

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy



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1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

This supports the Thornden ethos which is based on treating young people as individuals and supporting them through their school career.

The academic achievement of students and the progress they make consistently places the school as one of the best performing schools in the county and amongst the top schools in the country. This level of aspiration and success is only achievable when young people feel safe, confident and have a sense of belonging and these are things we work constantly to nurture and encourage

2. Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy school we must provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

At Thornden we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. A webinar and the draft policy were shared with parents/carers (in view of the COVID-19 pandemic) and any interested parties were invited to ask questions and send in feedback
3. All school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
4. We will review what students want from their RSE over the course of the next academic year
5. The final policy will be shared with governors and ratified

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE makes explicit reference to LGBTQ+ as part of what is covered.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSE is about encouraging students to be able to make informed choices.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum that takes into consideration several factors which include the feelings, age and needs of our students (including SEND and LGBTQ+ students). If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner, so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online without guidance.

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. This is delivered through some elements of "Group" in Year 7, the tutor programme in year 7 & 8 and through bespoke lessons in Year 9, 10 & 11. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in Religious Studies (RS) lessons in Year 7 -9 and Ethics and Belief lessons in Year 10 & 11.

Where the opportunity arises, students also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of the varying needs of our SEND and LGBTQ+ students (as we recognise that sexual orientation and gender reassignment are protected characteristics) as well as family life. Special care is taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example looked after children or young carers).

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The local academy committee

The local academy committee will both approve this policy and hold the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way

- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Head of School.

7.4 Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

8. Parents'/Carers' right to withdraw

Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the Head of School.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The Head of School will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action.

Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

9. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The school will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring arrangements

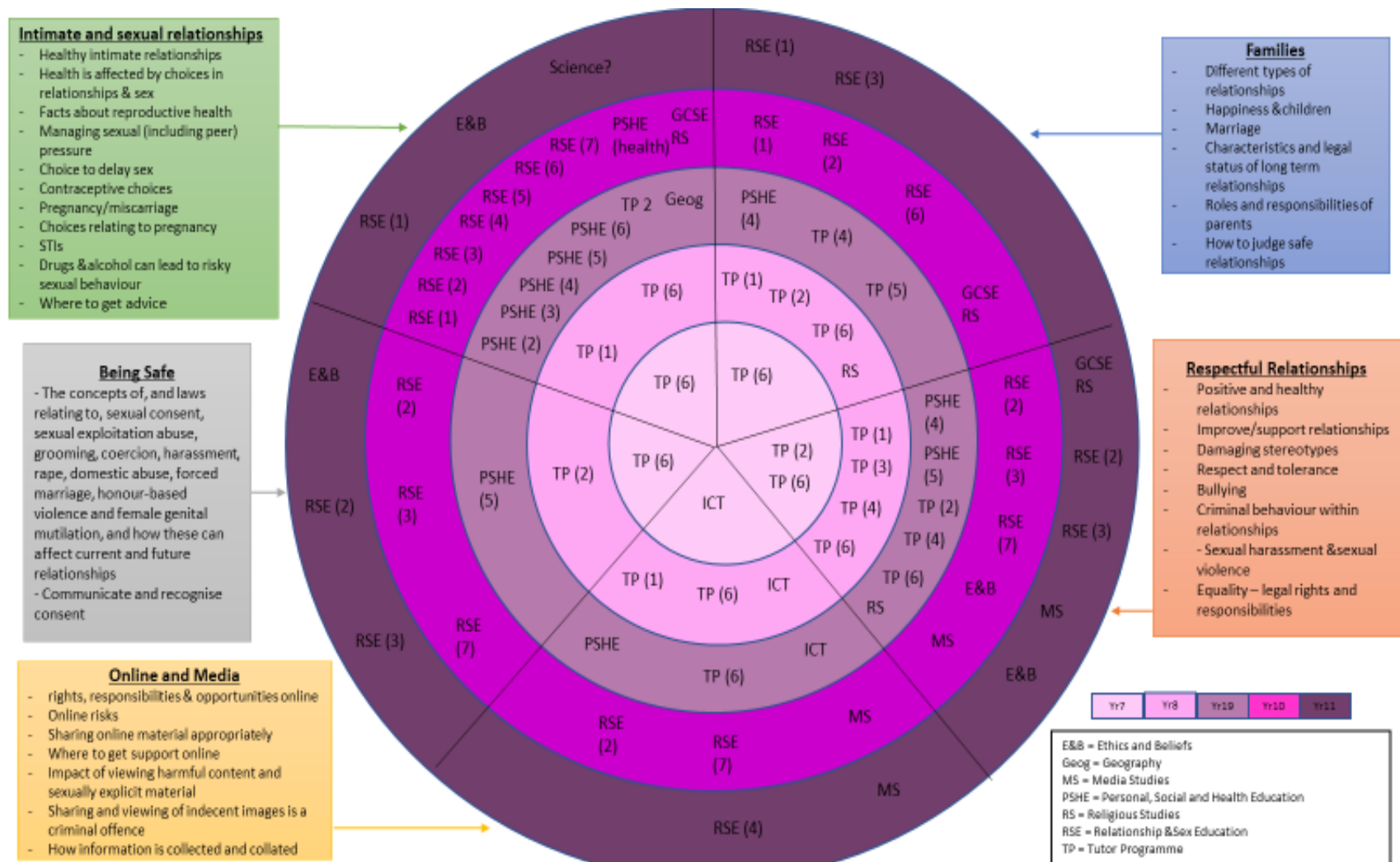
The delivery of RSE is monitored by Judith Evans (Designated Safeguard Lead and Mental Health Lead) & Emma Parker (Head of Year) through learning walks and as part of our Performance management structure (where appropriate).

Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the local Academy Committee annually.

Appendix 1: Curriculum map

Relationships and sex education curriculum map



Appendix 2: By the end of secondary school students should know

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there are different types of committed, stable relationships • How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children • What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony • Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into • The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships • The roles and responsibilities of parents/carers with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting • How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help • That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control • What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable • The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online • Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them • What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online • The impact of viewing harmful content • That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners • That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships • How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship • That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing • The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women • That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others • That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available • The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage • That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help) • How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing • About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment • How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour • How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

Appendix 3: Parent/Carer form: withdrawal from non-statutory aspects of sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS/CARERS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent/carers		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from non-statutory sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent/Carer signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents/carers	