



Relationships and Sexual Education

2024-2025

Learning to Flourish

To provide Personalised learning experiences so that every child can communicate, interact, grow and develop to the best of their ability. Together with families, we can ensure that our children have the skills and knowledge to manage everyday life as independently as they can and to lead happy and successful lives, through our values of Socialisation, Communication, Interaction, and Play

A Policy for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Contents

- *Introduction*
- *What is RSE?*
- *Aims of RSE*
- *The nature and values of relationships and sexuality education*
- *Entitlement and statutory requirements*
- *Implementation*
- *Whole school organisation*
- *Developmentally appropriate teaching*
- *Assessment and Monitoring*
- *Equality and diversity*
- *Roles and Responsibilities*

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide all stakeholders (learners, staff, parents/carers, governors, and external organisations) at The Hollies information about our Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) provision. We believe that relationships and sexuality education is part of the educational entitlement of all pupils and as part of a “whole school approach.” All young people, whatever their ability, develop physically and emotionally and therefore need to be helped to understand their bodies and their feelings. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a core part of this development and forms a part of our wider Curriculum provision. By providing children with an understanding of healthy and respectful relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider effective RSE to be a fundamental part of our approach to supporting pupils to grow into confident, caring, responsible and respectful young citizens. High quality RSE is fundamental in creating a safe school environment where learners grow and develop positive, healthy relationships for life. At the Hollies School we believe all learners have the right to receive high-quality, holistic, and inclusive education about relationships and sexuality.

Within the Hollies, RSE is taught within the Health and Wellbeing area of learning and experience. In addition, some aspects of the RSE programme will be covered through:

- Science curriculum
- Digital Competence
- Circle time
- Assemblies
- Class Stories
- PE in the context of health and hygiene
- Health and Wellbeing
- Humanities

What is RSE?

RSE is lifelong learning about personal, physical, moral, and emotional development. It should teach children and young people to develop and form positive values, attitudes, personal and social skills, and increase their knowledge and understanding of how to make informed decisions and life choices. RSE is a positive and protective part of the Curriculum for Wales. It plays a central role in supporting learners' rights to enjoy fulfilling, healthy and safe relationships throughout their lives. A rights and equity based RSE curriculum helps ensure that all learners can develop an understanding of how people's faith, beliefs, human rights and cultures are related to all aspects of RSE and how these rights can contribute to the freedom, dignity, well-being and safety of all people.

Aims of RSE

Aims of RSE at The Hollies School is fully inclusive which means that we use a whole school, strategic approach to fully include and respond to the needs of all our learners and families. RSE has a positive and empowering role in learners' education and is vital in supporting them to realise the four purposes as part of a whole-school approach. Our RSE curriculum enables learners to form and maintain a range of relationships, all based on mutual trust and respect, this is the foundation of RSE at our school. Good quality RSE empowers learners to make responsible, well-informed decisions and to be able to understand themselves and others. Equipping learners to challenge harmful stereotypes and perceptions and be able to seek help and support.

The nature and values of relationships and sexuality education

The Hollies School believe that pupils' ability to lead their lives competently and with fulfilment can be greatly enhanced by learning about their own sexual development and by developing their awareness of their relationships with others. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) explores the interconnected ways in which a wide and diverse range of social, cultural, technological and biological influences affect the ability to form and maintain positive relationships. The governing body also believes that the basis of moral behaviour is that each of us feels valued for what we are, and of worth to others. Our pupils have ASD and a variety of additional needs and come from a range of backgrounds, but they all need to experience our values at the Hollies.

Socialisation Communication Interaction Play

Socialisation-getting on with others

Communication-to develop our functional language.

Interaction-to connect with the world around us.

Play- foundation for all learning.

It is vital that all of our pupils are able to form loving and caring relationships throughout their lives.

Consequently, the overriding vision for our RSE Curriculum at The Hollies is to give our pupils the skills to conduct such relationships with dignity and assertiveness and to avoid being exploited. This overriding aim is supported by the following objectives: -

1. Provide a consistent standard of relationships, sexuality and health education across the school.
2. Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect and self-esteem, especially in their relationships with others confidence and empathy
3. Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
4. Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
5. Give pupils an understanding of reproduction and sexual development.
6. Create a positive culture of communication around issues of relationships.
7. Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
8. Promote responsible behaviour, including both online and offline behaviours.
9. To provide all pupils with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to make positive and healthy choices concerning relationships as they grow up and deal with risk.
10. Combat exploitation and violence/abuse against Women and Men alike at the pupils' own level of development.

Entitlement and statutory requirements

The sex education programme provided at The Hollies has been carefully planned to take account of students' age, maturity, and stages of emotional and physical development. It will develop slowly throughout the time the young people are in school, using well proven methods which allow time for repetition, practice of relevant skills and reflection. It will be fully and constantly evaluated.

RSE is a mandatory requirement in the Curriculum for Wales for all learners from age 3 to 16. This means that all learners must receive this education. There is no right to withdraw from RSE.

'Teaching will be age-appropriate, gradually building learners' knowledge, skills and ethical values and will consider the maturity and ALN needs of all its pupils.' 'This must take into consideration physical maturity – ensuring sensitively that pupils have the knowledge and understanding of changes that will affect them at onset of puberty before these changes start to occur. RSE will be taught in a neutral, factual way. It will be objective, critical, and pluralistic as to its content and manner of teaching.

- Reactive – dealing sensitively to issues when they arise.
- Preventative – Ensuring children are aware of changes to themselves both physically and emotionally. Helping develop skills of respect.

- Protective – ensuring children know who they can go to for help. And that children know their rights.

Implementation

Our RSE curriculum is embedded within our Health and Wellbeing area of learning and experience (AoLE). We have developed the curriculum considering the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an age-appropriate manner, so they are fully informed and do not seek answers online. Some aspects of sex education are part of the statutory National Curriculum for Science. The biological elements of sex education, including naming body parts, puberty and human development are all compulsory parts of the National Curriculum Science. Consequently, the following areas MAY be covered at school during the primary years, depending on the abilities and needs of pupil's including: -

- Relationships
- Values, rights, culture, and sexuality
- Self-awareness – who am I? What can I do?
- Identifying and naming body parts
- Understanding Gender.
- Staying safe & privacy
- Family and friends – who do I know?
- Skills: choosing, making decisions, saying yes and no
- Human body and development
- Preparation for puberty – periods (at appropriate age)

There are 3 National elements that the RSE curriculum is based on. These are;

- Relationships and identity
- Sexual health and wellbeing (at a developmentally appropriate level)
- Empowerment, safety, and respect

Whole School Organisation of RSE

Our RSE curriculum will support and build on each learner's knowledge, skills and values in appropriate ways throughout their development and create safe and empowering environments which build on learners' experiences both within and beyond the educational

setting providing positive alternatives to some learners' experiences. Set out below are the key principles regarding how RSE is organised and embedded at our Schools:

- RSE is part of a whole-school approach and effectively integrated and coordinated across the curriculum. Effective RSE requires specialist expertise, time and resources which the school will regularly evaluate to ensure are in place. This will ensure a supportive environment is created to ensure learners and practitioners are safe to discuss and learn about issues which may be sensitive or challenging.

RSE will be interdisciplinary and cross-curricular in its approach to content, knowledge and understanding and in the way it is explored. RSE is a broad and complex area that includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions that evolve over the lifespan.

- All practitioners contribute to the school's RSE priorities and professional learning is a key requirement for delivery of high quality RSE. At the Hollies we enable all practitioners to access learning that can support them to develop confidence and knowledge regarding RSE.

- RSE will always be delivered in a way that is inclusive. This helps ensure that all learners can see themselves, their families, their communities and each other reflected across the curriculum and can learn to value difference and diversity as a source of strength. This contributes to a cohesive, fair and equitable society that equips learners with skills for life.

- Provision draws on specialist services and expertise, and we engage with local communities. Our curriculum will always be mindful of the different perspectives and backgrounds within our local community.

- Our approach to RSE will be protective and preventative, considering how learners might need to be supported to:

- ❖ understand and cope with change, conflicts and pressure;
- ❖ have the knowledge to recognise discrimination and violence, including Violence against Women and Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence;
- ❖ seek help and advice where appropriate.

- The teaching of RSE will respond to and be respectful of the lived experiences of learners. The approach to RSE involves recurring themes and topics which reinforce and build on the learners' developing understanding and changing needs and encourages learners to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Practitioners recognise learners' social, physical, emotional and cognitive development and needs, as well as their evolving knowledge and experience.

- Progression in RSE is a continuous process aiming to improve overall learner well-being and safety and to realise the four purposes. As learners progress, they will build on previous learning: consolidating and strengthening the same dispositions; knowledge and skills and applying them in new, relevant contexts.

Developmentally Appropriate Teaching

Welsh Government requires that the RSE provided must be ‘developmentally appropriate’ for learners. Therefore, at The Hollies, we will always take account of a range of factors such as the learner’s age, knowledge and maturity and any additional learning needs. RSE needs to be developmentally appropriate for each learner. The age of learners should be one of the criteria by which teachers decide upon the appropriateness of content; however, there will be other factors they will need to consider when planning for this element of the Curriculum. Factors such as the physical and mental and emotional development of learners will also be considered. This is essential to ensuring learners are kept safe from information for which they are not sufficiently mature to process. This, however, should not be a reason for not providing children with the essential information they need as they develop physically, mentally and emotionally; developmentally appropriate RSE requires the coverage of subjects that are integral to learners’ development.

The delivery of RSE Curriculum Our Relationships and Sexuality Education programme will be delivered in a developmentally appropriate and sensitive manner by class teachers. Ground rules in class and across the school are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter and teaching RSE. Clear ground rules are established in partnership with the class, then reinforced at the start of each relevant lesson. As a minimum, ground rules are likely to include the following basic guidelines:

- Listen politely to each other
- Everyone gets a turn to speak, if they want to
- Everyone has a right not to speak
- Everyone’s contribution is respected
- We don’t ask or have to answer any personal questions
- We use anatomically correct language when we have learnt it. Pupil’s questions will be dealt with honestly and sensitively and in an age-appropriate way.

Confidentiality

Teachers conduct RSE lessons (or lessons that incorporate RSE principles) in a sensitive manner. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Legally, the school cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. We aim to ensure that pupils’ best interests are maintained and try to encourage pupils to talk to their parents or carers to provide support. If confidentiality has to be broken, pupils are informed first and then supported by the designated teacher throughout the whole process.

Assessment and Monitoring

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Senior Leaders through, for example, monitoring planning, learning walks and lesson observations. Pupils’ development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. RSE will be monitored and

evaluated, in line with all AoLE areas within the school, as part of our annual self-evaluation cycle. This policy will be reviewed on a 2-year cycle and approved by the governing body in line with statutory guidance. Since RSE 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. It is important then that all staff understand they have a responsibility to implement this policy and promote the aims of the school at any time they are supporting children.

Equality and Diversity

At the Hollies we, have specific responsibilities in relation to equality and protected characteristics. Planning and resources are reviewed to ensure they comply with equalities legislation and the school's equal opportunities policy. All RSE is taught without bias and in line with legal responsibilities such as those contained within the Equality Act (2010). 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 that may have different opinions. The personal beliefs and attitudes of staff delivering RSE will not influence the teaching of the subject in school. In our school we seek to recognise and embrace the diverse nature of our community. We aim to value and celebrate religious, ethnic and cultural diversity as part of modern Britain. We will explore different cultural beliefs and values and encourage activities that challenge stereotypes and discrimination and present children with accurate information based on the law. We will use a range of teaching materials and resources that reflect the diversity of our community and encourage a sense of inclusiveness. We do not use RSE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation.

Roles and responsibilities

Governors

The governing body has delegated the approval of this policy and will review its arrangements and effectiveness on a regular basis.

The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leaders are responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school.

- That members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity
- Resources are readily accessible to support teaching and learning

- Monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors on the effectiveness of the policy

Staff

Staff will decide on the most effective teaching approaches to use in the classroom, dependent on the needs and abilities of the pupils. The Hollies believes that learning about personal matters is increased if pupils learn in a small supportive group where they feel safe. At our school we also believe that teaching sex education to pupils who have difficulty understanding concepts means that teaching may need to include more opportunities for repetition and reinforcement. The SLT support the use of correct words for body parts and functions, and of visual material which is clear and unmistakeable. Sex education will be taught by teachers, who may decide to work on a team basis. The most valuable resource in the education of our pupils is to be found in the understanding, experience, skills and creativity of school teaching and non-teaching staff. The use of everyday objects and opportunities can be used in the teaching programme and to avoid confusing pupils, some explicit resources will be needed: illustrative material; cut outs of bodies and body parts; and anatomically correct models.

All staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Monitoring progress

Class teachers are responsible for teaching RSE where teachers will reply to, and answer, children's questions sensitively and openly. They will ensure that balanced information is provided which will consider different faiths' views and avoid any negative impressions. Teachers will need to answer questions that may arise through the direct teaching of RSE, as well as those that may be asked at other times. All questions will be handled sensitively and set within a general context. Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher. Questions which teachers feel uncertain about answering should be discussed with SLT and answered at a later date.

Pupils

Pupils at The Hollies are not excluded from the programme. Using appropriate methods, they will experience most of the basic content including self-awareness, body parts recognition, privacy. Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, appropriate to their level of communication and understanding when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity. Pupils' views, as always, will be sought as part of our

ongoing monitoring and planning for RSE within the school and this will be established through the usual channels already established within the school.

Parents

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's RSE lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation. In promoting this objective, we:

- Will carry out our statutory duty to consult with parents and governors on the contents of this policy
- Inform parents about the school's RSE policy and practice (available on the website)
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RSE of their child; this includes providing opportunities for parents to view the resources that are used in lessons
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSE in the school

Adopted by governors: 2023

Reviewed and updated: