

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy



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Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world, navigating both online and offline environments seamlessly. This presents numerous exciting opportunities but also significant challenges and risks. In this context, children and young people need the knowledge and skills to:

- Ensure their safety and well-being.
- Effectively manage their academic, personal, and social lives.

Relationships Education is compulsory for all primary schools in England, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is compulsory for all secondary schools. Health Education is compulsory in all state-funded schools.

Guiding Principles:

- **Age-appropriateness:** All compulsory subject content must be age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate for all students.
- **Inclusivity and Sensitivity:** The curriculum must be delivered sensitively and inclusively, respecting the diverse backgrounds and beliefs of all students and their families.
- **Legal Knowledge:** The curriculum must provide students with the necessary knowledge of relevant laws.

We recognise that parents and carers play a vital role in their children's education and are the primary educators on many of these matters. Earley Springs aims to complement and reinforce this role by building upon the knowledge and values that students learn at home.

Mental Wellbeing:

Promoting mental well-being is a key priority. We acknowledge that children and young people are increasingly facing mental health challenges, including loneliness.

Empowering Students:

To thrive as adults, students need the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their well-being, health, and relationships. They must also develop the capacity to make sound judgments when facing risks, challenges, and complex situations. RSE can equip students with the resilience, knowledge, and support networks they need to navigate life's challenges effectively.

Legal Framework:

This policy is guided by the following legislation:

- **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019:** These regulations, made under Sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, mandate Relationships Education for all primary pupils and RSE for all secondary pupils. They also mandate Health Education in all state-funded schools.
- **Education Act 2002:** Section 78 of this Act requires schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.
- **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014:** Part I of the Schedule requires independent schools (other than academies) to provide for PSHE (paragraph 2(2)(d)) and to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of life in British society (paragraph 2(2)(i)). Part 2 of the Schedule requires all independent schools (including academies) to meet the standards relating to the Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural development of pupils.

Parental Rights:

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. However, they do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education or Health Education.

Pupil Withdrawal Procedures:

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from any or all parts of the Sex Education program, except for those elements required by the National Curriculum for Science, up to three terms before their child turns 16. At age 16, students can choose to receive Sex Education if they desire. Any parent wishing to withdraw their child should inform the Headteacher of their decision in writing.

Either parent or carer may exercise this right of withdrawal. Parents are not required to provide a reason for their decision.

Earley Springs encourages open communication between parents/carers and the school regarding any withdrawal requests.

Provision for students withdrawn from sex education will be made on an individual basis, taking into account the available options at the time. Parents will be informed of any alternative arrangements made for their child.

Working with Parents:

Many young people experience challenges in navigating the emotional and physical aspects of adolescence and developing healthy relationships. Earley Springs recognises that this can be a challenging time for parents as well.

The Relationships and Sex Education program at Earley Springs is designed to complement and support the work that parents are already doing at home. Staff are available to offer additional support to parents, including:

- Sharing information and resources.
- Providing guidance on how to discuss these topics with their children.
- Connecting parents with relevant support services.

Relationships Education (Primary):

In accordance with legal requirements, the primary focus in primary school is on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular emphasis on:

- Friendships
- Family relationships
- Relationships with other children and adults

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): Secondary

The aim of RSE in secondary school is to equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. This includes:

- Understanding the characteristics of healthy relationships (e.g., friendships, family relationships, romantic relationships, professional relationships).
- Learning about contraception and decision-making regarding sexual activity.
- Developing skills to resist pressure to engage in sexual activity and to recognize and address inappropriate sexual behavior.
- Understanding the importance of consent and healthy boundaries within relationships.
- Recognizing and addressing unhealthy relationship dynamics.

RSE builds upon the foundation of Relationships Education taught in primary school. As students mature, the curriculum will gradually incorporate discussions about intimate relationships. However, it is crucial to remember that RSE encompasses a broader understanding of relationships, including family, friendships, and other important social connections.

The curriculum will emphasize the importance of healthy relationships and help students distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationship dynamics.

Legal and Ethical Considerations:

We recognise that there may be diverse perspectives on RSE. However, it is essential to teach applicable laws factually to ensure students understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Organisation of RSE and Health Education:

At Earley Springs, Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education are made accessible to all students.

- **Curriculum Planning:** Learning Approach Leads are responsible for the overall planning and coordination of the curriculum.
- **Classroom Delivery:** Class teachers adapt and deliver the curriculum to meet the specific needs and abilities of their students.
- **Guest Speakers:** In some cases, external visitors with relevant expertise may be invited to contribute to specific aspects of the curriculum. When this occurs, the content of the guest speaker's presentation will be discussed and agreed upon in advance with a senior leader.

Flexibility and Adaptability:

The government emphasizes the importance of flexibility in curriculum delivery. Schools are encouraged to:

- Develop an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate curriculum that meets the specific needs of their students.
- Consider local public health issues and community needs when designing the curriculum.
- Adapt materials and programs to address the specific needs and circumstances of their student population.

Working with Parents:

Earley Springs recognizes the importance of working collaboratively with parents/carers. We believe that open communication and shared understanding are essential for supporting student learning and well-being.

Relationships Education (Primary):

In the primary phase, the focus of Relationships Education is on:

- Building positive friendships.
- Developing healthy family relationships.
- Understanding and respecting relationships with other children and adults.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): Secondary

In the secondary phase, RSE aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to:

- Develop and maintain healthy relationships of all kinds (e.g., friendships, family relationships, romantic relationships).

- Understand the importance of consent and healthy boundaries within all relationships.
- Recognize and address unhealthy relationship dynamics.
- Make informed decisions about their sexual health and well-being.
- Develop the resilience and skills to navigate challenging situations and relationships.

Curriculum Resources:

A wide range of resources are available to support the delivery of Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education. These include:

- **Relationships Education:**
 - **Safeguarding:** NSPCC PANTS rule with accompanying film.
- **Relationships and Sex Education:**
 - **Sexual Health and Relationships:** Up-to-date information on all aspects of sexual and reproductive health can be found on the Sexwise website.
 - **Abuse in Relationships:** "Disrespect NoBody" resources from the Home Office and Government Equalities Office.
 - **Consent:** Lesson plans and resources from the PSHE Association.
 - **LGBT+ Inclusivity:** Lesson plans and materials.
- **Mental Health:**
 - Mental health and emotional well-being lesson plans from the PSHE Association.
 - MindEd educational resources on children and young people's mental health.
- **Online Safety:**
 - **Education for a Connected World:** The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCCIS) provides a framework of digital knowledge and skills for different age groups.
 - **Sexting:** UKCCIS offers guidance for schools on preventing sexting and managing reported incidents.
 - **Thinkuknow:** This NCA-CEOP program offers resources for parents, teachers, and students on a wide range of online safety issues, including digital footprints, recognizing fake websites, and checking URLs.
- **Drugs and Alcohol:**
- Planning effective drug and alcohol education based on research and briefing papers.
- **Extremism and Radicalization:**
- Resources and guidance from "Educate Against Hate" to help protect children from extremism and radicalization.
- **General Health and Well-being:**
- Public Health England provides a wealth of resources on various health topics, including relationships, bullying, alcohol, smoking, stress, body image, and online safety. These resources often include videos created by young people and materials that have been tested with teachers.