

WEATHERFIELD ACADEMY

To become the best person you can be.



Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) policy

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1) Introduction

Weatherfield Academy Special School takes its responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible relationship and sex education (RSE) very seriously.

It is part of the school's personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE).

The school wants parents and learners to feel assured that RSE will be delivered at a level appropriate to both the age and development of learners, and safe to voice opinions and concerns relating to the RSE provision.

This policy is drafted by the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the Head of School and School Governors.

Parents are given the opportunity to discuss this policy at parents' evenings, and teaching and non-teaching staff are invited to discuss it during training sessions.

The policy is reviewed and approved by the governing body annually.

Implementation

It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

Compliance

This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement.

2) Aims:

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- 1) Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
- 2) Prepare learners for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- 3) Help learners develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- 4) Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships.
- 5) Teach learners the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

The school would like to emphasise that by providing comprehensive RSE we are not encouraging learners to become sexually active.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the right provision is in place so that learners may have all the background knowledge they need to make informed decisions and responsible choices as they grow up.

Through the provision outlined in this policy we also aim to raise learner's self-esteem and confidence, trying to develop communication and assertiveness skills that can help them stay true to their values if challenged by others, their peers or what they see in the media.

We hope to teach learners to be accepting of the different beliefs, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities, backgrounds and values of those around them.

We want our learners to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle, teach them to care for and respect their bodies and provide them with all the right tools that will enable them to seek information or support, should they need it, both during their school years and after.

3) Roles and Responsibilities

Governors and Senior Leaders will:

- Develop this school policy and review it on a yearly basis. This policy is developed in consultation with school parents, learners and staff to ensure that it meets the needs of the whole school community.
- Ensure that all staff are given regular and ongoing training on issues relating to RSE and how to deliver lessons on such issues.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with policy changes, and familiar with school policy and guidance relating to sex education.
- Provide support to staff members who feel uncomfortable or ill-equipped to deal with the delivery of relationship and sex education to learners. This may be because they do not feel that their training has been adequate or that aspects of the curriculum are in conflict with their religious or cultural beliefs.
- Ensure that relationship or sex education is age-relevant and appropriate for all learners; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as our learners do and meets their needs.
- Ensure that the knowledge and information regarding RSE to which all learners are entitled is provided in a comprehensive way.
- Support parental involvement in the development of the RSE curriculum.
- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing a balanced RSE in school.
- Communicate freely with staff, parents and the governing body to ensure that everyone is in understanding of the school policy and curriculum for sex education, and that any concerns or opinions regarding the provision at the school are listened to, considered and acted on as appropriate.

We want the provision of sex education at home to be complementary to the provision the school provides, and this should be clearly communicated to parents and additional support given where necessary or requested.

It is important that all school staff feel comfortable to partake in PSHE classes and answer questions from learners. If the teacher or assistant does not feel confident leading RSE discussions then that is likely to be reflected by the learners, and their learning may be compromised. The school encourages regular professional development training for the teachers of PSHE and/or RSE in how to deliver sex education; this includes sessions on confidentiality, setting ground rules, handling controversial issues, responding to awkward questions and an introduction to the rationale of why teaching RSE is so important.

All staff will:

- Take it upon themselves to ensure that they are up to date with school policy and curriculum requirements regarding sex education. Any areas that they feel are not covered or inadequately provided for should be reported back to the Senior Leadership Team.
- Attend and engage in professional development training around sex education provision.
- Encourage learners to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal and emotional development in confidence, listen to their needs and support them seriously. If a learner comes to a member of staff with an issue that that member of staff feels they are not able to deal with alone, they should take this concern to their manager. No one else should be informed at this stage, and a breach of confidentiality may fall under staff misconduct and disciplinary procedures.
- Provide regular feedback to their managers on their experience of teaching RSE and learner response.
- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSE in school.
- Tailor their lessons to suit all learners in their class, across the whole range of abilities, including those learners with special educational needs. If teachers need support in this area they should speak to the Senior Leadership Team.

Learners:

Learners are expected to attend relationship and sex education classes that are in their school timetable and take them seriously. Although they are not assessed through examination, these classes are still a very important part of the curriculum and a tool to aid personal development. Learners should support one another with issues that arise through RSE. Listening in class, being considerate of other people's feelings and beliefs, and complying with confidentiality rules that are set in class are key to effective provision. Learners who regularly fail to follow these

standards of behaviour will be dealt with under the school behaviour policy. This can be accessed on the Weatherfield Academy Special School website or via the main office.

We also hope that learners will feel comfortable to talk to a member of staff, in confidence, regarding any concerns they have in school related to relationship and sex education or otherwise. Conversations of this nature between staff and learners will be held in confidence; however, staff may take concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) if there is a child protection concern or they feel ill-equipped to deal with the issue at hand.

We ask learners for feedback on the school's sex education provision yearly and expect them to take this responsibility seriously. Opinions on provision and comments will be reviewed by senior managers and taken into consideration when the curriculum is prepared for the following year's learners. In this way, the school hopes to provide learners with the education they need on topics they want to learn about.

Parents:

The school expects parents to share the responsibility of relationship and sex education and support their children's personal, social and emotional development. We encourage parents to create an open home environment where learners can engage, discuss and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through school PSHE. Parents are also encouraged to seek additional support in this from the school where they feel it is needed.

For information on accessing school support, see section 5.

4) Implementation and Curriculum

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

Teachers provide classes that are specific to the needs of the learners in that class, and responsive to their behaviour and development.

Learners may also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

- Years 3-6 learners will follow the PSHE Association 'PSHE' and Relationships' framework.
- Years 7-11 learners will follow the PSHE Association 'PSHE and Relationships and Sex Education' framework.
- Year 12+ learners will follow the PSHE Association 'PSHE' framework in addition

Relationships and Sex Education at Weatherfield Academy Special School works at every stage in co-operation and inclusion with different views and religions. Through this aspect of our

curriculum we aim to explore different attitudes, values and social labels, and develop skills that will enable our learners to make informed decisions regarding sex and relationships. It is important that learners know the difference between fact, opinion and belief.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships,
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see the PSHE curriculum map which features on the Weatherfield Academy Special School Website.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, children looked after or young carers).

Terminology

Learners will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang or everyday terms used in certain social circles will be discussed; with a focus on what is and is not acceptable/expected language.

Dealing with difficult questions

Ground rules in class are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter. There may still be times when staff are faced with a difficult question in class that they feel uncomfortable or ill equipped to answer. In this case, they may wish to put the question to one side and seek advice from the Senior Leadership Team or PSHE leader.

Some strategies staff may use to support this might be:

- An anonymous question box; this will enable learners to feel more comfortable to ask questions without being identified
- Making the classroom a zone of silence; this means that whatever is discussed in the classroom stays in the classroom and should not be brought up at any other time. We

hope this will give learners the sense that they are in a safe zone to speak freely about sex and relationships.

Learners with special educational needs:

Weatherfield Academy Special School recognises that many of our learners experience significant challenges in making positive relationships due to their autism and additional needs. These challenges may become more acute in relation to puberty, relationships and sex. Staff appreciate that such sensitivities may need to be managed on a personalised basis and not merely a generalised approach.

The school works hard to ensure that all aspects of the school curriculum are inclusive and support the needs of learners of all ranges of abilities. Staff should differentiate lessons to ensure that all members of the class can access the information fully, and this is no different when it comes to RSE.

The school will use a variety of different strategies to ensure that all learners have access to the same information. Some of these include:

- Interactive teaching methods e.g. contraceptive card game;
- Use of expert guest speakers;
- Practical activities;
- Speaking and listening tasks e.g. debate;
- Independent research;
- Using DVDs, video or imagery;
- Group and paired activities.

Withdrawal from RSE

The school aims to keep parents informed about all aspects of the RSE curriculum and urges parents to read this policy. Parents can request access to resources and information being used in class. The school will do everything it can to ensure that parents are comfortable with the education provided to their children in school.

Parents of primary-aged learners do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents do have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before their child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing to the Head of School. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the learner's educational record. The Head of School will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. Alternative work will be given to learners who are withdrawn from sex education.

Complaints

Parents or carers who have complaints or concerns regarding the RSE curriculum should contact the school and follow the school's complaints policy.

Equal opportunities

RSE lessons provide a good background for talking openly and freely about the diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences. Prejudiced views will be challenged and equality promoted. Any bullying that relates to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be dealt with swiftly and seriously. This is the case for bullying of any kind and the procedures regarding this are outlined in the school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies.

This can be viewed on the Weatherfield Academy Special School website or requested in the main office.

5) Safeguarding and Confidentiality

We aim to provide a safe and supportive school community where learners feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at school or at home. Training around confidentiality is provided to all teachers. It may be the case that discussion around what is expected and unexpected in healthy relationships may lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. If this is the case, the school's child protection and safeguarding procedure will be followed. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy can be viewed on the Weatherfield Academy Special School website or requested in the main office.

Personal information about learners who have approached a teacher for discussion should not be shared with any other person. If there is a child protection concern, the information must only be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead as is outlined in our child protection and safeguarding procedure. Staff members that breach the right to a child's privacy by disclosing or sharing confidential information with no reason to do so, will be dealt with under the school's staff discipline, conduct and grievance procedures. Staff can view this policy in the appropriate online HR system.

If a staff member is approached by a learner under 16 who is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, the teacher should:

- Ensure that the learner is accessing all the contraceptive and sexual health advice available and understands the risks of being sexually active.

- Encourage the learner to talk to their parent/carer. Learners may feel that they are more comfortable bringing these issues to a member of staff they trust, but it is important that children and their parents have open and trusting relationships when it comes to sexual health and the school will encourage this as much as possible.
- Decide whether there is a child protection issue. This may be the case if the teacher is concerned that there is coercion or abuse involved.
- If a member of staff is informed that a learner under 13 is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, this will be dealt with under child protection procedures.

Learners with special educational needs may be more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to protect themselves from harmful influences. If staff are concerned that this is the case, they should seek support from the Senior Leadership Team or another member of the Safeguarding Team to decide what is in the best interest of the child.

Advice and treatment

Staff who are approached by learners with a concern about having contracted or possibly contracted a sexually transmitted disease should refer them immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead who will liaise with the young person's Sexual Health Clinic within the child's Local Authority. Providing advice on contraception and practising safe sex is a key part of the school's RSE provision. We also encourage parents to engage their child in open discussion about practising safe sex. There is no reason for staff to expect to be made aware of a learner or colleague's HIV or hepatitis status, and no person will be discriminated against because of this if there is a disclosure of this type of information. Weatherfield Academy Special School will educate learners about HIV, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The school's first aid policy covers protection for all school members against infection from blood-borne viruses. This can be viewed on the Weatherfield Academy Special School website or requested in the main office.

6) Monitoring and Review

The academic and personal needs of our learners develop in line with varying societal pressures and economic changes. Our aim is to provide RSE that is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our learners, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason, we review the RSE curriculum annually and will inform parents of any revisions to the school policy or relationship and sex education curriculum.

We aim to monitor the effectiveness of our sex education provision through:

- Yearly feedback from learners or other stakeholders;
- Feedback from staff;
- Classroom observations;

- Curriculum map, scheme of work and planning moderation;
- Evidence of learning

7) Support

We hope that learners will feel safe in the school environment to talk to any member of staff in confidence about any areas of concern regarding their personal, social and emotional development, including matters raised by or relating to sex education.

We promote the school ethos as one of inclusion and acceptance throughout all areas of school activity and hope that learners respond to this by feeling comfortable to ask questions and continue their learning both in and outside of the classroom.

A parent introduction to the Safeguarding practice at school and the RSE curriculum is held annually.

The workshop enables parents to explore the RSE frameworks and be informed of any updates or changes to the PSHE and RSE curriculum.

Information given throughout the workshop will be shared on Weatherfield Academy Special School's website.

Parents requiring one to one support on providing effective relationship or sex education at home can contact their child's form tutor via email, in writing or by telephoning the main office.