ourselves and our relationships. It enables pupils to develop essential life skills for building and maintaining positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships. It equips pupils with information and skills they need to understand about themselves, their peers and people they meet in the wider community. It explores risks, choices, rights, responsibilities and attitudes. It will help pupils to develop skills to keep themselves and others safer, physically and emotionally, both on and off line. Relationships Education enables pupils to explore their own attitudes and those of others respectfully.

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is embedded within Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PHSE) and Science; it is enhanced by our supportive school ethos, where all are valued and encouraged, positive relationships are seen as important and there is a safe and secure school environment, which is conducive to learning; we aim to provide a curriculum which is relevant to the needs of our pupils, both now and in the future. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from those SRE lessons that fall outside the aspects covered in the National Curriculum Science lessons, however, very few parents do this.

### Purpose

Through Sex and Relationships education we aim to help each child:

- To discuss attitudes and values
- Develop interpersonal and communication skills
- Respect themselves and others, their views, backgrounds, cultures and experiences
- Recognise and avoid coercive and exploitative relationships
- Develop respectful, caring relationships based on mutuality, reciprocation and trust
- learn the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations
- develop understanding of a variety of families and how families are central to the wellbeing of children
- learn the value of respect, love and care
- learn value, care and respect for their bodies
- explore, consider and understand moral dilemmas

- build confidence in accessing additional advice to support themselves and others
- learn to make choices based on an understanding of difference and without prejudice
- manage conflict
- learn how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse
- learn and understand physical development at appropriate stages
- understand human sexuality, reproduction, emotions and relationships

## **Implementation**

### **Inclusion**

In relation to those with special educational needs or disability, we ensure our Relationships Education programme provides for those with additional needs. We consider:

- their level of vulnerability to coercion and pressure
- their need to learn and demonstrate appropriate behaviour
- their need to develop self-esteem and positive body image
- the management of personal care
- clarity about sources of support for pupils

### **Equality**

In line with the Equality Act 2010, we seek to develop key interpersonal skills such as respect and empathy which enable pupils to understand the rights and responsibilities we all have towards one another.

The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We will ensure that our provision of Relationships Education is not only equally accessible and inclusive for all pupils with protected characteristics, or who have family members with protected characteristics, but also that it reduces discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and encourages good relations between different groups.

In order to ensure that Relationships Education meets the needs of all:

- We will reflect a range of lifestyles and family structures so that all children see themselves and their families reflected back in the lessons
- We will ensure that the law in relation to, for example, marriage, online behaviours, sexuality, gender and violence are explained in age appropriate ways

- Where there are different cultural or religious views about families, relationships or behaviours, we will share these to ensure children see their family views represented
- We will not seek to gain consensus, but will accept and celebrate difference
- We will, as appropriate, ensure that a variety of views and beliefs are reflected back to pupils
- In order to ensure that children of all genders can access information they need, we will teach in mixed gender groups wherever possible.
- We will encourage respect and discourage abusive and exploitative relationships.
- We will not ask children to represent the views of a particular religious or cultural group to their peers, unless they choose to do so

We support children in developing their knowledge about and attitudes towards diversity throughout units of work including:

- Diversity and Communities
- Family and Friends
- Beginning and Belonging

### **Safeguarding**

We understand the importance of high quality Relationships Education as we fulfil our statutory safeguarding duties. Relationships Education enables pupils to understand about mutual, consensual and reciprocated relationships in all their forms. Whether the children are learning about friendships, families, relationships in school or the wider community, they will be developing essential skills which underpin their ability to recognise abusive relationships. Teaching about 'Family and Friends' and 'Anti-bullying' enables us to fulfil our statutory duty to prevent 'peer-on-peer' abuse.

In the case of RSE and Personal Safety, we recognise that effective teaching may alert children to what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour (including inappropriate sexual behaviour) and that there is an increased possibility that a disclosure relating to abuse may be made. RSE and Personal Safety enable us to fulfil our duty to prevent Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). All staff are aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and will report disclosures or concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

## **Guidelines**

At Thistly Meadow Primary School, we have a legal requirement to deliver Sex and Relationships Education as part of the science and PSHE curriculum in line with Every Child Matters. Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be excused from some or all of Sex Education delivered as part of statutory Relationships Education. Before granting any such request the a member of the Leadership Team will discuss the request with parents/carers (and if appropriate with the child) to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The educational, social and emotional benefits for the child of being part of the lessons will also be discussed. Children can not be withdrawn from those elements specified in the science curriculum. If a pupil is excused from Sex Education, we will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

The parents/carers will be asked to reconfirm their decision to withdraw their children from Sex Education each time a Sex Education element is planned for their child.

Our Relationships Education Curriculum (see appendix) is wholly consistent with the DfE statutory requirements for Relationships Education and Health Education (2020), National Curriculum (2014), other DfE and OfSTED guidance. It also reflects best practice described by the Sex Education Forum and PSHE Association. We consider Relationships Education to be a continuous process of learning, which begins before the children enter our school and continues into adulthood. We have planned a curriculum appropriate to each age group with a spiral of progression. All adults working with children have a part to play in supporting the delivery of Relationships Education.

Relationships Education is learning about:

- Families and People who care for me
- Caring Friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online Relationships
- Being Safe

Our PSHE topic structure does not separate delivery of Relationships Education from Health Education and wider PSHE. We deliver topics which, taking the lead from children's lived experiences, consider related themes including development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in an integrated way. The topics where Relationships Education is a significant driver are:

- Anti-bullying
- Digital Lifestyles
- Diversity and Communities
- Family and Friends
- Managing Change
- My Emotions
- Personal Safety
- Relationships and Sex Education

Also: Working Together, Beginning and Belonging, Rights, Rules and Responsibilities

Relationships Education will be taught in:

- PSHE through designated lessons, circle time, Votes for Schools, focused events, and health weeks.
- Other curriculum areas, especially Science, English, RE, PE and computing
- Enrichment activities, especially our assembly programme, SEL support materials, clubs and societies, social skills groups, involvement in school trips and adventurous activities, activities carried out as part of our development as a healthy school.

### **Teaching**

Our aim is that teachers use a range of teaching methodologies where skills such as communication, compromise and negotiation are practised in classroom situations and where attitudes such as respect and empathy are modelled and discussed. We encourage teachers to ensure that group work, debate, taking other people's view points and working together are practised in all PSHE lessons and across the wider curriculum. Our Relationships Education lessons are not simple opportunities to give information, but to explore views and perspectives and develop possible solutions through discussion and interaction.

In keeping with this approach we base our curriculum on a series of questions children will have the opportunity to engage with, rather than banks of knowledge they will acquire.

### **Ground Rules**

Relationships Education is taught in a safe, non-judgemental environment where all adults and children are confident that they will be respected. Specific ground rules will be established at the beginning of any Relationships Education work, in addition to those already used in the classroom. They will cover the following areas:

- appropriate use of language
- the asking and answering of personal questions
- strategies for checking or accessing information.

### **Distancing Techniques**

In order to protect children’s privacy, we will employ teaching and learning strategies which enable them to discuss issues without disclosing personal experience. For example, we will use fiction, case studies, role-play, videos, theatre in education to enable children to share ideas and opinions and to practise their decision-making skills in a safe learning environment.

### **Curriculum**

Our topic, RSE, combines elements of Relationships Education (e.g. learning about families, personal safety and emotional wellbeing) with aspects of Health Education (e.g. learning about the spread of illnesses and the changing adolescent body). This combination offers the best location for our provision of non-statutory sex education. Although ‘RSE’ as a subject is not statutory at primary level, many aspects of our RSE topic are statutory parts of Relationships Education and Health Education. Some elements of our RSE topic are part of the statutory National Curriculum for Science (e.g. the biological aspects of puberty, reproduction and the spread of viruses).

We will ensure that children receive teaching about puberty at Year 5 and Year 6 in order to prepare them for the physical, emotional and social changes they are approaching or undergoing. We will review the age at which puberty is introduced depending on the needs of each cohort.

We will primarily use the Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme and the resources recommended within it when planning and delivering Relationships Education.

We will select resources which:

- are consistent with our curriculum for Relationships Education
- relate to the aims and objectives of this policy
- are suitable to the age, maturity, needs, linguistic proficiency and ability of the children
- appeal to adults and children
- are up-to-date in factual content
- are produced by a reputable organisation

- do not show unfair bias e.g. towards a commercial product, religious view point
- avoid racial, gender, sexual, cultural and religious stereotyping and heteronormativity
- encourage active and participative learning
- conform to the statutory requirements for Relationships Education.

As part of our safeguarding policy, staff are unable to offer absolute confidentiality. We will reassure children that staff will act in their best interests and that this may involve sharing information if the child is at risk of harm. Children will be told if information is to be shared (taking special care with very young children or those with significant special needs) and will be offered appropriate support.

We acknowledge that sensitive and complex issues will arise in Relationships Education, as pupils will naturally ask questions. When spontaneous discussion arises, it will be guided in a way which reflects the stated school aims and curriculum content. As a first principle, we will answer questions relating to the planned curriculum for that age group or below to the whole class. We will answer questions relating to areas beyond the planned curriculum for that age group, in a sensitive and age appropriate way, only to the pupil/s who have asked the question. The teacher may decide to inform families about questions which go beyond the planned curriculum, in order to further home/school partnerships. If a member of staff is uncertain about the answer to a question which goes beyond the curriculum, or indeed whether they wish to answer it, they will seek guidance from the Leadership Team or Designated Safeguarding Lead. In some cases, the question will reach beyond the planned curriculum for Year 6 and the question will not be answered in school. The child will be asked if they would like support to ask their questions at home or to another trusted adult.

When answering questions, we shall ensure that sharing personal information by adults, pupils or their families is discouraged. Where the question indicates the need for pastoral support, the conversation will be deferred to a time outside the teaching session and other colleagues may be involved.

### **Definition of Sex Education**

Following guidance from the DfE, we define Sex Education as learning about ‘how a (human) baby is conceived and born’.

This extends the learning about sexual reproduction in ‘some plants and animals’ required through the Science national curriculum. It also complements the statutory requirement to teach about puberty as part of Science and Health Education, as



understanding sexual reproduction in humans enables children to understand the processes of puberty.

We have taken into account the DfE's recommendation that all primary schools have a Sex Education programme and we understand that this is not statutory. We understand that our teaching in sex education must be tailored to the needs and physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.

Parents/carers, governors and pupils have been consulted about this and our school has decided that we will offer content in Sex Education in the context of Relationships Education and RSE.

The content of our Sex Education programme will be gradually developed in an age appropriate way. The children will not learn about human sexual reproduction until Year 5/6.

Year 1/2 will learn that human babies grow inside their mothers alongside learning in Science that adult animals produce offspring like themselves. (Cats have kittens; cows have calves etc.)

Years 3/4 do not mention reproduction or "seeds" from a male/female.

Year 3 study Animals including Humans:

- identify that animals, including humans, need the right types and amount of nutrition, and that they cannot make their own food; they get nutrition from what they eat
- identify that humans and some other animals have skeletons and muscles for support, protection and movement

Year 4 study Animals including Humans:

- describe the simple functions of the basic parts of the digestive system in humans
- identify the different types of teeth in humans and their simple functions
- construct and interpret a variety of food chains, identifying producers, predators and prey

Year 5/6 will learn about human sexual reproduction and other ways that eggs and sperm are joined (e.g. IVF) in age appropriate detail. They will learn about vaginal birth and caesarean section in age appropriate ways, reflecting the experiences of children and families they know.

Sex Education will be delivered as part of our topic called Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) by a teacher, who knows the needs and natures of the children. The teacher is best placed to tailor the learning to the needs of the pupils.

Parents/carers will be informed by letter/email/via the school website about the content of the curriculum in advance of teaching and will be invited to talk to staff if they have questions.

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