

# The Acorn Federation Relationships and Health Education (R.H.E) Policy

## Policy Statement

### **Introduction**

This statement sets out the legal framework, the definitions and our policy expectations. The Acorn Federation implements this policy, adapted to meet the needs of individual contexts and cohorts.

The Acorn Federation ethos is that effective personal development is crucial to the rounded education provided to our pupils. Every child should have access to effective Relationships and Health Education.

This policy outlines the commitment to provide effective Relationships and Health Education for all pupils in support of that offered by parents, who are the first educators of their children in this area. It has been written with regard to the DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education guidance 2019 and statutory requirements.

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 make Relationships and Health Education compulsory for children receiving primary education.

RHE teaching contributes to our statutory duty to safeguard children and prepare them for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. RHE will be taught in an age-appropriate manner throughout the Federation.

### **Legal Framework**

Updated guidance:

[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414222/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_and_Health_Education_guidance.pdf)

*Please note: This policy should be read in conjunction with our policies on Safeguarding & Child Protection, Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) and Equality.*

### **Definition**

Relationship and Health Education is committed to supporting all children to grow up happy, healthy and safe, and to provide them with the knowledge they need to manage the opportunities and challenges of modern Britain. Through RHE children learn about relationships, diversity, respect, healthy lifestyles, safety, the body and how it changes, reproduction and birth in a sensitive and age-appropriate way. This is aimed at building the foundation of skills and knowledge that will be developed further at a secondary level.

Our key aim in providing RHE is to safeguard our pupils. Pupils will learn key knowledge and skills to help keep them safe and prepare them for adult life. Sex Education for primary age pupils is not compulsory. However, at The Acorn Federation, we ensure that our sex education programme is age appropriate and is tailored to the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils, and should be aligned with the model policies issued by the relevant local authority. The policy will equally be outlined and shared with the relevant stakeholders and parents.

The statutory subject of Health Education includes coverage of: mental wellbeing; internet safety and harms; physical health and fitness; healthy eating; drugs, alcohol and tobacco; basic first aid; and, changing adolescent body (ie. puberty education)

### **Key Objectives**

The key objectives of the RHE programme should be to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of positive and healthy relationships and the importance of commitment
- Enable children to gain the skills and understanding to support the development of healthy bodies and minds
- Develop pupils' skills around assessing risk and keeping safe
- Enable pupils to recognise and manage their emotions effectively
- Support pupils to effectively manage their health and wellbeing
- Make pupils aware of their rights especially in relation to their bodies
- Enable the development of social and relationship skills and protective behaviours
- Prepare pupils for the physical and emotional changes of puberty
- Develop understanding of reproduction and birth within the context of loving and caring relationships
- Explore a range of attitudes, values and faith perspectives around aspects of relationships and sex
- Support pupils to use the internet safely and to recognise the benefits and risks that it brings Provide pupils with the knowledge and skills to access appropriate support

The RHE programme is based on the needs of pupils, in order to support learning outcomes appropriate to their age, ability and level of maturity. Pupils will be helped to appreciate difference and to respect themselves and others.

### **The Curriculum:**

RHE will be taught in each year group throughout the Federation. The curriculum we deliver is age-appropriate and progressive, building the children's knowledge, understanding and skills year on year. RHE will be delivered, and parents/carers will be informed of what will be covered annually.

The following aspects and concepts will be covered within the RSHE guidance published in June 2019.

- Mental wellbeing
- Physical health & fitness
- Sexual education
- Being safe
- Changing adolescent body
- Basic first aid
- Internet safety & harms
- Drugs alcohol & tobacco
- Healthy eating
- Respectful relationships
- Families (& people who care for me)
- Online relationships
- Caring friendships

### **Sex Education**

In addition to Relationships and Health Education, sex education is taught in **years 5 and 6**. Parents are able to withdraw their child from this learning if they choose to (see 'Parents' section below).

### **Implementation:**

We deliver our RHE curriculum through a range of approaches within the school day.

These include:

Collective Worship

A weekly PSHE lesson

Science Lessons

## Computing Lessons

Since RHE incorporates the development of self-esteem and relationships, pupils' learning does not just take place through the taught curriculum but through all aspects of school life, including the playground. It is important then that all staff understand they have a responsibility to implement this policy and promote the aims of the Federation at any time they are dealing with children.

### **Teaching and Learning**

The personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of RHE. The approach to the teaching of this subject matter is rooted in education, rather than beliefs or emotion. A balanced and non-judgmental approach will therefore be taken. Teachers, and all those contributing to RHE will work to the agreed values within this policy.

Within RHE pupils will develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about relationships, keeping safe, health, puberty and sex. To achieve this, a number of teaching strategies may be used, including:

- Establishing ground rules with pupils
- Dealing with children's questions in an appropriate manner
- Using discussion and the appropriate materials
- Encouraging reflection
- Using strategies for pupils who may not wish to raise suggestions in front of others e.g. a question (ballot style) box.

### **Equality, Inclusion and Support**

Relationships and RSHE should be delivered in line with the Equalities Act and Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure those with protected characteristics do not face discrimination. Positive action is taken to deal with disadvantages affecting a group because of protected characteristics.

In complying with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, we value diversity, encourage respect for all and promote tolerance for, and celebration of, difference. We do not discriminate against pupils because of any protected characteristic (age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation). At times, when there is an identified need, we may take positive action through our planning and delivery of RHE to deal with disadvantages facing those with a particular characteristic.

RHE will be accessible to all regardless of their gender or background. Through the delivery of RHE, teachers will explore gender stereotypes and how they may limit a person's potential and ensure that people of all genders receive information that is relevant to their needs.

There are many different faith and cultural perspectives on aspects of RSHE. We aim to deliver RHE in a factual, non-judgmental way, ensuring that teachers do not promote one faith or cultural viewpoint, but rather provide a balanced approach that acknowledges the wealth of views and opinions of our community and teaches tolerance.

Parents and carers are key partners in RHE and are best placed to support their children to understand how their learning at the Federation fits with their family's faith, beliefs and values. To support this process we will ensure that parents are made aware of what will be taught and when.

We will use a range of materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the Federation population and encourage acceptance and tolerance. We want every child and family to feel included, respected and valued.

A range of different families and relationships will be explored within RHE. All children whatever their identity, developing identity, or family background need to feel that RHE is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. Resources used will demonstrate awareness of both the Academy community and wider society where possible.

## **SEND**

Teachers will plan in different ways and use a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs of individuals. For some children, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities, a tailored approach may be necessary to ensure learning outcomes are met – this will be discussed with parents/carers and based upon the individual needs of the pupil, prior to the session.

## **Vulnerable Pupils**

Some pupils may have experienced adverse childhood experiences that may impact on their ability to engage with RHE in a variety of ways. Care will be taken to ensure that, where this is the case, parents/carers are consulted about the most appropriate way for the pupil to access the curriculum.

## **Safe Learning in RHE**

It is important that all pupils feel safe and able to participate in RHE lessons. To support the involvement of all pupils, teachers will use a range of teaching strategies and ensure that pupils are aware of the expectations before beginning each session.

As with any topic, pupils will ask questions during RHE to further their understanding. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, teachers will employ strategies to ensure that questions are asked and answered in a factual, balanced and age-appropriate way.

When pupils can write independently, pupils may be introduced to the 'question box', into which they can place their written questions. This allows the teacher the opportunity to group questions into themes and filter any that may need answering on an individual basis or, in some cases, referred to parents. All staff will be mindful of their safeguarding role and will follow the relevant Federation procedures if a question raises concerns of this nature.

Teachers will use the following strategies to deal with unexpected questions:

- If a question is personal, the teacher will remind pupils of the rules and expectations.
- If the teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, the teacher will acknowledge this and will research the question and provide an appropriate answer later.
- If the question is too explicit, is outside set parameters, is inappropriate in a whole class setting or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher will attend to it on an individual basis which may involve informing parents.

Sometimes pupils may ask questions about issues that are not part of the planned programme, this could show that the taught curriculum is not meeting their needs. This will be fed back to the leader as part of the evaluation and monitoring process.

## **External speakers**

External speakers (eg NSPCC Speak out Stay safe) may be used to enhance the delivery of RHE.

All external speakers

deliver in line with our RHE policy and safeguarding procedures.

- be suitably qualified to deliver RHE sessions
- be aware of the school policy on RHE and work within this
- be supervised by a member of staff at all times when on school premises
- be familiar with the Safeguarding Policy and alert the teacher to any safeguarding concerns
- understand their contribution they make to the broader RHE programme
- be suitably vetted prior to being booked

## **Staff Training**

All staff delivering RHE will take part in training and be familiar with this policy. If a staff member has additional learning and development needs, these will be supported either through mentoring from a more experienced staff member in the Federation, team-teaching, or attendance at an internal or external training event.

## **Assessment and Review**

Teachers use a range of assessment strategies to track pupils' progress. This may include marked exercise books; self-assessment and peer assessment. Governors will monitor the achievement of pupils in RHE. Pupil's progress in RHE will be included in the end of year report.

## **The Role of Parents**

RHE is a partnership between the Federation and parents/carers. We recognise that in RHE, parents and carers play a core role and we therefore welcome their engagement with our programme. It is important that RHE delivered within the Federation is explored in more detail within the context of individual families. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our Federation through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we:

- Inform parents routinely about the Federation's RHE policy and practice (prospectus/letters/emails/ website)
- The curriculum content and organisation is shared and explained
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RHE of their child
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RHE in the Federation
- Conduct consultation on an annual basis about any needs in relation to our RHE programme and policy

Any parents wanting more information about our RHE curriculum can contact Mrs Claire Sharpe.

## **Right to withdraw from Sex Education**

Whilst we always try to work with parents to explore their views, we also accept that parents can exercise their right to withdraw their child from the sex education elements of our programme (other than that which comes within the science curriculum). There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Any parent wishing to exercise this right should initially contact the Head teacher to discuss the matter.

If a pupil is withdrawn from an aspect of Sex Education, alternative arrangements will be put in place. This provision and the nature of this learning will be negotiated on an individual basis, dependent on the needs of the pupil.

## **Resources**

As with any other subjects, the breadth of the RHE curriculum necessitates the use of a variety of age-appropriate resources. Teachers select resources that support the learning outcomes for the year group they are teaching. Parents are invited (annually) to review these resources and familiarise themselves with anything which is used.

We hold a parents meeting each year where you can familiarise yourself with the resources to be used. If you would like to see these at other times of the year please speak to your child's teacher. If you would like to discuss any of the resources in more detail please contact Mrs Claire Sharpe.

## **Confidentiality, Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Everyone involved in RHE will be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. Teachers will discuss confidentiality with pupils, making it clear that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Pupils will be informed that if confidentiality has to be broken, due to safeguarding concerns, they will be informed first and then supported as appropriate.

Teachers will be aware that effective RHE, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. Everyone involved in RHE will be alert to signs of abuse and report concerns or suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as outlined in the safeguarding policy. Any disclosure of sexual activity from a primary age child would raise immediate child protection concerns that would be dealt with in a sensitive manner in line with local safeguarding procedures.

### **Menstrual Wellbeing**

Some pupils will begin menstruation whilst still in primary education. To support pupils who are menstruating, we have in place the following:

- Sanitary disposal units are available in the staff toilet
- Pupils can access sanitary products from the staff toilet
- For those experiencing period poverty free sanitary protection can be accessed from a member of staff

When a pupil starts menstruating in the Federation, we will support them on-site and inform parents. Our RHE programme covers basic information about menstruation in year 5 and 6. If your child has difficulties managing their periods at school please contact the class teacher for support.

### **The Role of the Head Teacher**

It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to ensure:

- That parents and staff are informed about the Federation's RHE policy.
- The policy is implemented effectively.
- That members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.
- This policy is monitored on a regular basis and reports are made to governors on the effectiveness of the policy.

### **Links to other Policies**

It is important to acknowledge that this policy does not remain in isolation and is used in conjunction with the following Policies:

- . Anti-bullying
- . Healthy eating
- . Religious Education
- . Science
- . Safeguarding
- . Equality
- . Health and Safety
- . SMSC
- . British Values
- . Curriculum
- . Complaints

### **Concerns/ Complaints**

Any concerns regarding this policy should be addressed informally in the first instance by approaching your child's class teacher. If concerns remain, then they should be addressed via the complaints procedure which is available on the Federation website.