BRIDGEWATER SCHOOL

WORSLEY, MANCHESTER

M28 2WQ

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

SCOPE: This policy covers all pupils attending Bridgewater School, including those in EYFS and any using the school's Early and Late Clubs. In order to address all our pupils' needs, separate procedures may be appropriate for EYFS, Prep or Senior children. Where this is the case, the relevant procedure is attached.

This policy is directed by the statutory guidance *'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' (2025).*

Introduction

The objective of our planned and phased education programme is to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development so that they learn to respect themselves and others as they move from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

It enables them to develop the skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy and independent lives. Alongside other aspects of the curriculum, it helps them deal with difficult moral and social questions.

We recognise that there are many sources of information available for, and influences on, our students other than parents and teachers, some of it unreliable and suspect. Effective relationships and sex education is essential both to safeguard our children and to allow them, as young people, to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives.

We believe that parents are the people most suited to educate their children about relationships, including sexual relationships, at a time and in a manner most sensitive to their individual development. We aim to complement and support our parents in that role.

In line with current legislation, Relationships education will be delivered within Prep; Relationships and Sex Education for Secondary Education for the Senior School; and

Health education in both areas of the school. Relationships and sex Education (RSE) will be delivered for the most part through the Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education Programme (PSHCE), Religious Studies and Science curriculum. Health Education will be delivered thorough the Science, PE and PSCHE curriculums. Staff will be sensitive to the maturity level of the children in the class and consider the religious, ethnic and cultural values of those in the group.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from any formal RSE education except those elements that form part of National Curriculum Science and aspects of Health Education. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from sex education at Prep and Senior level up until 3 terms before a child's 16th birthday when the child can choose themselves to opt in. There is no right to withdraw from relationships or health education. Should a parent request to withdrawn their child from sex education, this should be formally addressed in writing to the head teacher who may wish to discuss the matter further.

Our Senior Department's PSHCE programme is available in school and any parent who wishes to see the detailed lesson plans and materials may make an appointment to do so in advance of the specific lesson. The Prep. Department's PSHE curriculum is on the school website.

We welcome the views of parents and students as useful feedback in improving sex, health and relationship education at our school.

Relationships and Sex Education

Relationships and Sex Education is part of lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development.

It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage and stable, loving relationships, respect, love and care especially for family life; and about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. This will also cover Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Gender Questioning identities within the Relationships Education. However, it is not about the promotion of any sexual orientation or sexual activity; this would be inappropriate and unacceptable.

It encourages high levels of morality, tolerance and understanding through debate about moral and ethical issues. It has three elements:

Attitudes and values

- Learning the value of respect, tolerance, love and care;
- Learning the value of stable, loving relationships for the nurture of children;
- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral considerations;
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;

- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.

Personal and social skills

- Developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of decisions;
- Managing conflict;
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and understanding

- Learning and understanding about physical development at appropriate stages;
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay;
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

Delivery

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) will be delivered for the most part through the Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education Programme (PSHCE), Religious Education and Science curricula.

Strategies

A range of teaching approaches is employed:

- Group work is used to enable children to develop personal and social skills, exchange ideas and express attitudes. Consideration is given to the organisation of group work and composition of groups, as well as negotiating ground rules to promote a confident and secure atmosphere.
- In any year group, from time to time, some sex education may be taught in single sex groups when the lesson content renders this more appropriate.
- Occasionally, visiting speakers, theatre groups and health professionals will be invited to address students.
- RSE will include formal teaching using video films, slides, and other audio-visual aids, vetted internet sites, small group and class discussion and role-playing, with the opportunity for questions raised to be answered.

Teaching should be accessible for all and should be differentiated where appropriate for students identified as having SEND needs.

The school will ensure that pupils are protected from teaching and materials that are inappropriate, having regard to the age and background of the pupils concerned.

The materials used in school will be in accordance with the PSHE framework and the law. Only appropriate images will be used and any explicit material will be used only where it is relevant and necessary to relay accurate information in a professional, sensitive manner.

Similarly, teachers will refuse to answer questions where such answers may be inappropriate for the majority of students in the group.

This is especially important, given that aspects of RSE may arise at any time in any part of the mainstream timetable e.g. a discussion of moral issues in an English literature lesson on "Romeo and Juliet". Staff, as professionals, will use their judgement to answer, develop or end such discussion.

Preparatory Department

In early primary school years, education about relationships focuses on friendship, anti-bullying strategies and the building of self-esteem.

Our relationships and sex education in the Prep Department is generally encompassed within PSHCE topics and discussions and is pertinent to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the children.

In the transition years before moving to senior school our RSE will support the pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively.

Subjects covered will include:

- Changes in the body related to puberty, such as menstruation and voice breaking;
- Details of when these changes are likely to happen and of any issues that may cause young people anxiety and how they can deal with these.

Senior Department

The Senior Department similarly focuses on friendship, anti-bullying strategies and the building of self-esteem.

The relationships and sex education programme is sensitive to what can be a wide range of differing levels of physical and emotional maturity among senior students, even within one class. This requires staff to re-assess timing, approach and material on a regular basis.

The RSE programme is delivered through the PSHCE framework and relevant topics in both RE lessons and the statutory aspects of National Science Curriculum, encouraging knowledge, self-esteem and responsibility for the consequences of one's actions.

At this level, relationships and sex education should prepare young people for an adult life in which they can:

- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour.
- Be aware of their sexuality and understand human sexuality.
- Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships.
- Have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others.
- Respect individual conscience.
- Communicate effectively and develop the skills to judge what kind of relationships they want.
- Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and their partner, where they have one, from unintended/unwanted conceptions, and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
- Avoid being exploited or exploiting others.
- Avoid being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.

Senior School RSE lessons will:

- Focus on boys and young men as well as girls and young women equally;
- Discuss relationships, love, respect, care and values;
- Teach the physical aspects of reproduction and the responsibilities of parenthood;
- Raise awareness about responsibility and the consequences of one's actions in relation to sexual activity and parenthood;
- Give young people a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure, including the importance of consent within relationships.
- Link relationships and sex education with issues of peer pressure and other risk taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol;
- Give young people a clear understanding of the reasons for having protected sex;
- Provide young people with information about different types of contraception and safe sex;
- Provide young people with information about how they can access further reputable advice locally as regards confidential sexual health advice, support and if necessary treatment;
- Ensure that young people understand how the law applies to sexual behaviour.

Absences

For the protection of all concerned, staff are not permitted to engage in one to one catch up lessons concerning sex education. Students who are absent from RSE lessons will be given copies of any notes or their materials and offered the chance to discuss these and check their understanding with the teacher in a later lesson or in a small group.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Overview documents and schemes of work show the knowledge that is to be covered in the schemes of work and staff will annotate and amend these accordingly, in the light of experience.

Lessons will be monitored and feedback used to inform future delivery.

Older children will be encouraged to reflect, evaluate and provide feedback on the RSE education, as appropriate, through ongoing discussions and occasional questionnaires.

Responding to Children's Questions

Staff are aware that views around RSE related issues are varied. However, while personal views are respected, all RSE issues are taught without bias. Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect others who may have a different opinion. Both formal and informal RSE arising from pupils' questions are answered according to the age and maturity of the students concerned and the limits of the year group topics.

We acknowledge that sensitive and potentially difficult issues will arise in RSE as pupils will naturally share information and ask questions. When spontaneous discussion arises, it is guided in a way that reflects the stated school aims and curriculum content for RSE. As a first principle, we answer questions relating to the taught, planned curriculum for that age group to the whole class.

During lessons on RSE lessons, children might ask questions about topics which are not specifically taught or have not yet been taught as part of a planned programme.

The teacher has to decide whether:

- To answer the question right away.
- To ask the child to wait for the answer until the class has been dismissed.
- To refer them or the matter to a pastoral teacher for advice.
- To deal with the question in accordance with the school's Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy if there is cause for concern.

As a general rule, if the question is about something that is likely to be appropriate to, and relevant for, the majority of the class then it should be answered honestly, openly and right away. If a member of staff is uncertain about the answer to a question, or indeed, whether they should answer it, they will seek guidance from the Head of PSCHE or SMT. Questions may be referred to parents / carers if it is not appropriate to answer them in school.

In order to help staff manage RSE lessons, it is expected that staff will establish clear parameters about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting by, for example, staff will set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way. Good practice would be to encourage students to write down questions, anonymously if desired. Staff will have time to prepare answers to all questions before the next session, and will choose not to respond in a whole-class setting to any questions that are inappropriate or need one-to-one follow up. If a verbal question is too personal, staff will remind the pupils of the ground rules.

However, if an issue is raised, staff must never promise confidentiality as a safeguarding/child protection issue can be raised or discovered in this manner. Should that happen, staff must follow our safeguarding/child protection procedures.

Equal Opportunities

Children will have equal access to RSE unless specifically withdrawn from this provision by their parents. Extra care will be taken to ensure sensitivity is shown towards children whose maturity, experience of family life, sexual knowledge and moral framework is a cause for concern.

Bridgewater's RSE education is delivered in line with the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that those with protected characteristics do no face discrimination.

This policy will be reviewed annually at the start of the academic year.

Reviewed by the Head Teacher and Senior Management Team – September 2026

Policy approved by:

J.A.T. Nairn

JAT Nairn
Head Teacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead

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K Mort
Chair of Governors & Safeguarding Governor