

# Relationships Education Policy

## Thackley Primary School



Approved by: [Name]

Date: [Date]

Last reviewed on: [Date]

Next review due by: [Date]

## Contents

1. Aim .....	3
2. Policy Development .....	3
3. Statutory Requirements.....	3
4. Links to other policies and curriculum areas.....	3
5. Delivery of relationships education .....	4
6. Roles and responsibilities.....	6
7. The right to withdraw children from sex education lessons.....	6
8. Training .....	6
9. Monitoring arrangements.....	6

Appendix

Advice for Schools

## **1. Aim**

The aim of relationships education at our school is to help pupils develop self-respect, confidence and empathy. Pupils will learn about what makes healthy relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in a way that is age appropriate and sensitive to their faith. This will include online relationships, and how to seek help if they feel unsafe. Teaching will respect the diversity of families in our community.

Relationships education is not about sexual relationships.

## **2. Policy Development**

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents as required by the Department for Education. We are committed to on-going consultation with families throughout the evolution of our school's relationships education programme. This process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a working group pulled together all relevant information including national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – staff had the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent consultation – parents were invited to work with us on the policy, look at examples of resources, and make recommendations
4. Pupil consultation – we spoke to pupils about the skills they would like to learn
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

## **3. Statutory Requirements**

Relationships education became compulsory in primary schools from 2020, so all pupils must take part in these lessons.

Sex education is not compulsory for primary schools. Pupils will learn about puberty from their teacher, the School Nurse or other professional as part of health education lessons in year 4, 5 and 6 and also as part of the science curriculum in year 5. Other aspects of sex education will not be covered unless safeguarding concerns determine otherwise. Parents will be informed in advance if that happens.

## **4. Links to other policies and curriculum areas**

### **4a Curriculum**

At Upper Key Stage 2, the science curriculum includes teaching about changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age. This remains statutory.

Religious education links to relationships education by looking at family, values and morals, and the celebration of marriage in different traditions.

Health education, which is statutory in state funded schools from September 2020, includes teaching on feelings as they relate to mental wellbeing, the importance of friends and family, the impact of bullying, and how children can seek help if they have worries. It also requires schools to teach about the emotional and physical changes that take place during puberty.

### **4b Policies**

The content of relationships education is supported by our anti-bullying policy, equality statement and objectives, and our safeguarding policy.

## **5. Delivery of relationships education**

Relationships education will be inclusive for all pupils, sensitive to all family and faith backgrounds and pupils' own identities. It will be respectful of all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Across all Key Stages, pupils will be supported to develop the following skills as appropriate to their age:

- Communication skills
- Forming positive relationships including self-respect as well as respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- Assertiveness and managing conflict and difficult emotions

These skills are taught within the context of family life and friendships, in an age appropriate way. The school environment will reflect, value and celebrate the diversity of friendships and relationships. Lessons will be delivered by school staff.

Children will sometimes ask questions pertaining to relationships, sex or sexuality that go beyond what is set out in the curriculum. If questions go unanswered by school staff, children may turn to inappropriate sources of information including the internet. We will answer any questions in a way that is sensitive to children's family and faith backgrounds, appropriate to their age and understanding, and consistent with the relationships education policy and scheme of work. This may necessitate discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, as not every child in a class will have the same type of questions. We may contact parents if we need guidance about a child's needs or if we think a child would benefit from their parents' input around a particular issue.

The Department for Education (DfE) has set out guidance on what children must learn by the end of year 6, under a series of themes. The statutory content as written by the DfE is set out below. Some themes will recur throughout school while others will be taught in the most appropriate years.

### **Families and people who care for me. Pupils should know:**

- Families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability
- The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives
- Others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family. They should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care
- Stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up
- Marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong
- How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed

### **Caring friendships. Pupils should know:**

- How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends
- The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties

- Healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded
- Most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right
- How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed

**Respectful relationships. Pupils should know:**

- The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs
  - Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- The conventions of courtesy and manners
- The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness
- In school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority
- Different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help
- What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive
- The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults

**Online relationships. Pupils should know:**

- People sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not
- The same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous
- 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

**Being safe. Pupils should know:**

- What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)
- About privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe
- Each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact
- How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know
- How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult
- How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard
- How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so
- Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

### **6.1 The governing board**

The governing board will approve the relationships education policy, and hold the head teacher to account for its implementation.

### **6.2 The head teacher**

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that relationships education is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory sex education lessons, if applicable.

### **6.3 Staff**

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering relationships in a sensitive way, taking account of pupils' family and faith backgrounds
- Modelling positive attitudes to relationships education, as with any other subject
- Monitoring children's learning in order to ensure they make progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from non-statutory sex education lessons, if applicable.

Staff who have concerns about teaching this subject are encouraged to seek support.

### **6.4 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to engage fully in relationships education lessons and treat others with respect and sensitivity, as we expect all the time in school.

## **7. The right to withdraw children from sex education lessons**

If we need to deliver elements of sex education as part of relationships education or PSHE, parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children from those lessons.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing to the head teacher. A copy of any such request will be placed in the pupil's file so that parents'/carers' wishes are on record. We will provide and supervise appropriate learning activities, in another room, for pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

There continues to be no right to withdraw children from any part of the science curriculum, which covers the human life cycle at Key Stage 2. There is no right to withdraw children from statutory health education.

## **8. Training**

Staff are trained on the delivery of relationships education as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The head teacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE. The sessions delivered by outside visitors will be consistent with our policy on relationships education.

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Julie Illingworth PSHE subject leader through planning and book scrutinies, learning walks and discussions with pupils.

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher every two years. At every review, the policy will be scrutinized and ratified by the governing board.

## **Statutory Relationships Education/RSE**

### **Information for schools**

This document addresses concerns about the statutory RSE curriculum, clarifies the DfE's intentions and answers some frequently asked questions which you may be asked. The information is from the DfE's draft statutory guidance on relationships education and relationships and sex education (RSE), available in full on the DfE website.

#### **What does the law say about teaching relationships education/RSE in the future?**

From September 2020, all primary pupils must be taught relationships education, and secondary pupils must be taught relationships and sex education. This applies to every school.

#### **Why is relationships education/RSE being made compulsory?**

Because the DfE believes 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. Most parents teach these skills at home, and the teaching in schools should build on what children learn from their parents.

In primary schools it is about healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships. That means learning how to get along with others, take turns, and resolve disagreements, and how to know when a friendship isn't healthy and how to ask for help. It is not about sexual relationships.

At secondary, RSE will support pupils' personal and social development including personal identity, characteristics of positive relationships, emotional resilience and how to resist peer pressure. The sex education component will include teaching about intimate relationships, sex and sexual health.

#### **Will my child have to learn about sex at school?**

Sex education in primary schools will not be compulsory. Most primary schools already teach about puberty in a sensitive, age appropriate way. They do that so children understand the physical changes that they are going through or are about to go through. It is about growth and development, not sex. Teaching in this subject should meet the pupils' needs, as assessed during the development of the school's RSE policy. Parents should be consulted fully during the development of the policy so that they know exactly what their children will be taught.

#### **Can parents withdraw their children from relationships education (primary) and relationships and sex education (RSE, secondary)?**

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Primary schools must agree to such requests. However, the right to withdraw does not apply to other aspects of Relationships Education, or to aspects of the science curriculum that deal with puberty and reproduction. There is no change to the science curriculum and there has never been a right to withdraw from science lessons.

In secondary, head teachers should discuss any request to withdraw a child from the sex education component of RSE. If parents still wish to withdraw their child after these discussions have taken place, the school should respect their wishes.

**Can a young person make their own decision about attending sex education lessons?**

If a child who has previously been withdrawn wishes to receive sex education, they can decide that for themselves in the last three terms before they turn 16 and the school should make arrangements to teach them sex education during one of those terms.

**Will the school consult parents about the relationships education/RSE policy after the new subjects become statutory?**

Yes. Schools must consult parents in developing and reviewing the policy. It should meet the needs of pupils and reflect the school's community. Schools should show parents what they are going to teach and the kind of resources they plan to use. This will be the parents' opportunity to have their say.

**Will school respect the child's religion?**

Yes, schools have to take into account the religious background of all pupils and handle sensitive topics appropriately. Faith is a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act and any curriculum development must therefore have due regard to that. People's beliefs will be respected. Schools must however still deliver the statutory curriculum to all pupils and have regard for the law as it relates to equality and discrimination. Where there appears to be conflict between religious beliefs and the statutory curriculum, schools can discuss different viewpoints with the children. It would be appropriate to teach that British society is diverse and everyone should be treated with respect, and at the same time that their family's religion teaches children a particular set of values that they believe in and live by. This should be done in an age appropriate way.

**Will relationships education/RSE 'promote homosexuality'?**

No, the aim of including relationships other than heterosexual marriage when looking at families is to promote inclusion and prevent bullying. School should be inclusive for all pupils, which means no child should be disrespected or socially excluded because their family is different to others. That includes but is not limited to those from families where someone is gay. This inclusive ethos should not conflict with religious beliefs that teach respect and tolerance. It will not involve teaching about intimate physical relationships at primary school.

**What are we doing in Bradford to support schools with the introduction of RSE**

Bradford Council is in active conversation with all faith communities as well as the LGBT community around this issue. The Council is developing a model RSE policy for schools, and communities are involved with the development of the policy. The model policy will be accompanied by guidance on consulting with parents about the teaching their children will receive in this subject.