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SOUTHEND EAST COMMUNITY ACADEMY TRUST

Thorpedene Primary School & Nursery



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

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Background

The UK government passed the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. These regulations made Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils in primary education, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils in secondary education. Additionally, Health Education became compulsory in all schools, except independent schools, where Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education (PSHE) remains mandatory.

The Department for Education also issued guidance on the content of Relationships and Health Education.

As of September 2020, all state-funded primary schools are required to teach two new subjects: "Relationships Education" and "Health Education". These subjects should be integrated into a broader framework of Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education (PSHE), which the Chief Medical Officer has described as a bridge between health and education.

High-quality, evidence-based, and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life. It also enables schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils, both within school and in society.

Research suggests that learning about relationships and health not only promotes well-being but can also improve academic attainment. These subjects provide a significant opportunity to help children and young people develop the knowledge and attributes needed to support their own and others' well-being and success, helping them become happy, responsible adults who contribute meaningfully to society.

Primary schools can also choose to teach Sex Education beyond what is already covered in the National Curriculum for Science.

Aims Of The PSHE Relationships And Health Education

At Thorpedene Primary School, we believe in developing successful learners who have the qualities and attributes needed to manage their lives, fulfil their academic potential, and thrive as individuals and members of society, both now and in the future. Through our teaching of PSHE, we encourage children to reflect on their experiences and understand their personal and social development, while addressing the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural issues that are part of growing up. They learn to respect diversity and differences, equipping them to form effective relationships, which are essential for life and learning.

We recognise that PSHE education provides our children with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to live healthy and safe lives. Our aim is to help children reflect on their values, attitudes, and feelings, promoting well-being, enabling good progress, and preparing them to leave us as responsible, healthy, and happy citizens.

It is important to note that Relationships Education is not about sexual relationships.

Learning in Relationships Education complements and supports Health Education, which includes both physical health and mental well-being. Physical health and mental well-being are interconnected, and it is vital that pupils understand how good physical health contributes to good mental well-being.

The purpose of teaching physical health and mental well-being is to equip pupils with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their health, support their ability to regulate emotions, and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues.

Children's learning in Relationships and Health Education will also enhance the wider work of the school in promoting pupil well-being, building resilience, and developing character—fundamental to helping pupils become happy, successful, and productive members of society.

At Thorpedene Primary School, we follow a structured PSHE programme to support teachers in the age-appropriate delivery of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). While it is not a statutory requirement to deliver sex education beyond the Science curriculum, we follow the guidance recommended by the Department for Education (DfE) to ensure we meet the specific needs of our pupils. An overview of lessons delivered in each year group for both Science and RSE can be found in Appendix A.

Statutory Requirements

Relationships education has been compulsory in primary schools since September 2020, meaning all pupils must take part in these lessons. The Department for Education (DfE) guidance makes it clear that schools ultimately make the final decisions, and parental engagement does not amount to a veto.

Sex education is not compulsory for primary schools. Pupils will learn about puberty and the changing adolescent body as part of Health Education after Year 4, within their PSHE and Science lessons.

As a primary academy, we are required to provide relationships education to all pupils under Section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Although we do not have to follow the National Curriculum, we are expected to offer a curriculum similar to it, including the requirement to teach Science. This includes the elements of sex education contained in the Science curriculum.

When teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to follow guidance issued by the Secretary of State, as outlined in Section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996

Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which requires public bodies to have due regard for eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between different groups when conducting their activities.

Other aspects of sex education will not be covered unless safeguarding concerns arise. Parents will be informed in advance if this happens.

Health Education is also statutory and focuses on learning about the characteristics of good physical health and mental well-being, as well as the relationship between the two.

Delivery of Relationships Education

Relationships education at Thorpedene Primary School will be inclusive for all pupils, sensitive to family, faith backgrounds, and pupils' individual identities. It will respect all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, which include 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 age-appropriate skills:

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

These skills will be taught in 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 may sometimes ask questions about relationships, sex, or sexuality that go beyond the curriculum. If these questions are not answered by school staff, children may seek

information from inappropriate sources, such as the internet. We will answer questions sensitively, considering family and faith backgrounds, and in a way that is age-appropriate and consistent with the relationships education policy and scheme of work. Discussions may take place on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, as not all children will have the same questions. If needed, we may contact parents to seek guidance or discuss areas where their input would be beneficial.

The Department for Education (DfE) has outlined what children must learn in Relationships Education by the end of Year 6, organised under specific themes. Some themes will be revisited throughout school, while others will be taught in the most suitable years.

Thorpedene ensures compliance with legal requirements around political impartiality in delivering the RSE curriculum, particularly when working with external organisations or using external materials.

We also have due regard for our responsibilities under the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty when planning and teaching RSE to create an inclusive classroom environment.

Families and People Who Care for Me

- Families are important for children as they provide love, security, and stability.
- Key characteristics of a healthy family life include commitment to one another, especially during difficult times, protection and care for children and other family members, and the importance of spending time together and sharing life experiences.
- Children may come across families in school or the wider world that are different from their own. They should be taught to respect these differences, understanding that other families are also built on love and care.
- Stable, caring relationships, which may come in different forms, are central to happy families and are essential for children's sense of security as they grow up.
- Marriage represents a formal, legally recognised commitment between two people, intended to be lifelong.
- Children should also know how to recognise when family relationships make them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice when needed.

Caring Friendships

- Friendships are important for making us feel happy and secure, and understanding how people choose and form friendships is key.
- Key characteristics of friendships include mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and offering support through problems and difficulties.
- Healthy friendships are positive and welcoming, ensuring that no one feels lonely or excluded.
- Friendships may have ups and downs, but these can often be worked through, strengthening the relationship. Resorting to violence is never acceptable.
- Children should learn how to recognise who to trust, how to judge when a friendship makes them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, how to manage conflict, and when to seek help or advice from others if needed.

Respectful Relationships

- It is important to respect others, even when they are different from us—whether physically, in character, personality, background, or when they make different choices or hold different preferences or beliefs.
- Children should learn practical steps to improve or support respectful relationships in various contexts. This includes the conventions of courtesy and manners.
- Self-respect is key to personal happiness, and children should understand the link between respecting themselves and their well-being.
- In school and wider society, pupils can expect to be treated with respect, and they should, in turn, show respect to others, including those in positions of authority.
- Children will learn about different types of bullying, including cyberbullying, the impact it has, the responsibility of bystanders (primarily to report bullying to an adult), and how to seek help.
- They will also learn about stereotypes—how they can be unfair, negative, or destructive—and the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers, and adults.
- Religious education complements relationships education by exploring family values, morals, and the celebration of marriage in various traditions.

☐ Online Relationships

- ☐ People may behave differently online, sometimes pretending to be someone they are not. The same principles apply to online relationships as face-to-face interactions, including the importance of respecting others, even when we are anonymous.
- ☐ Pupils will learn the rules for staying safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content, and harmful contact, and how to report them.
- ☐ They will be encouraged to critically evaluate their online friendships and information sources, understanding the risks of engaging with people they have never met.
- ☐ They will also learn about how data and information are shared and used online.

Being Safe

- ☐ Children will learn about appropriate boundaries in friendships with peers and others, including in a digital context.
- ☐ They will be taught about privacy, including the importance of not keeping secrets that relate to safety. Children will understand that each person's body belongs to them and learn to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate physical and other forms of contact.
- ☐ Pupils will be guided on how to respond safely and appropriately to unknown adults, both in person and online, and how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or uncomfortable around any adult.
- ☐ Children will be taught how to ask for help, for themselves or others, and how to persist until they are heard. They will also learn how to report concerns or abuse, and gain the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so, as well as where to seek advice—whether from family, school, or other sources.
- ☐

In delivering relationships education, we believe it is vital that pupils understand what constitutes appropriate discussions both on and offline. This includes in school, on social media, and on other digital platforms. As a school, we take any reports of victimisation seriously, whether pupils are victims or perpetrators.

Delivery Of Health education

Health Education is statutory in state funded schools from September 2020, includes teaching on feelings as they relate to mental well-being, 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 takeplace during puberty.

The Department for Education (DfE) has set out guidance on what children must learn in Health Education 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.

Mental Well-being

- ❑ Mental well-being is a normal part of daily life, just like physical health.
- ❑ There is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) that all humans experience in response to different situations.
- ❑ How to recognise and discuss their emotions, including developing a varied vocabulary to talk about their own and others' feelings.
- ❑ How to judge whether their feelings and behaviours are appropriate and proportionate.
- ❑ The benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, and voluntary activities on mental well-being and happiness.
- ❑ Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, spending time with friends and family, and engaging in hobbies and interests.
- ❑ Understanding that isolation and loneliness can affect mental health and the importance of discussing feelings with an adult.
- ❑ The negative and lasting impact of bullying (including cyberbullying) on mental well-being.
- ❑ How and where to seek support, including recognising triggers for seeking help, and identifying who in school to talk to if they are worried about their mental well-being or their ability to control emotions (including online issues).
- ❑ It is common for people to experience mental ill health. Many issues can be resolved if the right support is accessed early.

Internet Safety and Harms

- ❑ The internet is an integral part of life and has many benefits.
- ❑ The benefits of rationing time spent online, understanding the risks of excessive screen time, and the impact of online content on mental and physical well-being.

- How to consider the effects of online actions on others, display respectful behaviour online, and maintain privacy.
- Why some social media platforms, computer games, and online gaming are age-restricted.
- The internet can be a negative space where abuse, trolling, bullying, and harassment occur, which can harm mental health.
- How to be a discerning consumer of information online, including understanding how information is ranked, selected, and targeted.
- Where and how to report concerns or get support for online issues.

Physical Health and Fitness

- The characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle.
- The importance of incorporating regular exercise into daily and weekly routines, for example, walking or cycling to school, a daily active mile, or other forms of vigorous exercise.
- The risks associated with an inactive lifestyle, such as obesity.
- How and when to seek support, including which adults in school to speak to if they are concerned about their health.

Healthy Eating

- What constitutes a healthy diet, including an understanding of calories and other nutritional content.
- How to plan and prepare a range of healthy meals.
- The characteristics of an unhealthy diet and the risks associated with poor eating habits, including obesity, tooth decay, and other issues (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet and health).

Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco

- The facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and their associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use, and drug-taking.

Health and Prevention

- How to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss or unexplained bodily changes.
- Information on safe and unsafe sun exposure, and how to prevent sun damage, including skin cancer.
- The importance of getting enough good-quality sleep for maintaining good health, and how a lack of sleep can affect mood, weight, and learning ability.
- Dental health, including the benefits of good oral hygiene and regular check-ups at the dentist.
- Personal hygiene, germs (including bacteria and viruses), how they spread and are treated, and the importance of handwashing.
- The facts and science related to allergies, immunisation, and vaccination.

Basic First Aid

- How to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services when necessary.
- Basic first-aid concepts, such as dealing with common injuries, including head injuries.

Changing Adolescent Body

- Key facts about puberty and the changes that occur during adolescence, particularly from ages 9 to 11, including physical and emotional changes.
- Information on menstrual well-being, including key facts about the menstrual cycle.

Parents' Right To Withdraw Their Children From Lessons

The Department of Education have updated guidance, making the 'Relationships' aspect of RSE statutory. They have also updated the part of the National Curriculum for Science, making Life-Cycles topics statutory. This means that all RSE lessons are now statutory, however, parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons that are taught as part of the PSHE curriculum. This includes the following lessons:

- Making babies (assisted fertility/multiple births)
- Making babies (pregnancy and birth)

Please speak to your child's class teacher if you wish to find out more about the content of each lesson, they will be more than happy to discuss these with you.

Primary schools are required to teach the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum and there continues to be no right to withdraw from these lessons. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

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1. Appendix A - RSE and Science Curriculum Overview Statutory RSE and

Science Curriculum Overview

Year group	When	RSE in the science curriculum	RSE curriculum overview	Content
Reception	Summer term 2	Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.	Growing up: how we have changed since we were babies.	Name parts of the body. Healthy foods. Understanding that we all grow from babies to adults.
1	Summer term 2	Identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense.	Relationships Education (to be taught by the end of primary school): Families and people who care for me Caring friendships Respectful relationships	Life cycles of animals and humans. Things that have changed and stayed the same about their bodies. Identify parts of the body that make boys different to girls and use the correct terms.
2	Summer term 2	Notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adult. Describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food, and hygiene.	Online relationships Being safe Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (to be taught by the end of primary school): Mental wellbeing Internet safety and harms Physical health and fitness	Life cycles in nature. Natural process of growing from young to old. How bodies change since being a baby. Physical differences between boys and girls, naming parts of the body and understanding some parts are private. Different types of touch (for example, hugs, tapping, handshakes) and being able to say no.

3	Summer term 2		Healthy eating	Understanding changes between conception and
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			<p>Drugs, alcohol and tobacco</p> <p>Health and prevention</p> <p>Basic firstaid</p> <p>Changing adolescent body</p>	<p>growing up (animals and humans), knowing it is usually the female who has the baby. Understand how babies grow and develop in the mother's uterus.</p> <p>What a baby needs to live and grow. To understand that boys' and girls' bodies need to change so that when they grow up their bodies can make babies. Inside and outside body changes.</p>
4	Summer term 2			<p>To understand that some of my personal characters come from biological parents from the joining of their egg and sperm.</p> <p>Label internal and external parts of male and female bodies.</p> <p>How a girl's body changes in order for her to have a baby when she is an adult.</p> <p>-</p>
5	Summer term 2			<p>Body image. Explain how a girl's body changes during puberty and looking after yourself physically and emotionally. Describe how boys' and girls' bodies change during puberty.</p>
6	Summer term 2			<p>Self image. Girls' and boys' body changes during puberty.</p> <p>How a baby develops throughout the nine months of pregnancy and how it is born.</p> <p>Boyfriends/girlfriends.</p> <p>Sexual intercourse and IVF — conception.</p>

Non statutory content which can be withdrawn from at the parent's/carer's request.

