



COBHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Caring, Proud, Successful!

Relationship and Sex Education Policy

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Introduction:

1. This policy covers our school's approach to Relationship and Sex Education, not only in lessons but through the attitude of our team, families and pupils alike, our ethos and approach and commitment to equality both within and outside of the classroom.
2. It was produced through consultation with our team, board of governors, and most importantly with our pupils and parents.
3. It will be reviewed on a regular basis, every 2 years 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 DfES but also remains relevant to the experiences of our pupils.
4. To ensure its use, this policy will be available for staff to refer to by each member **having a paper copy provided** and to parents through **a link to the policy on the school website being sent through our schoolcomms communication network**.
5. This policy reflects our schools overarching aims and objectives for our pupils by **the expectation of every adult and child being Caring, Proud and Successful as well as our TRUST values of Tolerance, Respect, Unity, Strength and Truth**.
6. We recognise that as a school we have a legal responsibility under The Relationships Education, Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 & 35 of the Children & Social Work Act 2017, to provide comprehensive Relationship Education and Health Education for all pupils receiving primary education.
7. 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*.
8. 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*.
9. 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.

10. 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.
11. 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 Relationship Education:

12. 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.*
13. However, we believe comprehensive and honest relationship 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.
14. 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.
15. Comprehensive relationship 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.
16. 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.

17. In addition, we believe comprehensive relationship 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.

Defining Sex Education at Primary School:

18. Although The Relationships Education, Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made Relationship 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.
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. In our school 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 human life cycle set out 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.
22. 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.
23. 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:

24. In school we meet the learning objectives as set out in the Relationships Education, Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 for primary schools with a whole school approach.

25. The local authority delivers ongoing support and training to all staff to ensure they are confident and competent to deliver the materials appropriately and safely. This includes training around safeguarding and answering children's questions age appropriately.

26. We believe it is important that this material is delivered by the classroom teacher as it highlights to the children that relationship 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 form vulnerable due to some of the sensitive nature of the topic. We believe this makes them ideally placed to deliver the material sensitively to all children in their class. Staff receive updates/training on a yearly basis when needed through staff meetings, led by the leader of RSE. Curriculum maps are updated as part of this process.

Protective Behaviours:

As a school, we believe the following to be an intrinsic part of children's development and rights:

27. We all have the right to feel safe all the time.

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

29. We can recognise and understand our own mental health and well-being and develop our own support networks of safe adults who we can share their worries with.

Our Aims:

- The development of a personal identity, to be able to value themselves and others.

- The development of positive social interaction, and the skills to live and work with others.

Our Objectives:

- Develop a clear set of values and attitudes, establishing a strong moral code and keeping to it.

- Value themselves as unique human beings, capable of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth and development.
- Learn to live and enjoy a healthy, safe lifestyle.
- Develop an active role as a member of a family and of the community.
- Value family and marriage as one of the foundations of a civilised society.
- Respect the rule of law and encourage others to do so.
- Know and understand their own physical development.
- Respect themselves and others.
- Manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Recognise and avoid abuse.
- Be responsible for their actions and their consequences.
- Develop the life skills of communication, listening, negotiation and recognising pressures.

Content

Year R:

- Respect the rule of law and encourage others to do so.
- Know and understand their own physical development.
- Respect themselves and others.
- Manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Recognise and avoid abuse.
- Be responsible for their actions and their consequences.
- Develop the life skills of communication, listening, negotiation and recognising pressures.

Year 1:

- Learn how to look and sound friendly, and consider the qualities we look for and need to develop in order to have and be a good friend.
- Know that emotions vary in intensity from mild to very powerful.

- Know that sometimes we have to share people and things.
- Know how we make changes in our lives and cope with them.
- To extend their understanding of their own and others' healthy lifestyles.

Year 2:

- To experience how supportive it feels to belong to and be valued by a group.
- To develop an understanding that our behaviour influences the feelings and behaviour of other people.
To use knowledge and skills to make informed and responsible personal choices.
Understand that people have to make hard choices that affect others.

Year 3:

- To be introduced to some basic skills of assertiveness.
- Become more responsible for their healthy lifestyle.
- Know that more than one feeling can be experienced at a time.
- To consider some ways in which change is positive, developmental and necessary.
- To understand that people make their own choices.
- To develop their understanding of happiness and excitement, sadness and fearfulness, as well as ways to manage feelings.
- To be introduced to the correct terminology for their public and private bodily areas.

Year 4:

- To be able to resist pressure and influence.
- To know some of the changes in their bodies as they approach puberty and how to deal with them.
- Know that a degree of apprehension about change is normal and that humans have a range of strategies for coping flexibly with it.
- Develop strategies to recognise feelings in others and to help others overcome negative feelings.
- Use problem-solving skills to generate solutions, decide on a course of action, implement it, and review it.

Year 5:

- To revise knowledge of some of the changes in their bodies as they approach puberty and how to deal with them.
- To be able to assess risks and make appropriate, safe decisions.
- Explore the idea that negative feelings about change do not last for ever.
- To learn about every human's basic rights and the differences between needs, wants and rights.
- To be aware of the greater need for personal hygiene.
- Explore friendship choices

Year 6:

- Know that there are both internal and external body changes during puberty.
- Know that each person is made from an egg from a woman and a sperm from a man.
- Know how it feels to hold a minority opinion, feel confident in standing up for your beliefs.
- To explore the importance of taking responsibility for action and behaviour.
- Develop strategies for managing their feelings.
- Learn a number of strategies for dealing with embarrassment.
- Develop strategies that enable them to manage change more effectively.

30. We believe by answering children's questions which are perfectly natural at any 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 a 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.

31. 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. If a question is a particularly sensitive question that may need a follow up discussion, parents of the child may be notified. If the question is not age appropriate, then again sometimes it will be discussed with the parent/s for them to deal with if they see fit.

32. 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 included without feeling vulnerable.
33. As part of teaching safe and appropriate touching we recognise that we also need to address how children touch themselves including self-stimulation. We acknowledge that as part of *Healthy Sexual Development*, children of all ages tend to self-stimulate. Many children even in early infancy will touch themselves because it feels nice but there will rarely be a sexual undertone. As children reach puberty they often become more aware of their genitals and may start to masturbate properly. Throughout the programme we tackle the issue of self-stimulation and masturbation. We talk to children about private activities that should only happen in private spaces.

Answering Children's Questions:

34. We are aware that children are likely to have many questions that may occur 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.
35. 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.
36. 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. 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.
37. We believe that if children ask a question they deserve an answer. If ignored 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.

38. 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 and 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 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, our suggested response is: *"That is a brilliant question, 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 parents may be uncomfortable with, staff may choose to delay answering the question (as above) until they have spoken to the parent/carer if possible and talk 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:

39. 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.
40. 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.
41. 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 of how they can get a copy of this policy.
42. 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. Prior to our RSE lessons in Year 4 on puberty and Year 6 lessons on Relationships and Sex Education, parents are notified of the plans and content of both and in Year 6 parents are

invited to school to watch parts of the DVD used. Parents can raise any concerns during the meeting or are advised to inform the headteacher both confidentially and anonymously if they so wish.

43. We recognise under the new draft guidance for Relationship Education, Relationship & 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.**

44. Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these 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. We 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.

45. If parents do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the head 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:

46. 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.

47. 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.

48. Puberty is occurring earlier than ever 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 year 4, 5 & 6.

49. 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.

50. 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.
51. 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.
52. In school we have a menstruation kit available in the disabled toilet in the junior block, 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.
53. 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.

Safeguarding Children:

54. 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.
55. All members of staff who deliver any of our Relationship 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.
56. 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.
57. We recognise that for children who may be vulnerable due to past or present abuse or changes in family situations, this type of work, whilst it may be sensitive, there may be needs to adapt the programme or offer additional support. It is also a protective factor in preventing further abuse, to help them make sense of their experiences and essential to help them develop skills and resilience to keep them safe in future.