



Challenge for Achievement

# The Russett Learning Trust Relationships and Sex Education and Physical Health and Mental Well-Being Policy

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This is a *statutory* policy and it will be reviewed/amended Autumn 2021

## Document Control

There is one controlled copy of this document on Trust Governor

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Trust believes that in order to create a happy and successful adult life, children and young people need to have the self-confidence to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships. Relationships, Sex Health Education (RSHE) is about giving children and young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. Health Education is giving pupils information to make well-informed, positive choices about their own health and wellbeing. The Trust recognises that physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked, and it is important that pupils understand that good physical health contributes to good mental wellbeing, and vice versa.
- 1.2 The Trust has a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure the best for all pupils at its academies irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, maternity, religion or sexual orientation. As a result, RSHE will be sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and may need to adapt and change over time to reflect the needs of the particular cohort. The Trust may also take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting one group because of a protected characteristic.
- 1.3 The Trust is aware of the need to be mindful of and respectful to a wide variety of faith and cultural beliefs across its academies, and will make every attempt to be appropriately sensitive; equally it is essential that children and young people still have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. The Trust believes that its pupils deserve the right to honest, clear, impartial scientific 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.
- 1.4 The policy will be reviewed annually and parents will be consulted in advance about significant changes.

## **2 Aims and Objectives**

Through the delivery of high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate RSHE, Relationship and Health Education, the Trust aims to help prepare pupils for the onset of puberty, give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene, create a positive culture in relation to sexuality and relationships and to ensure pupils know how and when to ask for help and where to access support. By the end of their education the Trust hopes pupils will have developed resilience and feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy in preparation for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

## **3 Definition of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)**

- 3.1 RSE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching sex, sexuality and sexual health in a way that gives pupils the confidence to make sound decisions when facing risks and other challenges. It includes teaching about friendship, the

importance of caring, stable and mutually supportive relationships with another person, and how to control and understand feelings that come with being in a relationship.

3.2 **RSHE does not encourage early sexual experimentation.** It teaches children and young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others, to build self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity so that they can develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

3.3 RSHE will outline that there are different types of committed, stable relationships, the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships, the importance of marriage as a relationship choice and why it must be freely entered into, how relationships might contribute to human happiness and that their importance for raising children, as well as highlighting the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, characteristics of successful parenting and how to judge when relationships have become unsafe as well as how to seek help or advice and report concerns about others.

#### **4 Roles and Responsibilities**

All members of the Trust community are expected to follow this policy. Roles, responsibilities and expectations of each section of the Trust and academy community are set out in detail below.

##### **4.1 Board of Trustees**

Trustees will monitor and evaluate the impact of the policy by reviewing pupils' progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes. They will hold the Chief Executive Officer/Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of the policy.

##### **4.2 The Chief Executive Officer/Executive Headteacher**

The CEO/Executive Headteacher will ensure that RSHE, Relationships and Health Education is taught consistently across the Trust and will report back to the Board of Trustees on educational outcomes. They will ensure that senior staff receive regular professional development training in how to deliver RSHE.

##### **4.3 Local Governing Committee**

Local governors in the academy will review and monitor the application and implementation of this policy by receiving regular reports on educational outcomes. Local governors will scrutinise relevant data, review any issues that might arise and act as a point of challenge for decisions taken. The Local Governing Committee will annually report its findings to the Board of Trustees.

##### **4.4 Executive Headteacher**

The academy with support from their respective Senior Leadership Team, will ensure that staff are supported and up to date with policy changes. They will ensure that RSHE is well led, effectively managed and well planned across various subjects (to avoid unnecessary duplication of topics) and that the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation. To ensure that teaching is age-appropriate, delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with

SEND and that the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled appropriately. They will ensure that teaching delivered by any external organisation is age-appropriate and accessible for pupils and will liaise with parents regarding any concerns or opinions regarding RSHE, Relationships and Health Education provision and will manage parental requests for withdrawal of pupils from non-statutory, non-science components of RSE.

#### **4.5 Staff**

Teachers of RSHE, Relationships and Health Education will ensure that they are up to date with academy policy and curriculum requirements regarding sex education and will attend and engage in professional development training. Teachers will encourage pupils to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal and emotional development in confidence, listen to their needs and support them seriously. If a pupil comes to a member of staff with an issue that that member of staff feels they are not able to deal with alone, they will take this concern to their line-manager.

#### **4.6 Parents**

The Trust hopes to build a positive and supporting relationship with parents through mutual understanding, cooperation and trust. Parents are expected to share the responsibility of sex education and support their children's personal, social and emotional development. The Trust hopes parents will create an open home environment where pupils can engage, discuss and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through school. Parents are also encouraged to seek additional support in this from the academy their child attends where they feel it is needed.

#### **4.7 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to take RSHE, Relationships and Health Education seriously. Pupils are expected to listen, be considerate of other pupils' feelings and beliefs, comply with class-set confidentiality rules and support one another with issues that arise during class. Pupils who fail to follow these standards of behaviour will be dealt with under the behaviour policy.

### **5 Delivery of RSHE and Relationships Education**

RSHE will be delivered in a non-judgmental, factual way allowing scope for children and young people to ask questions in a safe environment. Teachers will tailor the delivery of RSHE to meet the specific needs of the pupils in that class, and to be responsive to their behaviour and development. Classes will explore different attitudes, values and social labels, and develop skills that will enable our pupils to make informed decisions regarding sex and relationships as well as being able to differentiate between fact, opinion and belief and an understanding of the law on various topics. Pupils will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang or everyday terms used in certain social circles will be discussed; this will surround discussion about what is and isn't acceptable language to use.

#### **5.1 Primary aged Pupils:**

In our primary phase RSHE or Relationships Education will be delivered in [science and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) Children of the same age may be developmentally

at different stages, leading to differing types of questions or behaviours. Staff will use teaching methods that take account of these differences and the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.

## **5.2 Secondary aged Pupils:**

In our secondary and post 16 phases RSHE will be delivered in science (KS3 & 4), computing and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and will build on the foundation of [RSHE or Relationships Education] delivered in the primary phase.

## **6 RSHE and Relationships Education: Curriculum and Outcomes**

6.1 By the end of their primary education the Trust expects pupils to know the information set out in the subject curriculum manuals. The Trust recognises that primary-age pupils may ask their teachers or other adult's questions pertaining to sex or sexuality which go beyond the designed curriculum for RSHE or Relationships Education.

6.2 By the end of their secondary education the Trust expects pupils to know the information set out in the subject curriculum manuals.

## **7 Health Education: Physical health and mental well-being**

7.1 The Trust wishes to promote pupils' health and well-being by encouraging self-control, their ability to self-regulate and strategies for doing so. This will enable pupils to become confident in their ability to achieve well and persevere even when they encounter setbacks or when their goals are distant, and to respond calmly and rationally to setbacks and challenges. The Trust believes that an integrated, whole-school approach to the teaching and promotion of health and wellbeing will have a positive impact on behaviour and attainment. Health Education will be delivered in science, Physical Education (PE) and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE).

## **8 Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities**

8.1 The Trust will endeavour to ensure that RSHE, Relationships Education and Health Education is accessible for all pupils. We are aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND and RSHE, Relationships Education and Health Education may be particularly important for such pupils, for example those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Teaching will be sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, differentiated and personalised to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages.

8.2 Staff will make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage faced by pupils with disabilities and will be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects. Staff will use a variety of different strategies to ensure that all pupils have access to the same information.

## **9 Right to request withdrawal from sex education**

- 9.1 The Trust hopes that parents will feel comfortable with, and understand the importance of, the education provided to their children as described in this policy.
- 9.2 Parents of children in primary phases have the right to withdraw their child from sex education and should state this in writing and send it to the Headteacher. Parents of children in secondary academies have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education aspects of RSHE.
- 9.3 Before withdrawing or making a request, the Trust strongly urges parents to carefully consider their decision as sex education is a vital part of the academy curriculum and supports child development. Parents cannot withdraw their child from Relationships or Health Education or the elements on human growth and reproduction which fall under the curriculum.
- 9.4 Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from sex education in a secondary academy should put their request in writing and send it to the Headteacher who will arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the academy will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the academy will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.
- 9.5 If a pupil is excused from sex education the respective academy will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

## **10 Confidentiality and Child Protection**

- 10.1 The Trust hopes to provide a safe and supportive school community where pupils feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at the academy or at home. All teachers will receive training around confidentiality and should ensure that pupils understand that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. If a child protection issue is disclosed to a member of staff, that member of staff should follow the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures.
- 10.2 If a staff member is approached by a pupil under 16 who is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, the teacher should:
- ensure that the pupil is accessing all the contraceptive and sexual health advice available and understands the risks of being sexually active;
  - encourage the pupil to talk to their parent or carer. Pupils may feel that they are more comfortable bringing these issues to a teacher they trust, but it is important that children and their parents have open and trusting relationships when it comes to sexual health and the academy will encourage this as much as possible;
  - decide whether there is a child protection issue. This may be the case if the teacher is concerned that there is coercion or abuse involved. If a member of staff is informed that a pupil under 13 is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, this will be dealt with under child protection procedures. Refer to the Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL).

10.3 Pupils with special educational needs may be more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to protect themselves from harmful influences. If staff are concerned that this is the case, they should seek support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead to decide what is in the best interest of the child.

## **11 Equal opportunities**

11.1 RSHE, Relationships Education and Health Education will be delivered equally to both genders, normally in mixed classes. There are, however, certain topics that may be delivered in single sex groupings e.g. menstruation and personal hygiene.

11.2 The Trust has a commitment to ensure that RSHE, Relationships Education and Health Education is relevant to all pupils and is taught in a way that is age and stage appropriate. Pupils are encouraged to openly and freely discuss diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences. Prejudiced views will be challenged, and equality promoted. Any bullying that relates to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be dealt with swiftly and seriously in accordance with the Trust's behaviour policy.

## **12 Complaints**

If parents have any concerns or complaints over the application or implementation of this policy they should raise their concerns with a staff member or the Headteacher/Trust in accordance with the Trust's complaints policy.

## **Equality Act 2010**

In accordance with its Public Sector Equality Duty, the The Russett Learning Trust has given due regard to equality considerations in adopting this policy/procedure and is satisfied that its application will not impact adversely on members of staff who have a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010.

In addition, the Russett Learning Trust is committed to promoting equality and will ensure that the appraisal process is fair and non-discriminatory and that monitoring data should be included in the head teacher's report covering each of the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010.

The Chief Executive Officer/Executive Headteacher will also report on whether there have been any appeals or representations on an individual or collective basis on the grounds of alleged discrimination under any of the protected characteristics.