



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Policy reviewed and agreed by: Teaching, Learning and Inclusion Committee
Date: April 2026
Next review: April 2027

Statement by the Governing Board

In adopting this policy, the Governing Board recognises its responsibility for ensuring the policy is implemented effectively, including that the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school fulfils its legal obligations.

Introduction

This policy covers Goring Church of England Primary School's whole school approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

RSE is vital for the personal, social and emotional development of pupils. It equips children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, respectful and enjoyable relationships and to make appropriate and well-thought-through decisions as they approach adulthood.

All children and young people have a right to holistic, inclusive and needs-led RSE. Through providing high quality RSE, the school's ethos and values and its commitment to equality and celebration of difference are upheld. Reflecting the school's vision and associated values, this policy aims to help children to grow up feeling confident about their emotional and sexual health and with the ability to live alongside people who have different values and beliefs about sex and relationships.

This policy was produced in consultation with the staff, board of governors, pupils and parents. The school will ensure the policy is effectively communicated to staff and parents, including through publishing the policy on the school website.

The information below complies with statutory obligations to deliver RSE under sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It also has due regard for the DfE's (Department for Education) statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance and other relevant guidance.

The policy is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it is in line with current Government guidance and legislation and to ensure that the RSE programme continues to meet the needs of pupils.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equality and Accessibility Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- PSHE Policy

Equality, inclusion and social justice

'Schools should consider what they can do to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls; and provide an environment which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic, including through these subjects and as part of a whole school approach.'

Department for Education (2019, p.14)

RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. It is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes, sexism and sexual harassment in school. Staff take these issues seriously and ensure that content on gender equality is embedded throughout the curriculum.

Goring Church of England Primary School is also committed to RSE that makes every pupil feel valued and included and is relevant to them. This means staff are committed to LGBTQ+¹ inclusion and SEND² inclusion and are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice 2014 when planning for this subject.

Staff also ensure that they consider the religious and cultural background of all pupils when teaching RSE.

Inclusive RSE at Goring Church of England Primary School will seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

Definition of relationships and sex education

'The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.'

(DfE Guidance, p25)

Consistent with the school's Anti-bullying and Equality Policies, and following the guidance provided by the Church of England's 'Valuing All God's Children' document, the school use a gender equity and human rights framework for RSE. Staff take a positive, inclusive and affirmative approach that accepts children's and young people's experiences and enables them to be explored sensitively.

¹ LGBTQ+ refers to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, and to people with gender expressions outside traditional norms, including nonbinary, intersex, and other queer people (and those questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation).

² SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability.

To meet the aims outlined in the DfE Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education Guidance, staff will equip pupils to build positive relationships online and offline. The school seek to ensure the curriculum gives pupils the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help them to:

- value their health, wellbeing and dignity
- build self-esteem and self-worth
- accept and value their personal identity and the personal identities of others
- understand and make sense of the real-life issues they are experiencing in the world around them
- manage and explore difficult feelings and emotions
- consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others
- develop as informed and responsible citizens
- understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

High quality, comprehensive RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation but in fact builds young people's confidence and self-esteem and helps them understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity.

Evidence shows³ that effective RSE plays a role in behaviour change, including reducing unprotected or unwanted sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Subject content and delivery

'Effective teaching in these subjects will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to pupils, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme or lessons.'

Department for Education (2019, p.8)

The school curriculum programme is developed by the PSHE and RSE subject coordinator in conjunction with the views of teachers, pupils and parents.

At Goring Church of England Primary School, staff teach to the learning objectives and content outlined in the DfE Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education Guidance. All content will be delivered in a timely way and will be age and developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of pupils, including those pupils with SEND.

RSE will be delivered at Goring Church of England Primary School as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all key stages, using a spiral curriculum approach (a course of study in which pupils will see the same topics throughout their school career, with each encounter increasing in complexity and reinforcing previous learning). The topics that are covered in each year group are as follows:

- 1) Me and my relationships
- 2) Valuing difference
- 3) Keeping myself safe
- 4) Rights and responsibilities

³ <https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/evidence/sre-evidence> - Briefing which aims to provide an accessible and accurate summary of the research evidence relating to relationships and sex education (RSE), particularly the contribution of RSE to behaviour change. It includes findings about RSE from the third British National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal).

- 5) Being my best
- 6) Growing and changing

More details of what is covered in these topics specific to each year group are outlined in the PSHE long term plan which can be found on the school's website.

The school uses a scheme called 'SCARF' (Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience, Friendship) to supplement their teaching and provide high quality resources during lessons.

The PSHE and RSE coordinator work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas (e.g. Science, Computing, RE and PE) to ensure a holistic and joined up approach to what is taught in RSE.

RSE will address aspects of relationships and sex in an integrated way within a single topic. Staff will not artificially separate learning about real life and online relationships when it is appropriate to integrate this teaching and explore a topic in both contexts. Where an issue is experienced exclusively or disproportionately in an online context, this will be drawn out.

The school also use external agencies, where appropriate, to deliver aspects of Relationships and Sex Education (see 'Working with visitors and external agencies' section below).

The programme will be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way, using the correct medical terms where appropriate (e.g. for external body parts). School staff will not express or be expected to express their personal views or beliefs when delivering the programme.

All staff who have responsibility for delivering RSE will undergo training on a regular basis to ensure they are up-to-date with the RSE policy and curriculum requirements regarding RSE.

In addition to ongoing training, CPD will also be scheduled in response to updates to the RSE scheme of work and any new development in terms of course content.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school regularly monitor and evaluate the RSE scheme of work to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, that the curriculum is meeting the new national requirements under the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance, and that learning outcomes are reflective of pupil need.

This policy will be reviewed by the school's leadership team in conjunction with the PSHE and RSE coordinator and Governors on a regular basis. If changes are needed, members of staff, parents/carers and pupils will be consulted, and any amendments clearly communicated.

The School's Leadership Team monitors and evaluates the implementation of the programme and pupil's knowledge and understanding through:

- Pupil voice (e.g. using pupil surveys and focus groups)
- Evidence from lesson observations including analysing pupil engagement in lessons
- Teacher evaluation of lessons and the overall RSE programme
- Looking at samples of pupils' work
- Analysis of behaviour incident records (e.g. prejudicial bullying)

Pupil voice

'Listening and responding to the views of young people will strengthen the policy, ensuring that it meets the needs of all pupils'

Department for Education (2019, p.12)

Pupil voice is central to the culture and ethos of the school. Staff use pupil voice to evaluate how relevant and engaging RSE is to children's lives.

Throughout the RSE scheme of work staff embed pupil voice practices to enable pupils to express their views on the range of topics and issues that RSE covers and to ensure that they listen to other opinions and evidence, reflect on their own perspectives and take a broader view.

The school wants to ensure that all pupil voices are heard but that those views that are hurtful, offensive or exclusionary do not dominate and are addressed appropriately and without delay.

The school want to ensure a culture where human rights, social justice, inclusion and diversity are promoted.

Answering pupil questions

'The school's policy should cover how the school handles [difficult] questions. Given ease of access to the internet, children whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information.'

Department for Education (2019, p.23)

RSE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from pupils. Staff view questions as a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others.

To ensure pupils have every opportunity to ask any question they might have and to avoid loss of dignity for all, school staff may offer pupils the chance to contribute questions anonymously in advance of specific lessons (e.g. on puberty). This will enable staff to form appropriate answers with factually accurate information.

As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, staff will answer it to the whole group. There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class. If school staff do not feel in position to immediately address questions, they may defer a question and seek more information before responding to pupils.

Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way and take into account whether a parent/carer has requested their child to be removed from sex education lessons. If school staff have concerns about pupil contributions or questions, they will inform parents/carers as appropriate.

School staff will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their pupils that could make either party vulnerable.

An open approach to answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and older pupils. Staff believe exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSE. Importantly, the school

believes that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they can discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

Working with parents/carers

'All schools should work closely with parents when planning and delivering these subjects. Schools should ensure that parents know what will be taught and when.'

Department for Education (2019, p.17)

'All schools must have in place a written policy for RSE. Schools must consult parents in developing and reviewing their policy.'

Department for Education (2019, p.11)

Successful teaching of RSE involves parents/ carers and schools working together. The school also believe that parents/ carers can play an important role in the RSE of their children through exploring discussions at home that have taken place in school.

The RSE policy has been developed through consulting parents and carers.

See below for how the school works with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of what staff teach and when:

- Long term plans are published on the school website
- Termly curriculum grids are shared with parents/carers
- Teachers write weekly newsletters
- Parents evenings
- Welcome packs for new parents
- Parents receive letters outlining when certain lessons (including lessons that involve sex education) will take place and what will be covered in these lessons

If parents/carers have any concerns or special circumstances that the school should be aware of, or would like any further information about the curriculum, staff can designate a time for them to come into school and address any issues.

Staff may share examples of key resources they use with parents/carers to reassure them of the content and to enable them to continue the conversations started in class at home. If parents/carers wish to view resources, this can be arranged via the school office.

Parental right to request their child be excused from sex education

'All schools should work closely with parents and clearly communicate the fact that parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.'

Department for Education (2019, p.17)

As outlined within the Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSE.

Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education.

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the science curriculum.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of Relationships Education, it is the school's aim to encourage parents to see the value of RSE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice.

Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, the school would ask that they first speak to the headteacher to discuss their concerns. The headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum.

If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this.

The school will remind parents annually that the request to withdraw is still in place and invite them to confirm whether they still want it.

Working with visitors and external agencies

'Working with external organisations can enhance delivery of these subjects, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with young people It is important to agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with school policy.'

Department for Education (2019, p.18)

From time-to-time Goring Church of England Primary School may invite external experts and visitors to deliver or enhance parts of the RSE scheme of work.

External visitors will be selected in order to enrich and supplement RSE by bringing particular skills, methods and expertise to the classroom and the whole school. External visitors may include: a school nurse, someone from the NSPCC or other charities and organisations (for example, One-Eighty)

A teacher will always be present throughout these lessons to build on the pupil's learning after the session/s as well as answer any questions the pupils may subsequently have.

Any external visitor will be expected to comply with this policy and other related policies, including the school's confidentiality and child protection policy.

Staff will also ensure that:

- There is appropriate planning, preparatory and follow up work for the session
- The visitor understands the cohort of children involved, including the different ability levels and diversities in identities across protected characteristics. They will also be made aware of any specific issues relating to child protection.

Safeguarding and child protection

'At the heart of these subjects there is a focus on keeping children safe, and schools can play an important role in preventative education [...] Good practice allows children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports.'

Department for Education (2019, p.42)

Goring Church of England Primary School acknowledges that RSE is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the school and for meeting statutory obligations as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2019).

RSE helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing abuse or have experienced abuse.

Staff recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSE covers, some pupils could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory training around child protection and will follow the schools safeguarding policy and procedures.

Staff also recognise that some children may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes to their personal life. For those children, additional support will be given to prevent them being affected by the scenarios or topics in their planned lessons.

While Goring Church of England Primary School wants to create a learning space that feels safe for children and young people to disclose, staff also want to protect children's privacy.

At Goring Church of England Primary School, the staff do this by using a number of teaching techniques including the use of a working agreement, where rights respecting ground rules are created with pupils on what makes a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Once ground rules have been set, staff will check they are in place throughout the scheme of work and actively referred to. Through the use of ground rules and other approaches, such as distancing techniques, staff believe the school can create a supportive environment for discussions that can be sensitive or difficult.

Reference:

- Department for Education (2019) Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>