

Barford St. Peter's C.E. (V.A.) Primary School

Together we love; together we learn



Sex and Relationship Education Policy

Date adopted: April 2026

Review date: April 2028

Introduction

1. This policy covers our school's approach to Relationship and Sex education, not only in lessons but through the attitude of our staff and students alike, our ethos and approach and commitment to equality both within and outside of the classroom
2. It was initially produced through consultation with our staff, 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 beliefs of the school population and remains up to date with both current guidance from Government and the DfE but also remains relevant to the experiences of our pupils.
4. To ensure its use, this policy will be available for staff and parents through our school website.
5. This policy reflects our school's overarching aims and objectives for our pupils by supporting their physical, emotional and moral development, enabling them to make informed life choices confidently, and furthering their respect for themselves and others as they move through life.
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 we 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, 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. At an age appropriate level, 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, 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 Relationship Education:

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. At Barford St. Peter's we believe that relationship education should also be 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
- Explore personal identity
- Help children understand and make sense of the world they are growing up in
- Help children to recognise and respect the differences and similarities between themselves, their peers and their families
- Help children understand that every human being is unique and has the right to be respected.
- Enable children to understand that there are many different family structures
- Ensure children know that they have the right to feel safe.

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 that there is a difference between public and private behaviours.

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 the parts of their bodies, children are proven to be safer from abuse.

In addition, we believe 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:

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.

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. Details of content taught will be available to parents on the school website and parents will also be invited in to school before lessons are taught so that they are fully informed of the content and can support children with their understanding at home.

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.

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 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.

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 from becoming taboo and children from becoming embarrassed by the topic.

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

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. Each year group follows the Kapow scheme to ensure there is clear progression in knowledge and skills within, and across, year groups. This means that all relevant content is taught (and some areas revisited) so that by the end of their time at Barford, children have received, and had many opportunities to engage with and contribute to, a full and thorough curriculum. Key knowledge and skills covered through the Kapow Scheme include:

- Valuing different family structures
- Creating and maintaining positive friendships
- Developing safe and respectful relationships
- Understanding the changes that take place during puberty
- Promoting good health and carrying out first aid
- Learning to make independent choices and not be influenced by others
- Operating safely in a digital world

With a continual focus on the safeguarding and wellbeing of all pupils, the whole school engages with the NSPCC 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' programme which includes focused assemblies and follow-up lessons. The content of these are continually referred to and kept high profile so that children are reminded of the importance of speaking out if they feel unsafe or are experiencing abuse of any type.

Protective Behaviours

Across all year groups we deliver the Protective Behaviours Programme as recommended by Warwickshire's Safeguarding Children's Board. Protective Behaviours is delivered by the classroom teacher. 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.

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, so we believe it is important that all staff are able to deliver this material to their class also.

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 class vulnerable due to the sensitive nature of the topic. We believe this makes them ideally placed to deliver the material sensitively to all children in their class.

Protective Behaviours is an approach to learning about personal safety. It is a process which encourages self-empowerment and brings with it the skills to avoid being victimised. This is achieved by helping children recognise and trust their intuitive feelings (Early Warning Signs) and to develop strategies for self-protection. The Protective Behaviours Process encourages an adventurous approach to life which satisfies the need for fun and excitement without violence and fear.

Theme 1: We all have the right to feel safe all the time.

Theme 2: We can talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small.

- Protective Behaviours uses a 'Rights and Responsibility' approach and encourages children to recognise their Early Warning Signs (EWS) and develop their own support networks of safe adults who they can share their worries with.
- Protective Behaviours is delivered across the entire school from Reception to year 6, during the Autumn term and revisited before a holiday. There are four lessons in each year group. Lessons are delivered over 4 weeks but key messages are revisited throughout the year as part of our PSHE curriculum.
- For more details, please see the school's Protective Behaviour Manuals for each year group. These can be made available on request.

Answering Children's Questions

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.

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.

By tackling the topic in a factual way, without embarrassment, means that we help children to understand they can talk about, and ask questions about, issues relating to sexual relationships. We encourage children to verbalise questions they may have as part of their natural curiosity. If children's questions are not answered, this may lead to misinformation, or to children seeking their answers from less reliable sources.

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 with the whole class.

- 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 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 party vulnerable.

Parental Rights to Withdraw

We are committed to working together with parents to ensure children grow up to have safe, happy and healthy relationships. We also want to work together to ensure that children have the ability to manage their emotions and speak up when they feel unsafe.

We endeavour to be transparent and give parents information about all the programmes and lessons we deliver around RSE. All parents will be given information about the RSE programmes we teach, which will also be available on the school website or on request from the class teacher.

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 family's beliefs and values.

We recognise that, under the new draft guidance for Relationship Education, Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education (DfE 2018), parents retain the right to request that 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.

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

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 understand the changes happening to their bodies. 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 years 4, 5 & 6.

As part of these lessons all children will be told about menstruation and there will be discussion about what periods are, explanation of other symptoms associated with periods and how they can be managed hygienically and sensitively.

During lessons where puberty and menstruation are discussed, we will take the opportunity to highlight the location of sanitary bins available in school, spare sanitary products and how these are to be used.

In school we have a menstruation kit available in year 4, 5 & 6 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.

When school trips or residential visits are arranged for years 4, 5 & 6, provisions to deal with a child's menstruation should be considered and added to the risk assessment and planned for.

Monitoring & Evaluation

We gather evidence of children's work in their PSHE wellbeing journals where they document their learning experiences. The PHSE lead will monitor children's learning and evaluate their progress twice per year, through deep dives and scrutinising planning.

Safeguarding Children

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.

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.

It is our practice to review safeguarding procedures in team meetings before 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.

We recognise that, for children who may be vulnerable (due to past or present abuse or changes in family situations), or those with complex SEND, there may be a need 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 it is essential to help them develop skills and resilience to keep them safe in future.