

Arbour House School

Relationships and Sex Education Statement

We follow a graduated, age-appropriate programme of Relationships and Sex Education. We ensure that our teaching and materials are appropriate and have regard to the age and religious backgrounds of our pupils. We also recognise the significance of other factors, such as the special educational needs and/or disabilities of our pupils, as well as their developmental differences and plan our teaching and resources/materials used accordingly.

Relationships Education – Primary

The Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools.

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools and the content we teach at therefore focuses primarily on Relationships Education for primary pupils.

The Department for Education, however, continues to recommend that all primary pupils should have a sex education programme tailored to their age and their physical and emotional maturity. They specify that this programme 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.

We recognise that it is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary provision supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively and the adapted National Curriculum that we deliver in Science includes subject content in these areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals.

Teachers will consult parents before the final year of primary provision about the detailed content of what will be taught. We will also offer parents support in talking to their children about sex education and how to link this with what is being taught in school.

Unlike sex education in Relationships and Sex Education at secondary level, at primary level parents may withdraw their child from any sex education beyond what is taught in the National Curriculum for Science.

Please see 'Parents Right to Withdraw' in the RSE section of the school website for further information.

If you have any concerns about the content or manner in which your child is being taught Relationships and Sex Education, please contact your child's class teacher in the first instance.

Relationships and Sex Education – Secondary

The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship.

RSE will also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It teaches what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This helps pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It teaches young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity.

Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

Knowledge about safer sex and sexual health remains important to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This is delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allows scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment. The teacher may use approaches such as distancing techniques, setting ground rules with pupils to help manage sensitive discussion and using question boxes to allow pupils to raise issues anonymously.

RSE provides clear progression from what is taught in primary school in Relationships Education. Teachers build on the foundation of Relationships Education and, as pupils grow up, at the appropriate time extend teaching to include intimate relationships.

Alongside being taught about intimate relationships, pupils are also be taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult. This teaching enable pupils to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful.

Pupils should understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect. Through gaining the knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, they can be empowered to identify when relationships are unhealthy. They should be taught that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing.

Pupils will be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way that takes into account their SEN.

Sexual orientation and gender identity will be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner. When teaching about these topics, it is recognised that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. There will be an equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same sex relationships. This will be integrated appropriately into the RSE programme, rather than addressed separately or in only one lesson.

We recognise that there will be a range of opinions regarding RSE. The starting principle when teaching each of these must be that the applicable law should be taught in a factual way so that pupils are clear on their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

We may choose to explore faith, or other perspectives, on some of these issues in other subjects such as Creative Curriculum, PSHE or Citizenship.

Pupils will be well informed about the full range of perspectives and, within the law, should be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs.

Key aspects of the law relating to sex which will be taught include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy.

Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, will also be addressed sensitively and clearly. We will also address the physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM). Pupils will be taught where to find support and that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM or fail to protect a person for whom you are responsible from FGM. As well as addressing this in the context of the law, pupils may also need support to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk.

Internet safety will also be addressed and pupils taught the rules and principles for keeping safe online. This will include how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues.

Pupils will be taught how data is generated, collected, shared and used online, for example, how personal data is captured on social media or understanding the way that businesses may exploit the data available to them.

Some pupils are also exposed to harmful behaviours online, and via other forms of media, which may normalise violent sexual behaviours. A focus on healthy relationships and broader Relationships Education can help young people understand acceptable behaviours in relationships.