

## Relationships and Sex Education Policy July 2021

This policy has been written with regard to the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Guidance published in 2019.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/805781/Relationships\\_Education\\_Relationships\\_and\\_Sex\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

### INTRODUCTION

Bethany School aims to provide all our young people with a curriculum that ensures they are prepared for adult life in modern Britain. Relationships and Sex Education, and Personal Social Health and Economic Education (PSHE) can help to provide students with the key knowledge to:

- ensure that they can keep themselves safe
- develop healthy and positive relationships
- maintain good mental health
- build resilience
- manage their finances
- prepare for the workplace and
- successfully navigate the changing world in which they are growing up

We understand that from **September 2020**, and subject to making the regulations, all secondary schools (maintained, academies or **independent**) will be required to provide Relationships and Sex Education (RSE); this policy reflects that guidance.

As a Christian school, we believe that any teaching on relationships, love and sex should be delivered in accordance with the Christian faith, based on a historic biblical understanding of human beings and their relationships, both with God and each other, and at the appropriate age.

We understand that positive, healthy relationships are vital to our sense of wellbeing, and a good gift from God who affirmed the importance of loving both God and ones neighbour when Jesus said

...the first and greatest commandment is 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and the second is Love your neighbour as yourself'

Matthew 22 v 36-40

In relationships and sex education, we place the emphasis on helping pupils understand and form respectful, loving relationships with friends, peers, family and all those they interact with. Understanding how relationships work and developing relationship skills gives a context for understanding human sexuality and sexual health. Our focus in the primary setting relates to building healthy relationships and staying safe. The secondary area of the school focuses on developing the students' understanding of healthy adult relationships in more depth, with sex education delivered in that context, and in accordance with Christian teaching.

We aim to develop an integrated approach that is sensitive to the needs of our students and the school community. We honour and affirm the role of parents as the primary educator of their children in line with our 'family school' ethos which is based on our understanding of the Bible. This includes their right to withdraw their child from sex education. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from sex education, but not from

learning about relationships in accordance with RSE and Health Education Guidance, (DfE2019). We would encourage parents to look at the curriculum material before doing so and encourage and support parents to teach their children about relationships and sex before they learn about it outside the home.

## **RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION**

**Definition:** Relationships and Sex Education *is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of loving and caring relationships.* Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DfE 0116/2000)

### **Principles**

#### **Age appropriate**

We believe that children and young people have not yet attained full maturity and staff will keep this in mind when delivering relationships and sex education. We will ensure that the information comes at an appropriate time and in a manner matched to their age, needs, physical and psychological maturity. Our consultation with parents resulted in feedback that could be broadly characterised as a desire that children not be taught 'too much, too soon'. See consultation data, available on request. Awareness of where each child is in their development and their individual differences are key factors in choosing when to deliver this education.

#### **Partnership with parents and right to withdraw**

Working with families is one of the core aims of Bethany school. As per the DfE guidance, when drawing up the new RSE policy, a parental and staff consultation was opened at the parents meeting in November 2019 and was closed on 21st May 2021. (See consultation data). We know that our RSE will be most effective when parents also spend time discussing issues with their children, and we promote an open dialogue with parents in relation to all our curriculum, including making the resources used for RSE available to families.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons but not relationships education. Parents will be given advanced notice of sex education lessons, and those who choose should request a parent's withdrawal letter (Appendix A) and discuss the matter with the Head Teacher, who will document the reasons. In these cases, the school will undertake to provide alternative learning for the pupil who is absent. We recognise that our pupils have a variety of home backgrounds, with some having a Christian faith, some another faith and some no faith at all. We respect the diversity of views on issues of relationships and sex and our aim is to be sensitive in areas where there are differences.

#### **Consistent with our ethos**

Our Biblical ethos strongly teaches that every person has equal value, worth and dignity as they are all made in God's image. As such we treat all our pupils and families, whatever their beliefs, with the same care and compassion and without partiality.

We recognise and teach that in British law, marriage is between two consenting adults, in line with the Marriage (same sex couples) act 2013. We also know that many Christian churches and other faiths believe that marriage is the union of one man and woman for life. We believe that the Bible outlines the best way for human relationships, and refer to the recent guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) which provides helpful clarification that the traditional, Biblical nature of marriage can continue to be taught in schools.

"Teachers, other school staff, Governors, parents and pupils are all free to hold whatever personal views they choose on marriage of same sex couples, including a view that marriage should only be between a man and a woman. The Government recognises that the belief that marriage can only be between a man and a woman is a belief worthy of respect in a democratic society."

“Schools with a religious character can continue to deliver sex and relationship education in accordance with their particular religious doctrines or ethos. They must do so in a sensitive, reasonable, respectful and balanced way”

### **Equip for the future**

We are committed to presenting pupils with a Biblical, balanced and sensitive education on relationships and sex. Bethany School prepares our pupils for life in modern Britain and actively promotes British values. Pupils are taught throughout our curriculum at age appropriate times, of the diverse worldviews and opinions of our society. As we seek to educate our pupils on the Bible's good teaching for life, and guide them through the choices they face, we also encourage them to think through these issues for themselves, rather than accept ideas without question. They learn to practise respect and tolerance of those with different beliefs and lifestyles including different types of relationships, and are equipped to understand different perspectives, paying particular regard to those with protected characteristics under the 2010 equality act.

### **Well planned and sensitively delivered**

We seek to ensure that our staff deliver good quality relationships and sex education that communicates facts and viewpoints clearly. Class teachers deliver the content of RSE across the curriculum in PSHE, science, topic, R.S. and during tutor time, school prayers, circle time or 1-1 support. The Bethany school curriculum grid details when the different topics are covered throughout the school. A range of teaching methods which involve children's full participation are used to teach relationships and sex education. These include use of video, discussion, looking at case studies and drama. 'Lovewise' have been selected as the main curriculum provider, as they seek to provide PSHE and RSE resources from a Christian perspective. Resources may be supplemented with activities from the PSHE Association, Twinkl or other appropriate organisations.

### **Aims and Objectives for Relationships and Sex education**

We aim to

- provide our pupils with a knowledge and understanding of Biblical teaching on a range of healthy relationships and sexual love and help pupils understand the importance of families for nurture, identity and wellbeing, depending on their age and maturity levels;
- provide our pupils with a positive understanding of what constitutes healthy, loving relationships, and how relationships may affect physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- clarify and reinforce existing knowledge;
- provide our pupils with a knowledge and understanding of the biological facts about puberty, sex and human reproduction, depending on their age;
- provide our pupils with the skills and confidence to make wise choices in life, protecting their physical and mental health and safety in relationships. This includes having an understanding of sexual health and how to protect themselves against unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), depending on their age and maturity levels;
- teach our senior pupils the biblical view of refraining from sexual intercourse outside of marriage, whilst also providing them with a clear understanding about the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society.
- raise students' self-esteem and confidence, helping them to value themselves and others; helping them to understand their feelings and behaviour, and the importance of personal choice so they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives;
- help pupils develop the communication, decision making, choice and assertiveness skills needed to conduct healthy relationships, cope with the influences of their peers, and the media and get help when required.
- help gain access to information and support;
- help pupils understand the concept of stereotyping, and to discuss issues such as sexual harassment in terms of their effects on individuals.

- give pupils understanding of relevant legislation relating to sexual behaviour, gender, and equal opportunities, and to make them aware of statutory and voluntary organisations which exist to offer support in this regard.

## **CURRICULUM CONTENT**

In accordance with DfE guidance, relationships education is woven into the fabric of the school curriculum. Relationships Education consists of four key elements:

- a) Safety in forming and maintaining relationships
- b) The characteristics of healthy relationships
- c) How relationships may affect physical and mental health and wellbeing
- d) The nature of marriage and civil partnership and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children

Sex education is taught in PSHE in key stage 1, 2 and 3, and in science in key stage 4. Across the school, sex education will be age appropriate and taught from a biblical Christian perspective. Relationships and Sex Education is usually delivered in mixed gender groups, however, there may be occasions where single gender groups are more appropriate and relevant. Schemes of work are detailed in the relevant departmental curriculum grids.

## **Curriculum responsibility**

### **The Governing Board is responsible for:**

- Ensuring all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- Ensuring the curriculum is well led, effectively managed and well planned.
- Evaluating the quality of provision through regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Ensuring teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND.
- Providing clear information for parents on subject content and their rights to request that their children are withdrawn.
- Making sure the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations and teach in accordance with the Bible and the wishes of the parents

### **The Head teacher is responsible for:**

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects.
- Ensuring that parents are fully informed of this policy.
- Reviewing requests from parents to withdraw their children from the subjects.
- Discussing requests for withdrawal with parents.
- Organising alternative education for pupils, where necessary, that is appropriate and purposeful.
- Reporting to the Governing Board on the effectiveness of this policy.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.

### **The PSHE subject leader is responsible for:**

- Overseeing the delivery of the subjects.
- Ensuring the subjects are age-appropriate and high-quality.
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the subjects.
- Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to the relationships, sex and health curriculum.
- Ensuring the relationships, sex and health curriculum is inclusive and accessible for all pupils.

- Working with other subject leaders to ensure the relationships, sex and health curriculum complements, but does not duplicate, the content covered in the rest of the school curriculum.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subjects and providing reports to the Head Teacher.

### **Child Protection / Confidentiality**

- Teachers need to be aware that effective relationships and sex education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, may lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.
- The staff member will inform the Head Teacher in line with the school's procedures for child protection.
- A member of staff should not promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

### **Dealing with Difficult Questions**

- Ground rules are essential to provide an agreed structure to answering sensitive or difficult questions. Sessions may use an anonymous question box as a distancing technique.
- Teachers will endeavour to answer questions as honestly as possible but if faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, provision would be made to meet the individual child's needs.

### **Children with SEND**

Teaching and resources will be adapted as appropriate to address the needs of these children in order for them to have full access to the content of relationships and sex education.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This content has been agreed in consultation with Governors, parents and teaching staff.

Policy Adopted by Governors on: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Policy Due for Review after 1 year and then on a 3 year cycle: July 2022 and July 2025

Signed: Ben Udejiofo (Chair)

## Appendix A

### Parents right of withdrawal letter

Dear Parents

As you may already be aware, Relationships Education is now statutory in all primary schools. We are pleased that this decision has been made as it means that our biblical framework for learning about different relationships; different families; growing up; puberty and their changing bodies is now timetabled throughout the school as personal, social and health education (PSHE) in primary and World View Studies (WVS) in secondary.

Sex Education is also taught at both primary and secondary level, and at Bethany, parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons that are taught in PSHE lessons in key stage 1, 2 or 3.

Sex Education includes the biological names for the external genitalia for both males and females, the physical and emotional changes in puberty, sex; pregnancy; birth and contraception.

Whilst we want to teach about puberty before children experience it, to ensure that pupils' physical, emotional and learning needs are met and that they have the correct information about how to take care of their bodies and keep themselves safe, we recognise the biblical mandate to parent your children and wish to support you in doing so.

In order to keep pupils safe, it is vital that they learn about puberty before it happens. NHS advice states that puberty can begin as early as 8 for girls and 9 for boys. We aim to teach children about puberty in Year 5/6.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or any parts of the Sex Education, however we would urge any parents considering withdrawing their child from these lessons to consider what is being taught, how it is being taught and how important this education is for all children.

Our Relationships Education is fully inclusive to meet the needs of all our pupils. We cover the following objectives:

- being a good friend
- kind and unkind behaviours, including bullying
- teamwork and resolving disputes
- feelings we experience and how to discuss our feelings
- self-worth and self-respect
- important people in our lives
- consent and autonomy
- secrets and surprises
- different families and relationships
- differences, similarities and stereotypes
- body image

Our Sex Education will cover the following objectives

- naming the private parts for our bodies (Key stage 1)
- growing up and physical and emotional changes to our bodies (Key stage 2)
- how babies are made and how babies are born (Key stage 3)

We fully believe that all children should learn about these important life skills from a biblical Christian perspective, in an open, honest and safe environment. We teach these lessons in an age-appropriate and engaging way. We encourage parents to view our Relationships, Sex and Education Policy and scheme of work. We value our strong partnership with parents and will always communicate what is being taught through our usual communication methods. We will also provide any further reading or support for any parents wishing to discuss the objectives taught with their children at home.

Any children who are withdrawn from Sex Education lessons will be provided with alternative learning in another learning space.

If there is any part of the curriculum that you have concerns or queries about, please do come in and speak with your child's class teacher, Gill O'Connell or the Head Teacher.

If you would like to remove your child from a Sex Education lesson, please sign the slip below and return to the Head Teacher.

Yours faithfully,



Date:

Dear Head Teacher,

I/We wish to withdraw \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ class from

\_\_\_\_\_ (please clearly state the PSHE lesson you are removing your child from).

Signed parent .....

Head Teacher.....