



# Relationships and Sex Education Policy

**Approved by: LGB Board**

**Date: Autumn 2021**

**Last reviewed on:** Autumn 2021

**Next review due by:** Autumn 2022

The Genesis Education Trust have at their heart a belief that all children are loved by God, are individually unique and that the school has a mission to help each pupil to fulfil their potential in all

aspects of their personhood: physically, academically, socially, morally and spiritually. Our aim is that all may flourish and have an abundant life. Our schools have a duty to try to remove any factor that might represent a hindrance to a child's fulfilment. We want all pupils to willingly engage in learning in a safe and welcoming environment as reflected in a statement from the Archbishop of Canterbury:

*People are made in the image of God. All of us, without exception, are loved and called in Christ. The way forward needs to be about love, joy and celebration of our humanity; of our creation in the image of God, of our belonging to Christ – all of us, without exception, without exclusion*

We are proud to support this ethos and at our school, we love, embrace and accept the diversity of our school community. We celebrate the fact that our school community is made up of people who are in happy, loving relationships of all varieties, as well as having people in our community who have identified as gender neutral; we love, accept and respect all people, just as God has taught us to love our neighbour in the same way that we love ourselves.

The Genesis Education Trust welcomes the new 2020 DfE Guidance on Relationships Education.

Genesis Education Trust values the importance of knowledge in all aspects of life and believes that we should equip all children with the appropriate knowledge to enable them to make informed decisions in the future that would affect their lives. It is therefore necessary for our children to be taught the basic facts about relationships and sex before they go to secondary school, for their own safety and wellbeing.

At the Genesis Education Trust, we aim to educate the whole person. RSE should be carried out as part of the holistic education which seeks to form as well as inform children in preparation for adult life.

In order for RSE to be fully effective it needs to:

- Be faithful to Christ's teaching to love all people in the context in which we live today;
- Encourage the teaching of virtues which are important in promoting dignity and respect.
- Involve parents as they are primary educators of their child;
- Provide a positive view of relationships and sex education;
- Equip our children with the ability to make practical judgments about the right thing to do in particular circumstances;
- Be delivered in an age appropriate way which reflects the development of the child;
- Be taught holistically within the wider curriculum;
- Be sensitive to the needs of the individual child and recognise the mix of family backgrounds;
- Be delivered by professionals who understand the Church's teaching.

1. The principles behind the new DfE guidance for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education are:

- a. that all of the compulsory subject content is age appropriate and developmentally appropriate;
- b. that it must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the background and beliefs of pupils and parents and aiming to provide pupils with the knowledge they need regarding the law.
- c. That parents and carers are the prime educators for children on many areas and schools complement and reinforce this role.

d. The intention is that RSE provides the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online.

2. In response to this significant curriculum development, the Genesis Education Trust undertook various discussions with its schools to agree a way forward. The Trust has sourced materials and information including '1 Decision' to develop and deliver specific resources for our schools to use.

The Genesis Education Trust has worked alongside schools and other organisations to develop guidance to support the implementation of RSE into the curriculum from September 2020.

3. The essential understanding of how to be healthy will be followed through from Reception up to Year 6, with an increased focus on risk taking behaviours such as the effects of substance misuse, as well as introducing basic knowledge about intimate relationships and sex.

Teaching about mental wellbeing is central to RSE as parents and schools prioritise highly their children's happiness. The Genesis Education Trust views RSE as fundamental to many aspects of school life – helping to foster pupil wellbeing and develop resilience and character which leads to pupils becoming happy, successful and productive members of society. Children need to believe they can achieve goals, both academic and personal; they can benefit from sticking to tasks that help them achieve those goals, even when the reward may be distant or uncertain; they can learn to recover from knocks and challenging periods in their lives. Personal attributes, such as kindness, integrity, generosity and honesty, will be promoted through effective RSE.

4. A number of consultations with professionals have been held to consider the implementation of the new Guidance and Genesis Education Trust supports the outcomes of these sessions:

- Aiming to 'Help children to keep themselves safe and understand what is age-appropriate or not – both on and off- line';
- Believing that 'The school believes that in Year 6 children have the right to be prepared to live a healthy, safe, fulfilled and balanced life and so we will be teaching some aspects of sex education';
- Further defining RSE as 'Learning about different family structures and healthy relationships'. This should include exploring various family structures from different ethnic backgrounds, living within an extended family (e.g. grandparents), fostering arrangements and 'step-parent' arrangements;
- Clarifying that 'In terms of sex education in Year 6, this will focus on conception, where babies come from and the correct anatomical language for genitalia';
- Stressing that 'All types of relationships will be taught in a sensitive and age-appropriate way, recognising that not all sectors of our community are in agreement with all of these types of relationship or family structures. Teachers may acknowledge this using the following script:
  - *The law in this country allows and respects the right of people to live in different types of family structure. For example, you may come across families where two men or two*

*women live together or marry and bring up children together or where there is only one parent. These families are allowed under the law in this country and we respect the rights of people to live in different families. If we meet children who live in different sorts of families to those we are familiar with, it is wrong to say bad things about them or to bully them. Like their parents and their families, they are entitled to the same respect as everyone else.'*

When dealing with difficult questions, we use the following advice:

- *Primary aged pupils will often ask their teachers or other adults questions pertaining to health, relationships and sex which go beyond what is set out in the curriculum. Children whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information, including the internet and other children. Children will, therefore, need a graduated age-appropriate response.*
- *The focus for teachers should be on the subject matter planned. Questions of this nature should not generally be answered in front of the whole class. Strategies include offering a 1:1 session outside of the lesson, referring to another more senior member of staff, offering a simple holding answer or mentioning the question to the parents at the end of the day. Teachers should be aware that such questions may raise a safeguarding concern at which point the school's Safeguarding Policy will apply;*
- Where appropriate, using a provider such as 1Decision to assist with resources.

5. Schools should comply with the National Curriculum requirements in relation to RSE. The Genesis Education Trust is pleased that the Government has now made the teaching of relationships in primary schools and RSE in secondary schools compulsory. Health education is an important addition to the curriculum.

The new DfE Guidance helpfully emphasises the importance of inclusive education and covers crucial subjects like consent, different types of families and relationships, safe and respectful relationships, menstrual health, mental health and online safety.

The Genesis Education Trust believes that all children and young people have a fundamental right to high quality, comprehensive Relationship and Sex Education which promotes good health and equal and enjoyable relationships.

6. The Genesis Education Trust is aware that primary schools are not required to teach sex education but believes that our schools should have a Sex Education programme tailored to the age and physical and emotional maturity of our pupils.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from Sex Education (but not Relationships Education including puberty) and Head Teachers would wish to discuss such requests with parents.

7. It will be important to keep parents informed about RSE in the school and stress that the health and well-being of the pupils are an important part of their overall education. This will involve learning about all kinds of relationships, physical and emotional health and living in the wider world.

The aim is to help the children make safe and informed decisions during their school years and beyond. Parents need to be aware that their children will be able to ask questions which will be answered factually and in an age- appropriate manner. Each pupil's privacy will be respected and no one will be asked to reveal personal information. The Genesis Education Trust believes that the presentation of images in social and other media makes it important that all children and young people have a place to discuss pressures, check facts and dispel myths. Parents are the most important educators of young people on personal issues and will welcome the support the school can offer in supplementing home teaching.

8. Children and young people face a host of modern-day issues which need to be reflected in the teaching of RSE. The digital world and social media present a number of risks to children. The NSPCC reports that one in five 8-11 year olds and seven in ten 12-15 year olds have a social media presence. This can lead to problems such as cyber bullying which affects as many as one in three children. It is pre-teens and early teenagers who are most at risk. Educating primary school aged children about the risks, how to stay safe online and how to report abuse will set them in good stead for the future as they become more active online.

9. RSE teaching about healthy and safe relationships with family and friends will help equip young people to recognise the difference between a relationship and abuse: this could include physical, sexual and mental abuse. RSE also develops the characteristics for good mental health and wellbeing such as emotional and physical aspects, connectivity to family, friends, school and the community; healthy behaviours and values and how to seek help. Half of mental health problems are established by the age of 14 but evidence suggests that providing high quality RSE results in happier, more resilient pupils who confront challenges with greater knowledge and experience.

10. Digital context is crucial for young people. RSE lessons can helpfully include: opportunities to develop critical thinking skills so that pupils can recognise advertising techniques, stereotypes and their impact, thus empowering them to make independent choices and to challenge limiting and harmful stereotypes; integrate real-life scenarios so that learning is relevant; help children differentiate between fact and opinion they may encounter online and suggest sources of reliable help; teach pupils about their rights and responsibilities online including legal facts.

## Additional Guidance

This Guidance should be read in conjunction with the DfE statutory guidance on RSE (Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019) and:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)  
<https://educateagainsthate.com/download/36/>  
Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>
- Equality Act 2010 and schools  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>
- Alternative Provision (statutory guidance)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision>
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools (advice for schools)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)  
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance>
  - Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/380595/SMSC\\_Guidance\\_Maintained\\_Schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf)
  - SMSC requirements for independent schools (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulating-independent-schools>
  - National Citizen Service guidance for schools  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-citizen-service-guidance-for-schools-and-colleges>
- Church of England documents  
<https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/subject-management/>
- The Church of England Charter

## **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE) in Church of England Schools**

The Church of England Education Office faith sensitive inclusive approach to Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education<sup>1</sup> (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE) is underpinned by two key biblical passages:

*'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them' (Genesis 1:27, NRSV)*

All people should be given dignity as all people are made in the image of God and loved equally by God. This truth underpins what pupils learn about the differences that are permissible under UK law.

*I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness' (John 10:10, GNB)*

All pupils have a right to an education which enables them to flourish and is set in a classroom culture where differences of lifestyle and opinion are given dignity; bullying of all kinds is eliminated; and where they are free to be themselves and fulfil their potential without fear.

### **Some key principles**

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<sup>1</sup> Where, after consultation with parents and carers, primary schools decide to include elements of sex education in their curriculum.

Church of England schools should ensure that their RSHE<sup>2</sup> curriculum protects, informs and empowers all pupils. It should ensure that children are able to cherish themselves and others as unique and wonderfully made, and to form healthy relationships where they respect and offer dignity to others (SIAMS schedule page 11). It will provide pupils with the knowledge that will enable them to navigate and contextualise a world in which many will try to tell them how to behave, what to do and what to think. It will help them to develop the skills to express their own views and make their own informed decisions. This is a responsibility that should normally be shared between parents and school.

Church Schools are maintained schools and are required to act within the requirements of the law, including the Equalities Act of 2010<sup>3</sup>. The Church of England welcomes, supports and expects the teaching of Relationships and Health Education in all Church of England Primary Schools. Primary Schools can decide whether they wish to choose to teach some aspects of Sex Education. In Church of England Secondary Schools Relationships, Sex and Health Education will be taught. Where Sex Education is taught parents will have the right to withdraw their children from that part of the curriculum 'other than as part of the science curriculum'<sup>4</sup>

We encourage all schools to approach RSHE in a faith sensitive<sup>5</sup> and inclusive way. Such an approach should seek to understand and appreciate differences within and across the teachings of the faith and other communities the school serves. It should give dignity and worth to the views of pupils from the faith and other communities represented in the school as part of ensuring that the Equalities Act of 2010 is applied in the school. It should recognise that there is no hierarchy of protected characteristics in the Equalities Act and that sometimes different protected characteristics can be in tension as they cannot necessarily be equally protected at all times.

## **A CHARTER FOR FAITH SENSITIVE AND INCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION, RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) AND HEALTH EDUCATION (RSHE)<sup>6</sup>**

In *[organisation's name]* we seek to provide Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE), which will enable all pupils to flourish.

### **We commit:**

- 1. To work in partnership with parents and carers.** This will involve dialogue with parents and carers through all stages of policy development as well as discussing the

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<sup>2</sup> The rest of this document uses RSHE to indicate either Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education as determined by the school context.

<sup>3</sup> *Equality Act 2010*. Available at [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents)

<sup>4</sup> *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and health education 2019*. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education> page 18 paragraph 49.

<sup>5</sup> As used by Dr Jo Sell in her recent research which is due to be published by UCL.

<sup>6</sup> RSHE is used to indicate either Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education as determined by the school context since, after consultation with parents and carers primary schools may decide to include elements of sex education in their curriculum.



resources used to teach their children and how they can contribute at home. It must, however, be recognised that the law specifies that what is taught and how it is taught is ultimately a decision for the school.

2. **That RSHE will be delivered professionally and as an identifiable part of PSHE.** It will be led, resourced and reported to parents in the same way as any other subject. There will be a planned programme delivered in a carefully sequenced way. Staff will receive regular training in RSHE and PSHE. Any expert visitors or trainers invited into the school to enhance and supplement the programme will be expected to respect the schools published policy for RSHE.
3. **That RSHE will be delivered in an inclusive way that gives dignity, respect to all that make up our wonderfully diverse society, including the LGBT+ community.** It will be taught in a way that is sensitive to the faith and beliefs of those in the wider school community and will seek to fairly explain the tenets and varying interpretations of religious communities on matters of sex and relationships. It will value the importance of faithfulness as the underpinning and backdrop for relationships. It will encourage pupils to develop the skills needed to disagree without being disagreeable, to appreciate the lived experience of other people and to live well together.
4. **That RSHE will seek to build resilience in our pupils to help them form healthy relationships and resist the harmful influence of pornography in all its forms.** It will give pupils opportunities to reflect on values and influences including their peers, the media, the internet, faith and culture that may have shaped their attitudes to gender, relationships and sex. It will promote the development of the wisdom and skills our pupils need to make their own informed decisions.
5. **That RSHE will promote healthy resilient relationships set in the context of character and virtue development.** It will reflect the vision and associated values of the school and develop character and virtues such as honesty, integrity, self-control, courage, humility, kindness, forgiveness, generosity and a sense of justice. It will encourage relationships that are hopeful and aspirational.
6. **That RSHE will be based on honest and medically accurate information based on reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights.** It will present a positive view of human sexuality. It will distinguish between different types of knowledge and opinions so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health as appropriate to their age and maturity.
7. **To take a particular care to meet the individual needs of all pupils including those with special needs and disabilities.** It will ensure that lessons and any resources used will be accessible and sensitive to the learning needs of the individual child. We acknowledge the potential vulnerability of pupils who have SEND but recognise the possibilities and rights of SEND pupils to high quality relationships and sex education.

- 8. To seek pupils' views about RSHE so that the teaching can be made relevant to their lives.** It will discuss real life issues relating to the age and stage of pupils, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, exploitation and safe relationships online. This will be carefully targeted and age appropriate based on a teacher judgment about pupil readiness for this information in consultation with parents and carers.