



ASTON AND COTE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

This policy should be taken and used as part of Aston and Cote's overall strategy and implemented within the context of our vision, instrument of government aims, and values of a Church of England School. Aston and Cote is a Church of England School which celebrates a love of God and puts the Christian ethos at the centre of all that it does.

June 2025

Signed:	Headteacher
Signed:	Chair of Governors
Date:	Date of next review: June 2028

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Introduction

At Aston and Cote Church of England Primary School, Relationships & Sex Education is set within the context of our Christian ethos and values and is provided through our framework for PSHCE.

Sensitivity and respect are shown to all children when teaching about relationships and sex education and whilst upholding Christian values regarding marriage and relationships, we are mindful of the circumstances of our pupils and the variety of expressions of family life in our culture. Children are given the opportunity to explore their own attitudes, values and beliefs while at the same time understanding that they should respect others with a different point of view.

Relationships and Sex Education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe. At primary school some aspects are taught as part of the National Curriculum for science, and others are taught in the broader context of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE).

In 2000, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, now DfE) published Sex and Relationship Education Guidance which continues to be the current statutory guidance for schools. In 2014 the PSHE Association and the Sex Education Forum worked together to produce advice for schools which supplements that guidance – ‘Sex & Relationships Education for the 21st Century’. It is these documents that have been used to develop this policy for the teaching of Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) at Aston and Cote CE Primary School.

Why is relationships and sex education important?

RSE plays a vital part in meeting schools’ safeguarding obligations. Ofsted is clear that schools must have a preventative programme that enables pupils to learn about safety and risks in relationships.

As a school, we follow principles of high-quality RSE in all schools (primary and secondary) as recommended in the guidance, Sex and Relationships Education in the 21st Century. This states that Relationships & Sex Education:

- Is a partnership between home and school
- Ensures children and young people’s views are actively sought to influence lesson planning and teaching.
- Starts early and is relevant to pupils at each stage in their development and maturity.
- Is taught by people who are trained and confident in talking about issues such as healthy and unhealthy relationships, equality, pleasure, respect, abuse, sexuality, gender identity, sex and consent
- Includes the acquisition of knowledge, the development of life skills and respectful attitudes and values.
- Has sufficient time to cover a wide range of topics, with a strong emphasis on relationships, consent, rights, responsibilities to others, negotiation and communication skills, and accessing services.
- Helps pupils understand on and offline safety.
- Is both medically and factually correct.
- Is inclusive of difference including gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, faith or belief, or other life experience.

- Uses active learning methods, and is rigorously planned, assessed and evaluated.
- Helps pupils understand a range of views and beliefs about relationships and sex in society including some of the mixed messages about gender, sex and sexuality from different sources including the media.
- Promotes equality in relationships, recognises and challenges gender inequality and reflects girls' and boys' different experiences and needs.

It contributes to:

- A positive ethos and environment for learning.
- Safeguarding pupils (Children Act 2004), promoting their emotional wellbeing, and improving their ability to achieve in school.
- A better understanding of diversity and inclusion, a reduction in gender-based and homophobic prejudice, bullying and violence and an understanding of the difference between consenting and exploitative relationships.
- Helping pupils keep themselves safe from harm, both on and offline, enjoy their relationships and build confidence in accessing services if they need help and advice.
- Better outcomes for young people including reducing teenage pregnancy and sexual exploitation.

What is the programme for RSE and how is it delivered?

Our programme at Aston and Cote Primary is fully informed by what pupils, parents and staff tell us, and is designed to help children grow, learn, and develop positive, healthy behaviours for life. Our current Y6 pupils tell us, that through sex education they are reassured that the changes they are going through, or will go through, are completely normal and that they happen to everyone, just at different times. It also makes it ok that there are different kinds of relationships, and no stable and supportive family group is better than another.

There are a number of requirements that all schools must adhere to when providing relationships and sex education, alongside the statutory guidance. In the recent review of the National Curriculum, the government has made it clear that all state schools 'should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and that relationships and sex education (RSE) is an important part of PSHE education.

ALL STATE FUNDED MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS	
WHOLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM	Must be balanced and broadly based, with a statutory duty to promote pupil wellbeing. Schools must publish details of their curriculum, including PSHE and SRE.
PSHE	The Department for Education states that all schools should make provision for PSHE education, drawing on good practice. Schools are free to develop their own PSHE programme to reflect the needs of their pupils.
RSE GUIDANCE	Any school that provides RSE has a statutory duty to have 'due regard' to the Secretary of State's Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DfE, 2000)
NATIONAL CURRICULUM	Statutory science programmes of study at Key Stages 1 to 3.
RSE POLICY	The Secretary of State's 2000 guidance states that all schools should have an up-to-date policy for RSE, which must be available to parents on request.

The school's commitment to promoting the personal and social development, health and wellbeing of our pupils is evident in our statement of aims and values. This underpins the ethos of Aston and Cote CE Primary School, and is reflected in our policies and in the breadth of the curriculum – including the teaching of PSHE and RSE.

High quality RSE is delivered as part of our PSHE & Citizenship framework and is linked to broader school policies. The long-term plan for PSHE is undertaken in the context of the school's overall curriculum framework which reflects the needs of the children, and sets out what should be taught at which stages, in a sequence that promotes breadth and balance, curriculum continuity and progression in children's learning. The Framework for PSHE is included below.

Science teaches about the biological facts relating to human growth, puberty and reproduction. PSHE helps pupils to think about the different social contexts, influences and beliefs that affect personal behaviour. It also develops a positive vocabulary, and the strategies and skills children need to stay healthy and safe.

PSHE links to the curriculum for Computing & E-safety. Children and young people are growing up in a culture where technology and social media are important resources for learning and sharing information. Through RSE pupils are encouraged to think about what they want others to know and see about them - both online and offline; they are taught about potential risks associated with the internet and how to stay safe online. Robust filtering systems protect pupils from accessing unsuitable materials on the internet.

'Sexting' and other self-made images and messages of a sexual nature, raise particular issues of safety, privacy, peer influence and personal responsibility. As a school we address privacy and boundaries from a very early age in the context of personal safety and abuse. Specific work about 'sexting' is only addressed if it is identified as a potential issue. Teaching covers communication skills, attitudes and values, the law, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and how to seek help. Pupils should learn that it is illegal to produce, possess or distribute an indecent image of a person under the age of 18 – even if it's a picture of themselves. These laws have been created to protect children and young people.

RSE is delivered by class teachers who understand the importance of being positive role models and displaying the qualities essential to good relationships. Elements of RSE may be provided by health professionals, including the school nurse, who are able to offer specialised knowledge, experience and resources. Such visitors will be provided with a copy of the school's RSE Policy, and will be fully briefed by class teachers so their input appropriately complements the work of the school.

In Years 5 & 6 pupils are taught about changes in the body related to puberty, such as periods and voice breaking; when these changes are likely to happen; what issues may cause young people anxiety and how they can deal with these; and about how a baby is conceived and born.

Occasions will arise when the teaching of unrelated topics will result in discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour. Sexual matters may occur across the curriculum and answers will not constitute sex education so long as discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the other subject. When this involves a child who has been withdrawn from sex education, teachers will need to balance the need to give proper attention to the relevant issues with the need to respect pupils' and parents' views and sensitivities.

What content is covered within Relationships & Sex Education?

Significant elements of RSE are included in the National Curriculum for Science. There is a statutory duty upon schools to teach these aspects. Parents cannot withdraw their children from the biological aspects of sex education that are taught in science. Other aspects, including the relational context of sex education, are delivered through the PSHE and Citizenship Framework that are non-statutory.

At both key stages, the PSHE curriculum is developed through the three broad themes as detailed in guidance provided by the PSHE Association. The three themes are:

- Health and well-being
- Relationships
- Living in the wider world

The following paragraphs pick out the sections of the National Curriculum for Science that contain an explicit reference to RSE at each Key Stage. Other aspects of the PSHE framework together with teaching in Religious Education will contribute to a holistic teaching of RSE.

Foundation Stage

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities. (Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum)

Key Stage One

Pupils should be introduced to the basic needs of animals for survival, as well as the importance of exercise and nutrition for humans. They should also be introduced to the processes of reproduction and growth in animals. The focus at this stage should be on questions that help pupils to recognise growth; they should not be expected to understand how reproduction occurs. (NC Year 2 Science Programme of Study)

Key Stage Two

Pupils should find out about different types of reproduction, including sexual and asexual reproduction in plants, and sexual reproduction in animals.

Pupils should draw a timeline to indicate stages in the growth and development of humans. They should learn about the changes experienced in puberty.

Pupils could work scientifically by researching the gestation periods of other animals and comparing them with humans; by finding out and recording the length and mass of a baby as it grows. (NC Year 5 Science Programme of Study)

Through the PSHE curriculum in Years 5 and 6 pupils are taught about:

Puberty – Boys and girls need to be prepared for puberty. Through the teaching of RSE they will know and understand that they will change and develop, and will have confidence in managing the physical and emotional changes. Children are taught about:

- Changes in the body related to puberty, such as periods and voice breaking.
- When these changes are likely to happen and what issues may cause young people anxiety and how they deal with these.
- How a baby is conceived and born.

Menstruation - Girls should be prepared for menstruation before their periods start. Class teachers will ensure all girls are clear of the arrangements in school to help them cope with menstruation and from whom sanitary protection is available.

Marriage and Family Life

DFE Guidance: Sex & Relationship Education, July 2000 states:

‘As part of Sex and Relationship Education, pupils should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children. But the government recognises that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. Therefore, pupils should learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society. Care needs to be taken that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.’

We live in a society that includes an increasing number of cohabiting partners and families in which the parents have divorced or separated. Teachers do not assume that each child in their class lives with both parents and when discussing marriage, handle this with sensitivity.

Divorce and separation of parents can have a profound effect on young people. Ignoring marriage and marriage breakdown for fear of causing pain will not help children process what they may be going through. Teaching is focussed on stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society. Our practice is equally inclusive of civil partnerships and same-sex relationships.

Confidentiality

Teachers understand that the provision of advice to individual pupils should be undertaken with considerable care, particularly if this relates to sexual behaviour. The dividing line between good pastoral care and trespassing on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities is very narrow.

DFE Guidance: Sex & Relationship Education, July 2000 states:

‘Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that schools should be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. Where younger pupils are involved this will be grounds for serious concern and child protection issues should be addressed.’

Teachers need to be aware that during effective RSE pupils will be taught about what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, and this can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.

If a member of staff (teaching or non-teaching) suspects that a child is a victim of abuse or has reason to believe that he/she is at risk of abuse, they should report their concerns or suspicions to the Headteacher, as the member of staff with designated responsibility for child protection, and follow the procedures set down in the school’s Child Protection Policy.

Key Principles of the School’s Confidentiality

- Pupils will be reassured that their best interests will be maintained.
- Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers and will be given support to do so.
- Pupils will know that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- Pupils will be reassured that, if confidentiality has been broken, they will be informed first and then supported as appropriate.
- If there is any possibility of abuse, the school’s Child Protection procedure will be followed.
- Pupils will be informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the school nurse, counsellor, GP or local young person’s advice service.
- Ground rules will be established and used in lessons.

Are there specific topics that are not covered?

Following consultation with parents it is agreed that it is not considered appropriate to the needs of children at Aston and Cote Primary for some specific issues to form part of the planned teaching programme for RSE. These issues include:

- Contraception, however it is considered appropriate that children are aware that pregnancy can be avoided through abstinence and other methods.
- Abortion
- HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections

It is to be expected that reference to these topics could arise in discussion. Teachers will need to balance the need to give proper attention to relevant issues with the need to respect pupils’ and parents’ views and sensitivities.

What teaching strategies are used for delivering Relationships and Sex Education?

It is essential, that as a school we help our pupils develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about Relationships and Sex Education. Teachers and other staff can use a range of teaching strategies to help them do this, including establishing ground rules, introducing 'distancing' techniques, making use of discussion and project learning, and encouraging reflection.

Ground Rules - A set of ground rules will help teachers create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from pupils. Ground rules will be developed with each class at the outset of a PSHE unit relating to RSE. Ground rules will address these principles:

- No one (teacher or pupil) will have to answer a personal question.
- No one will be forced to take part in a discussion.
- Only the correct names for body parts will be used.
- Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.

Distancing Techniques - Teachers can avoid embarrassment and protect pupils' privacy by always depersonalising discussions. For example, role play can be used to help pupils 'act out' situations. Case studies with invented characters can help pupils discuss sensitive issues and develop their decision-making skills in a safe environment.

Dealing with Questions - Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions from pupils in a whole-class situation.

Having a set of ground rules and a 'question box' available for pupils to put in their questions, anonymously if they wish, should reduce the chances of this happening but teachers will need support and training so that they are prepared for the unexpected. For example:

- If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher can suggest she or he might like to discuss that with her or his family; or refer him or her to the appropriate person, such as the school nurse, helpline, or an outside agency or service.
- If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is important to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the question later.
- If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have been treated with respect, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect the teacher must remember to talk with the pupil later.
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's child protection procedures.

Discussion - Research into what makes RSE effective shows that discussion encourages learning and is enjoyed by pupils. Methods used will include discussion techniques such as the use of circle time.

Reflection - Reflection is crucial for learning as it encourages pupils to consolidate what they have learned and to form new understanding, skills and attitudes. Teachers can help pupils reflect on their learning by asking questions like these:

- How did you feel taking part in today's discussion?

- What did you learn from the others, especially those who had a different experience or belief from your own?
- What do you think you will be able to do as a result of the discussion?
- What else do you think you need to think or learn about?

Input from Health Profession - Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality. In-line with best practice they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in the classroom by using the negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques.

What resources are used to deliver Relationships and Sex Education?

The best resource in the classroom is the teacher and many resources can be put to good educational effect if the teachers use them skilfully. To do this, as part of the planning process, teachers will be aware of:

- Their own values
- The values implicit in resources
- The values which have been negotiated and agreed with parents and Governing Body.
- The teacher's role in consultation with senior leaders is to ensure that any resource selected is appropriate, is sensitively used, that inaccuracies or imbalances are corrected and that effective learning takes place. When making decisions on the suitability of resources to be used, teachers will:
 - Consider pupils' needs, preferred learning styles, age, maturity and knowledge.
 - Preview the resources thoroughly, meeting and briefing any health partners involved in the teaching of RSE.
 - Check the policy, programme aims and objectives.
 - Ensure materials are in-line with DFE, Department of Health and Diocesan guidance and do not conflict with personal or parental values.
 - Plan and prepare appropriate and adequate follow up materials or activities.

Resources to be used in the teaching of sex education are reviewed as part of the three-year review cycle of policy and practice. On an annual basis prior to the teaching of sex education in Years 5 and 6, parents have the opportunity to view materials including DVD footage to be used.

Do children have to take part in sex education?

As a school we will always seek to work in partnership with parents believing this is essential to effective RSE. Parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex education and growing up; the school's RSE programme is designed to complement and support parents in their role.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Relationships & Sex Education that falls outside the National Curriculum for Science. However, by involving parents in developing our school RSE Policy, we hope to minimise the need for any parent to withdraw their child.

Parents are informed in writing prior to the teaching of sex education. They are given the opportunity to see teaching materials to be used, and receive explanations of the way in which it is proposed to use them in the classroom. Parents will be reminded of their right to withdraw their child/ren and the procedure they should follow to exercise this right.

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child, they should put their request in writing to the Headteacher – a reason does not have to be given. Once a request has been made, that request will be complied with until

the parent, changes or revokes it. Pressure will not be put on parents who decide to withdraw their children.

How do we monitor the effectiveness of Relationships and Sex Education?

Monitoring is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the named governor for Safeguarding.

The school will assess the effectiveness of the aims, content and methods in promoting children's learning by sampling teacher's planning, questionnaires to teachers and children, and feedback from parents.

Findings from monitoring and evaluation together with feedback from consultation with key stakeholders will be used to review this Policy every three years. In reviewing the policy, the following questions will be asked:

- Is the policy working?
- How do we know?
- Are any changes needed?
- Does the policy encourage good practice?
- Does the programme meet the needs of children at Aston and Cote Primary?
- Does the policy continue to reflect the views of parents, staff, governors and pupils?