

Brookhurst Primary School



Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Summer 2023

Policy approved by A. Stanton - May 2023

Policy to be reviewed - May 2024

This policy covers our school's approach to Relationships and Sex education, not only in lessons but through the attitude of our staff and students alike, our ethos and approach and commitment to equality both within and outside of the classroom.

It was produced with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and through consultation with our staff, governing body, and most importantly with our pupils and parents.

It will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects the attitudes and belief of the school population and remains up to date with both current guidance from Government and the DfE but also remains relevant to the experiences of our pupils.

This policy will be available for parents to refer to through the school website. This policy reflects our schools overarching aims and objectives for our pupils by providing children the opportunity to learn and develop, as well as to cultivate a sense of wonder, empathy and understanding of the world around them. Together, we will strive to bring the best out of our children, ensuring that they maximise their potential and are prepared as fully as possible for the next stage of their lives.

We recognise that as a school we have a legal responsibility under The Relationships Education, Relationships & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 & 35 of the Children & Social Work Act 2017, to provide comprehensive Relationships Education and Health Education for all pupils receiving primary education.

We acknowledge that in order for children to embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. We understand that high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help.

As part of the Education Act 2002/Academies Act 2010 all schools must provide a balanced and broad-based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, whilst also preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life...'

We recognise that we have a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure the best for all pupils irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, maternity, religion, sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children. As a result, RSE needs to be sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and may need to adapt and change as the pupils of the school change. Not only does the teaching need to be sensitive of these needs, but also to help the pupils realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours or prejudice-based language.

Whilst as a school we are aware we need to be mindful of and respectful to a wide variety of faith and cultural beliefs, and we will make every attempt to be appropriately sensitive; equally it is essential that young people still have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. This must include clear, impartial scientific and factual information on matters such as naming their body parts, puberty, menstruation, masturbation, the variety of family structures, gay marriage gender identity, gender equality, sexuality, contraception, forced- marriage and FGM. Furthermore, all teaching should reflect the law as it applies to relationships, marriage, adoption and care.

We acknowledge that all young people deserve the right to honest, open and factual information to help better form their own beliefs and values, free from bias, judgement or subjective personal beliefs of those who teach them.

Defining Comprehensive Relationships Education:

The Department for Education defines relationships education as, *teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive*

relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships and relationships with other peers and adults.

However, we believe comprehensive relationships education is designed to help children to develop the skills to recognise and manage healthy relationships both online and in the real world. It is designed to build self-esteem and to explore personal identity.

It is about helping children understand and make sense of the world they are growing up in; to recognise the differences and similarities between their peers and their families; to understand the fact every human being is unique and has the right to be respected. There are many different family structures and all children have the right to feel safe.

Comprehensive relationships education has been shown to help keep children safe by allowing them to understand appropriate and inappropriate touching, to realise that their body is fantastic and belongs to them. It is about building the foundations of an understanding of consent and personal boundaries; in that no one has the right to touch you in a way you don't like but also the difference between public and private behaviours.

It is important for children to know the names and functions of their body and to be reassured it is natural to be curious about them. Indeed, by teaching children the correct terms for their private parts, children are proven to be safer from abuse. In addition, we believe comprehensive relationships education helps children to develop their vocabulary and emotional literacy to enable them to talk about and manage their feelings. It helps children build their own support networks and the confidence to ask for help when they feel unsafe. This is a required element of the Health Education Guidance.

Defining Sex Education at Primary School:

Although 'The Relationships Education, Relationships & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools, Sex education is currently

not compulsory. However, the Department for Education continues to recommend that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and maturity of the pupils.

As set out in the guidance it is up to individual schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. We, like many other schools, already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so.

We recognise that some parents may be uncomfortable with the thought of their children receiving sex education in primary school. Equally, we recognise it is completely natural for children to have questions about sex, their bodies and to be curious about where they came from. In the age of information where children in primary school have access to the internet through mobile technology we believe it is better that children receive age appropriate answers from us than it being left to their peers or the internet.

At Brookhurst Primary sex education is an opportunity to answer children's questions about where they came from, an opportunity to explore their own stories and to be clear about how a baby is conceived and formed as set out in the human life cycle as covered in the national curriculum for science. Furthermore, it should ensure that all children are prepared for both the physical and emotional changes of puberty including menstruation. Children need to understand how both girls and boys' bodies function and change as they grow into adults.

We believe that sex education should allow children a safe space to ask the questions they may have without shame or judgement. Evidence states that a graduated age-appropriate spiral curriculum is the best way of preventing the topic of sex, reproduction and private body parts of becoming taboo and children from becoming embarrassed by the topic.

We believe it is the duty of our school to give our young people the learning that will enable them to live safe, fulfilled and healthy lives. This includes ensuring that they have the skills to keep themselves safe

from harm and develop positive and healthy relationships - free from exploitation pressure or abuse.

Subject Content:

In school we meet the learning objectives as set out in the Relationships Education, Relationships & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 for primary schools with a whole school approach. Across all year groups we deliver both the Protective Behaviours: Taking Care Programme as recommended by Warwickshire's Safeguarding Children's board and My Feelings, Friends and Family. Both programmes are based on a spiral curriculum beginning in Foundation stage, building on key messages through to year 6.

We believe it is important that this material is delivered by the classroom teacher as it highlights to children that relationships and sex education is something we can all talk about. Our classroom teachers cover all other aspects of the curriculum, we believe it is important that all staff are able to deliver this material to their class also. Furthermore, our classroom teachers know our children. This means they are more likely to be aware of any additional needs, support or particularly sensitive topics that may make a child in their class vulnerable due to some of the sensitive nature of a topic. We believe this makes them ideally placed to deliver the material sensitively to all children in their class.

Protective Behaviours:

Protective Behaviours is a practical and down to earth approach to personal safety. It is a process which encourages self-empowerment and brings with it the skills to avoid being victimised. This is achieved by helping children recognise and trust their intuitive feelings (Early Warning Signs) and to develop strategies for self-protection. The protective Behaviours Process encourages an adventurous approach to life which satisfies the need for fun and excitement without violence and fear.

Theme 1: We all have the right to feel safe all the time.

Theme 2: We can talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small.

Protective Behaviours uses a Rights and Responsibility approach, and encourages children to recognise their Early Warning Signs (EWS) and develop their own support networks of safe adults who they can share their worries with.

Protective Behaviours is delivered in the Autumn term, across the school from Foundation stage to year 6.

Below is an overview of the programme content for Key Stage 1. For more details please see the school's Protective Behaviour Manuals for each year group. These can be made available on request.

Protective Behaviours - Taking Care Programme Infants: Reception, Year 1 & Year 2				
Reception	<p>Feelings: There is no such things as good or bad feelings Theme 1,</p>	<p>Body Awareness: Naming Private body parts: Penis, Vulva, & anus. mouths are private too</p>	<p>EWS/Scary body feelings: identifying children's EWS</p>	<p>Telling & Secrets: Theme 2, Children will construct their own support networks hands.</p>
Year 1	<p>Feelings: Feelings are feelings, not good or bad, it is how we behave when we have feelings that matters Theme 1.</p>	<p>Unsafe Feelings & Body Awareness: Our bodies warn us if we feel unsafe - we call these feelings EWS</p>	<p>Body Privacy & Secrets: Naming Private body parts: Penis, Vulva, & anus. mouths are private too. Safe & unsafe secrets</p>	<p>Telling & Networks: Theme 2, Children will construct their own support networks hands.</p>
Year 2	<p>Feelings, Rights & Responsibilities: What are Rights & Responsibilities? Theme 1.</p>	<p>Unsafe Feelings, Problem Solving: recognising EWS. Is my fun, fun for everyone?</p>	<p>Body Awareness & Personal Space: my body belongs to me. No one has the right to touch me in a way I don't like. Theme 2.</p>	<p>Networks & Using Them: Children will construct their own support networks hands. Theme 2.</p>

An overview of the programme content for Key Stage 2 below.

Protective Behaviours - Taking Care Programme Juniors: Years 3,4,5, & 6				
Year 3	Feelings, Rights & Responsibilities: A feeling is a feeling, not good or bad, right or wrong. What are Rights & Responsibilities? Theme 1.	Unsafe Feelings: identifying children's EWS. Strategies as to what to do when experiencing their EWS.	Body Awareness & Telling: my rules for safety & my body. My body belongs to me.	Networks & Using Them: Children will construct their own support networks hands. Theme 2.
Year 4	Rights & responsibilities, Feelings: exploring children's Rights & responsibilities that come with them. Theme 1.	Safe & Unsafe Feelings: exploring Situations when its feeling fun to feel scared. Recognising EWS.	Exploring Theme 2, Secrets: safe & unsafe secrets. Theme 2	Networks & Using Them: Children will construct their own support networks hands. Theme 2.
Year 5	Rights & responsibilities, Feelings: exploring the Rights of the child. Theme 1.	Safe feelings, Fun to Feel Scared & EWS: exploring & creating safe places. Situations when it feelings fun to feel scared. Recognising EWS.	Theme 2, Secrets & Networks: safe & unsafe secrets. exploring Theme 2 and creating support network hands.	Using Networks: Network review, Who makes a good network person. Keep telling.
Year 6	Rights & responsibilities, Feelings: exploring the Rights of the child. Emotions Theme 1.	Safe feelings, Fun to Feel Scared & EWS: Theme 1. is my fun fun for everyone. Recognising EWS.	Theme 2, Secrets & Networks: safe & unsafe secrets. exploring Theme 2 and creating support network hands.	Using Networks: Network review, Who makes a good network person. Keep telling.

My Feelings, Friends and Family:

The My Feelings, Friends and Family (MFFF) is a programme of resources designed by Going off the Rails: GOTR SRE Consultancy Limited. It is an evidence based programme of Comprehensive Relationships & Sex Education based on good practice.

MFFF is designed on a spiral curriculum and based on a values and human rights approach. It is built on the premise that it is much better to drip feed positive messages and have little conversations, to ensure that children will feel prepared for the changes of puberty and for the challenges of moving on to secondary school.

We deliver the programme over the first half of the summer term during our weekly scheduled PSHE lessons. The lessons are all activity based and pupil led, meaning that whilst the sessions are designed to be an hour long each, they can end up taking much longer. There are art activities, circle time discussions, stand up-sit down, move around games, pair work, group work and scenario-based activities.

MFFF is designed to review and reinforce all of the key messages from Protective Behaviours, allowing children to refresh their support networks and build on previous learning. We deliver Protective Behaviours in the Autumn term and MFFF in the Summer Term, allowing us to book-end the year, giving out key messages designed to keep children safe.

The programme has also been designed so it can be delivered as a vertical programme, to support young people who are struggling and may need some additional support, with a particular focus on supporting children who may be struggling with emotional literacy, have suffered a bereavement or family changes or are displaying low level Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB).

MFFF is evidence based using the latest research and guidance including UNESCO "International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach" (2018) and the Sex Education Forums: 12 Key Points for Good Quality RSE (2018). As well as incorporating the NSPCC Pants rule and learning from Running Rutgers Spring Fever programme and the AIM Programme around working with children who display Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB).

For a curriculum overview please refer to the PSHE Long Term Plan which can be found on the school website. Please note that as a result of lockdown, year groups have prioritised areas of greatest relevance to the children in their cohort.

The lesson 'Mummy's Bump' in year 1 is the only sex education lesson in the Key Stage 1 programme. Whilst it is not a core requirement of the statutory guidance for Relationships Education, we believe it is an essential lesson. This lesson is designed in a specific way which means that it is pupil-led and we shape the lesson to fit what the class is ready for; we ask them a question, see what they know, correct the bits that aren't quite right, and then fill in the blanks.

We believe by answering children's questions - which are perfectly natural at this age, especially considering that they will likely be exposed to pregnant parent's having siblings, or aunts, and family friends at their age, we can feed their natural curiosity in safe way. As a result, rather

than the topic becoming a taboo, something that is shameful, instead, we can ensure children continue to come to us for answers that we can answer age appropriately rather than building barriers to addressing the topic which will later have to be overcome.

In the Key Stage 2 section of the programme there are only two lessons highlighted "Where do I come from?" in year 3 and "Puberty: What I have heard about Sex" in year 6; as with Key Stage 1, these lessons are designed in a specific way which means that they are pupil-led and shaped to fit what the class is ready for; we ask them a question, see what they know, correct the bits that aren't quite right, and then fill in the blanks.

Both of these lessons help to support the requirements for maintained schools to teach about the main external body parts and changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age as part of the National Curriculum for science. Under the current guidance these two lessons are not statutory. However, we would still recommend that children take part as we believe they are essential lessons.

We believe that by tackling children's questions around sex as part of a wider programme focused around relationships, family, self-awareness, emotional literacy, consent and personal boundaries, children will feel better able to engage in discussion and ask questions without embarrassment. Equally, tackling sex and reproduction in this way helps to promote positive messages and values around sex as well as children's relationship with their own bodies without shame or guilt and will develop respect for other people's body autonomy.

We do not separate our classes into girls and boys for any part of the programme, including lessons around puberty. We believe it is important for both girls and boys to learn about each other's bodies, changes and experiences. By keeping children together in mixed groups, children will learn to talk openly without embarrassment in front of each other and we can foster better understanding, break down gender stereotypes and build positive relationships and respect for each other, regardless of gender. This ensures that any non-binary or transgender children are

not forced to 'pick-a-side' and have equal access and can feel included without feeling vulnerable.

As a school we support both the Protective Behaviours and MFFF programmes in school by delivering complimentary work across the school during E-Safety Week, Anti-Bullying Week as well as supporting mental health awareness through Children's Mental Health Week.

Answering Children's Questions:

We are aware that children are likely to have many questions that may pop out at any time. Children tend to ask whatever is on their mind. We see this as a positive point and a sign that we have created a safe environment where children feel empowered to feed their natural curiosity and learn about themselves, their bodies and the world around them. However, we acknowledge that some parents may feel uncomfortable about how particular questions may be dealt with in class.

We believe children are better off receiving honest, open answers from safe adults in their lives, rather than it being left to the internet or older children with a smart phone. In the age of information, where children in primary have access to tablets, smart phones and the internet (often unsupervised) it is essential that we help children to recognise they are able to ask questions without judgement rather than searching for answers on the internet.

By tackling the topic in a matter of fact manner, without embarrassment means that we take the mystic allure out of the topic - making sex no longer the secret taboo, you have to sneak around trying to find out about - and instead something we can talk about at the dinner table. However uncomfortable a proposition that may be it is far better than the alternative. For children these questions are not rude, they are simply signs of a healthy and natural curiosity. We can stop the topic becoming taboo and embarrassing and removing the stigma before it has had chance to form.

We believe that if children ask a question they deserve an answer. The replies: "you are too young to know", or "I think you would be better off asking your parent" are not sufficient; instead they merely build

unnecessary barriers, making children think they have done something wrong. They are unlikely to ask again, and are instead left to seek their answers from less reliable or child friendly sources, due to shame. However uncomfortable the question may be, the thought is already in their head - it is much better we as safe adults take responsibility and tackle the question safely and age appropriately.

Staff have received training as to how to deal with children's questions age appropriately. This will be done consistently across the school as follows:

- Children will be praised for asking questions. We wish to encourage children to seek answers from safe adults.
- If a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group.
- However, as with any other subject, there may occasionally, be the need to differentiate depending on children's knowledge & experience. Some children may need additional information or support compared to others.
- If a child asks a question that is not necessarily suitable for the entire class, we will respond, by saying: "that is a fantastic question, hold that thought, I am going to set everyone some work and I will come and talk to you and answer your question in a minute when everyone else is working."
- If the member of staff doesn't have an answer or doesn't know - they will say so. There is no shame in not knowing the answer - but the member of staff should make an effort to help the child to find the answer later.
- If the member of staff is not sure how best to answer a particularly tricky question, they should say so: "That is a brilliant question... But I would like to give you an equally brilliant answer, so let me have a think about it and once I know the best way to explain it clearly I will come back to you."
- This will allow teaching staff time to think, seek help, advice or support from colleagues or to speak to senior management.

- If a child asks a question we know parent's may be uncomfortable with, staff may choose to delay answering the question before liaising with the parent if possible and talking through their response.
- Teachers will answer questions, openly, honestly, scientifically and factually without relying on their own personal beliefs. Teachers will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their students that could make either parties vulnerable.

Parents and parental rights to withdraw:

We believe that successful teaching around RSE can only take place when parents and school work together. Especially, considering we both want children to grow up safe and happy in healthy relationships, with the ability to manage their emotions and speak up when they feel unsafe. Therefore, we are committed to working together with parents.

We endeavour to be transparent and give parents information about all the programmes and lessons we deliver around RSE as we recognise it can be a sensitive subject for some families for a number of reasons.

All new parents to our school will be given information about the RSE programmes we run as part of their induction to the school, including information about how they can get a copy of this policy.

We recognise the importance of parents knowing about the content of the lessons so they can carry on the conversations at home and have an opportunity to talk to their children about their own families, beliefs and values. As a result, we have engaged parents in consultation through parent forum meetings and parent information workshops and briefings.

Before, any lessons that could be described as sex education are delivered we will send home correspondence to parents to inform them of the dates the lessons will be delivered. If parents have any concerns or special circumstances we should be aware of, or would like any

further information teachers will arrange a mutually convenient opportunity to discuss these with you.

We recognise under the new DfE guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships & Sex education and Health Education (DfE 2019), parents retain the right to request their child is removed from some or all of the elements of sex education which go beyond the national curriculum for science. Maintained schools are required to teach about the main external body parts and changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age, including puberty. There is no right to withdraw from the national curriculum.

In the Key Stage 1 programme parents can choose to opt their child out of only the lesson *Mummy's Bump*, which sits in the year 1 programme under the My Relationships subject heading. All other lessons in the Key Stage 1 programme are statutory under the new guidance.

In the Key Stage 2 programme, parents can choose to opt out of two lessons, one in the year 3 programme: "*Where did I come from?*" and one in the year 6 programme: "*Puberty: What I've heard about sex*". All other lessons are mandatory.

Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these three lessons, we would ask that they first speak to their classroom teacher to discuss their concerns. Our teachers will happily show parents all the teaching material and context of any of our lessons and explain the reasons why any material is included in the programme. They will also highlight that whilst parents have the right to withdraw their child from these lessons, they do not have the right to withdraw other children from receiving these lessons. We believe it is better for children to hear from safe adults than to hear second hand from their class-mates at break-time.

If parents do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the head teacher who will find other provision for the child to engage in during the lesson. Currently, head teachers must comply with requests to withdraw from any non-statutory lessons in the programme.

Policy on Menstruation:

We recognise that the onset of menstruation can be a confusing or distressing time for children if they are not prepared. As a school we acknowledge we have a responsibility to prepare children for menstruation and make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help children manage their period. Especially children whose family may not be able to afford or will not provide sanitary products.

We recognise that period poverty exists in the UK and that some children are forced to avoid attending school if they are on their period, when they are unable to manage it sensitively. We do not want that to be the case in our school and will make every reasonable effort to support children to access their education and enjoy school.

Puberty is occurring earlier than before, and it is now not uncommon for children to start their periods whilst in primary school even in year 4. For this reason, we deliver puberty lessons to all children in years 3, 4, 5 & 6.

As part of these lessons all children will be told about menstruation and there will be discussion of what periods are, explanation of other symptoms associated with periods, how they can be managed hygienically, and sensitively.

Menstruation is a healthy biological function for 50% of our school. It should not be something that a person is made to feel embarrassed, shameful or be teased about. As a school we need to treat each other with respect and empathy and this includes changes that take place during puberty such as menstruation.

During lessons where puberty and menstruation are discussed, we will take the opportunity to highlight the location of sanitary bins available in school, and how these are to be used.

In school we have a menstruation kit available in year 4, 5 & 6 which contains sanitary products, spare underwear and plastic bags to wrap up underwear should there have been any accidents. Children will be

made aware of where these are kept and how they can be accessed through designated members of staff, including lunchtime supervisors.

When school trips or residential visits are arranged for years 4, 5 & 6 provisions to deal with a child's period needs to be considered and added to the risk assessment and planned for.

Monitoring & Evaluation:

Teachers and the subject lead will continually monitor and evaluate the resources in order to ensure the materials are relevant to children as well as to keep the programme up to date and evidence based. This collates their teaching experience of the resources and documents as well as issues or important conversations that may have taken place within the classroom.

Furthermore, the children's work is collated into their learning journals, as is their Protective Behaviours work. These will be monitored and will act as evidence of the work the children have been involved in and document their learning experiences. Children will be given opportunities to reflect back on all the work they have done in the programme and talk through what they have achieved, how they have grown as a person and what lessons they have learned. We believe this reflection is essential to build personal identity and self-esteem.

In addition, as a school we ensure staff feel confident to deliver relationships and sex education by providing comprehensive staff training, led by Jonny Hunt RSE consultant, as well as the provision of additional training materials from the Department for Education.

We monitor children's learning and evaluate their progress through three types of assessment.

- *Pupil self-assessment:* check-lists, diaries, displays, portfolios, pictorial and written work.
- *Peer group assessment:* oral feedback, mind maps, video or audio clips, presentations.
- *Teacher assessment:* teacher observations, reviewing written work, assessment tasks.

Safeguarding Children:

When teaching any sensitive topic, such as RSE which deals with family life, safe and appropriate touching, personal body parts and healthy relationships, we recognise the potential to uncover incidents of abuse through children's disclosures.

All members of staff who deliver any of our Relationships or Sex Education Programme, have statutory training around safeguarding children and are all aware of our school's safeguarding policy and procedures in the case of a disclosure or suspicion of a safeguarding concern.

It is our practice to review safeguarding procedures in team meetings before either programmes are delivered. Furthermore, if relevant, there may be conversations around protecting and supporting children for whom some of this work may make them vulnerable due to previous safeguarding concerns, past child protection investigations, ongoing concerns or changes in family or living situations if these may be triggered by scenarios or topics in their planned lessons.

There is support on offer if we have any concerns or wish to have any support around delivering the MFFF programme to vulnerable children. We recognise that there may be a need to adapt the programme or offer additional support for children who may be vulnerable due to abuse or changes in family situations. Whilst this type of work may be sensitive it is also a protective factor in preventing further abuse and to help them make sense of their experiences. It is also essential to help them develop skills and resilience to keep them safe in future.

Policy written by Samera Uddin.

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