

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction

Although Nova Hreod Academy has always included elements of relationships and sex education (RSE) within the PHSE programme, the law now requires that all pupils in secondary education be taught RSE from September 2020. Recent statutory guidance sets out the required RSE content whilst giving schools the freedom to deliver that content within a broad and balanced curriculum.

This policy covers the School's approach to teaching RSE. It is informed by the statutory guidance referred to above.

RSE will often address aspects of relationship and sex education in an integrated way and within a single topic: there is no requirement to artificially separate sex and relationships education, and indeed to do so may be unhelpful. Children must understand what the law does and does not allow when it comes to relationships and the wider legal implications of any decisions they may make. This will be covered in subject delivery.

The religious background of all pupils will be considered when planning teaching so that sensitive topics that need to be taught are handled appropriately. We will comply with the relevant provisions of the Equalities Act (2010), under which religion or belief are protected characteristics.

Alongside the requirement to take the religious background of all pupils into account, teaching will reflect:

- a) 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; and
- b) the recommendations for teaching content regarding intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health as set out further in this policy.

Specifically, at the point at which we consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT relationships, we will ensure that this content is fully integrated into their RSE or Relationships Education curriculum rather than be delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson.

Ownership of these subjects will be at senior leader level and we will show how sex and relationships and sex education is monitored.

We view the partnership of home and school as vital for providing the context for any RSE programme. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies: -

Safeguarding Policy

PSHE Policy

Wellbeing Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Policy Statement

Every school in United Learning is committed to the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of every child and young person. The ethos of each school and its whole curriculum, as well as the specific framework within which Relationships, Relationships and Sex and Health Education are taught are geared to this goal. Children need to know how to be safe and healthy and how to manage their lives in a positive way in an increasingly complex world. In particular, the development of productive and lasting relationships with others

is a deeply important part of human growth and personal development.

High-quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of Relationships, Relationships and Sex and Health Education can help prepare children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, both in the real world and online. These subjects aim is to give children and young people the skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need in order to make responsible decisions about their life, to learn to respect themselves and others, and to move with confidence from childhood into adolescence and adulthood. It is centrally concerned with supporting children and young people through their physical, emotional and moral development, helping to ensure they develop resilience, know how and when to ask for help, and know where to access support.

It is essential that RSE is appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children being taught. For younger children, it will have at its centre friendship and the maintenance of healthy and respectful relationships with others. Equally, it is important that children are aware of and prepared for the physical and other changes of puberty before they take place.

For all children and young people, RSE will be designed to help them to discuss and deal with difficult social and moral situations that they may be encountering in the present or may encounter in later life. It will help them to make considered choices which are right for them, and to be better able to resist social pressures in relationships of all sorts. It should enable them to recognise how their own behaviour could inappropriately create pressures on others and to avoid doing so. At the appropriate ages, this should include proper teaching of consent, both legally and morally.

Close interpersonal relationships are both a source of great joy and fulfilment and also a setting in which people may be at their most vulnerable. RSE is designed to help children and young people to negotiate their relationships in ways which are positive for them and others. Younger children will learn about negotiating difficult issues and disagreements within friendships, how to respond to difficulties in ways which respect themselves and others and how to recognise and restrain behaviours in themselves which may cause distress to others. These themes will be developed throughout the programme of Relationships, Relationships and Sex and Health Education in ways which are appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils. At appropriate stages, teaching should ensure that young people are sensitised to the risks of inappropriate, controlling or abusive relationships, helped to recognise the signs and to know where and how to find help if needed.

Relationships and Sex Education should enable young people to understand and accept themselves and others. It should help young people to recognise that people are different from one another and to appreciate and value those differences. It should help children and young people to understand what will be important to them in a successful relationship and how to communicate this successfully. It should also give young people knowledge and skills to prevent prejudice and to challenge it where it occurs. It is not the role of RSE to promote any particular sexuality, but it is the role of RSE to promote respect for and acceptance of others, whatever their sexuality, and to challenge prejudice based on gender, sexuality or other grounds.

RSE should develop an understanding of the value of stable, loving and caring long-term relationships, as key building blocks of society and as providing a strong basis for bringing up children. It will encourage the appreciation of marriage, civil partnerships, family life and the implications of parenthood, recognising that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. It ensures that no young person is stigmatised on the grounds of their own family background or circumstances

RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation, but enables understanding of the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits of this. Within this context, it ensures that young people have an understanding of contraception and of the risks of sexually transmitted infections. It sets out to reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancy and ensures that young people are able to discuss and develop understanding of abortion in an appropriate way. RSE respects the religious and ethical beliefs of pupils and

their parents; and parents may withdraw pupils from RSE except in relation to the requirements to teach human reproduction in biology. RSE will focus equally on boys and girls, and all aspects of this policy apply to the education of both.

Nova Hreod Academy, as part of United Learning, is committed to ensuring that the application of this policy statement is non-discriminatory in line with the *UK Equality Act* (2010, with 2015 amendments). Further details are available in the *Equal Opportunities* policy.

As previously stated, please read this Relationship and Sex Education Policy in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy and Anti Bullying Policy, which include how the school challenges the use of homophobic and other sexually discriminating language or behaviour.

Working with parents, including parental rights to withdraw pupils from sex education

Nova Hreod Academy recognizes the role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital: you have the most significant influence in enabling your children to grow and mature and form healthy relationships. It is therefore critical that we work closely with you when planning and delivering these subjects, including communicating to you that you have the right to request that your child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. *Note: there is no right to withdraw a child from the science curriculum, which relates to sex education in terms of teaching about the human body and the changes to it as grows, including puberty.*

We will follow the process outlined below in considering such a request: -

- The Headteacher will discuss with the parent (and, if appropriate, the child) to ensure your wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum and the content that will be covered.
- The Headteacher will discuss with the parent the benefits of the child receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child, including social or emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing from their peers what was covered (and having that content channeled through a child's voice rather than a teacher's). A note of this meeting will be kept as a record.
- Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. safeguarding concerns), the 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 rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.
- For the vast majority of pupils with SEND, their SEND should not be a consideration in deciding whether to grant a parental request. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Headteacher will want to take a pupil's SEND into account when making this decision.
- If a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, we will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Keeping Children Safe

At the heart of these subjects is keeping children safe. Our Safeguarding policy can be found <https://www.novahreodacademy.org.uk/portals/0/library/documents/policy/Safeguarding%20Policy%2022-23.pdf> and should be read alongside this policy.

Curriculum and Assessment

We will have the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas. Tests, written assignments or self-evaluations will capture progress. The curriculum will build on the

knowledge pupils have previously acquired, including in other subjects, with regular feedback provided on pupil progress.

Teaching

The programmes of study for sex education will demonstrate:

Progression: As students get older, language, concepts and content will increase in depth and complexity as the students mature physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

Relevance and Differentiation: Teachers, in being aware of the levels of development of their students, will identify existing knowledge and needs and build on them appropriately.

Integration: Sex education will be integrated into a programme of personal, social and health education and into other relevant areas of the curriculum.

Different types of relationships, challenging attitudes, promoting inclusion and reducing discrimination are all part of the sex and relationships education programme, and teachers will deal sensitively about issues of sexual orientation. The sex and relationships education programme will include an understanding of all different types of relationships.

Teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people and will continue to do so in these matters. Care will be taken, however, in counselling and giving advice to individual students, particularly with regard to their sexual behaviour, and will not trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. It will require skilled judgement to know when to counsel and when and how to refer for specialist counselling and support.

Ensure that staff are appropriately trained so that the programme is delivered effectively.

Staff are responsible for adhering to the policy on confidentiality as set out in their school's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy.

Use of materials

Resources and materials used in delivering Relationships, Relationships and Sex and Health Education will be appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils.

Differentiated resources for children with SEND will be used where appropriate - our starting point will be high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised to ensure accessibility. We are aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying or sexual violence for example, and as such we may want to consider taking positive action to support particular groups where necessary.

Implementation

Where external specialists are brought in to support Relationships and Sex Education they will be required to conform to the school's RSE and PSHE Policies.

Teachers will ensure that at all times they act in accordance with United Learning child protection policies. Teachers will encourage students to seek advice from parents and/or general practitioners or appropriate health professionals attached to the school or Academy where relevant. The teaching of apparently unrelated topics may occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour. Provided that such a

discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it will not necessarily form part of the sex education programme.

In such cases, particularly since they may involve students whose parents have withdrawn them from sex education, teachers will need to balance the need to give proper attention to relevant issues with the need to respect students' and parents' views and sensibilities.

Relationships and Sex Education - RSE

RSE will build on the foundation of Relationships (and Sex) Education delivered in primary schools. It will focus on giving young people the information they need to develop safe, healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds: supportive family relationships, good friendships, good colleagues, successful marriages or civil partnerships or other types of committed relationship. It will also cover contraception, sexual health, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to, and not applying pressure to, have sex.

It is important that pupils understand how good relationships, underpinned by respectful behaviours, can have a positive impact on their mental wellbeing, and that they can identify when relationships are not right or are harmful (both on and offline), and how such situations can be handled. Applicable law will be taught in a factual way so that pupils are clear on their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Within subject delivery, there will be a strong focus on the importance of self-respect and respect of others. This includes the reasons for delaying sexual activity, alongside supporting people to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships (regardless of sexual orientation) at the appropriate time. Young people will feel they can ask questions in a safe environment, and we will give consideration as to how issues can be raised anonymously if needed.

More broadly, we have a key role to play in being a place of consistency and safety for children who may be experiencing unhealthy or unsafe relationships at home or socially. The school's approach to RSE dovetails with its Keeping Children Safe in Education policy.

Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, will also be addressed sensitively and clearly. We will address the physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), and how to seek support.

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, we will recognise 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. Teaching children about the society that we live in and the different types of loving, healthy relationships that exist will be done in a way that respects everyone. This will be integrated appropriately into the RSE programme and will not be delivered as a separate lesson / subject.

Teaching about positive relationships will be underpinned by a wider, deliberate cultivation and practice of resilience and positive virtues.

In addition, the following content will be covered by the end of Year 11.

Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.▪ How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.▪ What marriage and civil partnerships are, including their legal status e.g. that marriage and civil partnerships carry legal rights and protections not
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	<p>available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into. ▪ The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships. ▪ The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to the raising of children. ▪ How to: determine whether peers, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
Respectful relationships including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (both on and offline) including: trust, respect, honesty, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship. ▪ How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). ▪ That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due tolerance and respect to others and others' beliefs, including people in positions of authority. ▪ About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help. ▪ That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control. ▪ What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable. ▪ The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply online and offline. ▪ About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online. ▪ Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them. ▪ What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online. ▪ The impact of viewing harmful content. ▪ That specifically sexually explicit material often presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners. ▪ That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail. ▪ How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

Being Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships. ▪ How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (on and offline).
Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship. ▪ That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing. ▪ The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women. ▪ That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others. ▪ That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex. ▪ The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices and options available. ▪ The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage. ▪ That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help). ▪ How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing. ▪ How prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment. ▪ How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour. ▪ How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Health Education: Physical Health and Mental Well-being

Health Education will ensure pupils have the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and well-being, recognise issues when they arise (in themselves and others) and seek support as early as possible.

Nova Hreod Academy's ethos of 'the best in everyone', coupled with our Framework for Excellent, creates a positive whole school approach which encourages openness alongside the development of personal resilience, self-control and self-regulation. Within this context, the delivery of Health Education has the potential to have a positive impact on behaviour and attainment.

We will be flexible and design and plan age-appropriate subject content. Puberty will be covered in Health Education before its onset, so that pupils are prepared in advance for changes they will experience.

Health Education

We will build on the foundations of Health Education set in primary schools and introduce new content to older pupils at appropriate points. This should enable pupils to understand how their bodies are changing and the impact of puberty (including understanding of and preparation for menstruation) on their wider health and well-being. Pupils will be equipped with the knowledge to understand and identify where normal variations in emotions and physical complaints end, and where health and well-being issues begin.

Pupils should feel able and empowered to protect and support their own health and wellbeing, recognising the relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing. As at primary school level, pupils should know the contribution that hobbies, interests and community participation have to overall wellbeing, recognising that humans are social beings and that outward facing activity (service to others in particular) are beneficial to wellbeing as well as helping to develop a stronger society. The impact of isolating and disconnecting lifestyle choices on wellbeing will also be covered.

Whilst the starting point will be on enabling pupils to make well-informed, positive choices for themselves, they also need to be taught about common problems. This will include factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental and physical health conditions, drugs, alcohol and effective interventions. The impact of time spent on social media including online forums and games will also be covered.

Alongside this, pupils need to know who they can go to for further help, advice and support, both inside and outside school.

Health Education in Nova Hreod Academy will complement the KS3 curriculum for PE and Sport as well as Computing.

In addition, the following content will be covered by the end of Year 11.

Mental wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary. ▪ That happiness is linked to being connected to others. ▪ How to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing issues. ▪ Common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression). ▪ How to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health. ▪ The benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.
Internet safety and harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online through setting unrealistic expectations for body image, how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships (including social media), the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online. ▪ How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or get support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.
Physical health and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardio-vascular ill-health. ▪ Facts about wider issues including blood, organ and stem cell donation.
Healthy eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, eating disorders and cancer.
Drugs, alcohol and tobacco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The facts about legal substances and illegal substances, including drug-taking, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions. ▪ The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances. ▪ The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes (relatively) safe alcohol consumption. ▪ The physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency. ▪ Awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks. ▪ The facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.
Health and prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About personal hygiene, germs (including microbes), the spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics. ▪ About dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist. ▪ (Late secondary) the benefits of regular self-examination (including screening and immunisation). ▪ The facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination. ▪ The importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.
Basic first aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basic treatment for common injuries. ▪ Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR. ▪ The purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.
Changing adolescent body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing. ▪ The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.

	Date	Name of owner/author
Authorised:	5/1/2024	Nick Wells
Next Annual Review Date:	5/1/2025	Nick Wells