



Downs View Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Co-ordinator	Juliet Hudson
Original date of completion	February 2014
Date of adoption by Governors	November 2022
Date of last review	July 2022
Date of next review	July 2024

Introduction

The Department for Education's policy statement (2017)

Introduce as statutory:

- Relationships education in primary schools
- RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) in Secondary schools
- PSHE in schools

Teaching must be age/ developmentally appropriate

In the context of a school where all pupils have learning difficulties, all pupils have communication difficulties and most have difficulties with social interaction skills; careful teaching about Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is very important. In partnership with parents and carers the RSE curriculum aims to teach our pupils about physical, moral and social development.

At Downs View we believe that to have a broad range of human relationships is every person's right. How those relationships are expressed and carried forward will be a reflection of the individuals concerned, their age, interests, personalities and abilities. All people have a right to the appropriate expression of their sexuality. It is also a right, not to engage in sexual behaviour and not to want sexual relationships. For people with profound levels of disability, the appropriate expression of sexuality can be a problematic concept. However, it is our view, that to ignore or to suppress the sexual aspects of our pupil's personalities would be wrong. The right course of action is to teach both the biology and the moral and social aspects of human development and relationships where possible and appropriate. Finding the right approach for our more disabled pupils is a significant challenge, but it is our view that ignoring that challenge would always result in worse outcomes than attempting to meet it.

It is a sad fact that pupils and students at Downs View are, overall, more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse than their mainstream peers. It is also the case that they will need more teaching about all aspects of human development and relationships (of all kinds) than their non-disabled peers. People with learning difficulties are frequently exploited or abused socially and sexually. A core reason for teaching a thorough and specific programme of RSE at Downs View, is our strong intent not to have our pupils become victims of exploitation or abuse through ignorance of the facts, naiveté or inability to assert themselves. It remains an unfortunate truth that it is especially difficult for our pupils to recognise and resist exploitation or abuse. We must do our best to equip our pupils and students with the skills to recognise and resist such unwelcome advances.

Beyond these issues of rights (to relationships) and (special need for) protection, the remaining elements of this rationale for our programme of RSE are strongly similar to those of all schools.

- Young people's concerns to have early, adequate and properly contextualised education on sex and relationships.
- The difficulties parents may have in beginning to deal with and manage their son/daughters developing sexuality.
- The mis-information, dis-information and scare stories that may be picked up from the media.
- The fact that young people are becoming sexually active younger than in previous generations and the high teenage pregnancy rate.
- The need for a soundly based RSE programme within PSHE to promote pupils' social development and self-esteem.
- The fact that such a programme will contribute to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development in order to prepare them for (the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of) adult life.

Rationale

The PSHE schemes of work does incorporate the delivery of some form of RSE across the key stages (according to age/ developmental ability/ individual needs- see RSE schemes of work/ key areas) , therefore **all staff** will be involved in delivering the programme to their students and it is important that they are comfortable with the delivery and aware of the resources and guidance on hand to support them.

The delivery of an appropriate curriculum acknowledges that students with learning difficulties have;

- *a right to RSE (including online safety)*
- *a right to be recognised as sexual beings*
- *a right to grow up and achieve adult status*
- *a right to recognise different types of relationships healthy/ unhealthy relationships*
- *a right to as much knowledge about sexuality and social behaviour as they can assimilate*
- *the right to privacy and dignity*
- *the right to make informed sexual choices*

Definition

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning teaching for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities who represent a large minority of pupils. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility. Schools should also be mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes, 12 as set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching these subjects to those with SEND.

In special schools and for some SEND pupils in mainstream schools there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of

pupils at different developmental stages. As with all teaching for these subjects, schools should ensure that their teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.

DFE statutory guidance RSE and Health Education 2020

Aims

We aim to develop in our pupils and students an understanding of the biological, emotional, social, legal and moral aspects of sex and sexuality (tailored to their needs and abilities).

The overall aim as written in the PSHE policy is,

“To help all pupils understand and value themselves and others...”

In light of this, we need to acknowledge that sex and relationships education isn't just about facts surrounding human development but is about ...

“.... helping and supporting young people through their physical, emotional and moral development”

As well as the above aim we need to take into account the need;

- To provide pupils with the appropriate information to enable them to cope with their sexual and emotional development needs.
- To develop skills in decision-making and assertiveness.
- To develop self-advocacy and sensitivity towards the rights of others.
- To promote acceptable and appropriate behaviour in public and private situations.
- To develop skills to reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse.

All pupils have a right to information about themselves and their bodies. However, knowledge / information are not enough; it is vital that our pupils are also given the opportunity to acquire appropriate skills and develop personal attitudes / qualities if they are to achieve any degree of sexual maturity. Consequently the sex education curriculum tends to focus on the development of skills and attitudes in order that pupils can more easily set information about their changing bodies in context. In such a specialised, sensitive area of the curriculum, it is important that the work is carefully planned and differentiated so that it is accessible to all pupils. Also it is important to ensure that information/education is presented at an appropriate pace to the individual.

Objectives

RSE has three main elements: attitudes and values, personal and social skills, knowledge and understanding.

Attitudes and values

- Valuing and respecting ourselves and others
- Valuing and respecting healthy personal relationships, including between friends, families and others
- Developing an understanding of the value of family life and other ways of living communally that may form part of the life experience of our pupils.
- To have an appreciation of the many different types of family group
- To understand the value of loving and stable relationships for the nurture of children
- Recognising the importance of pursuing a healthy lifestyle and keeping ourselves and others safe.

Personal and Social Skills

- Developing skills in recognising feelings and emotions in themselves and others
- Developing skills in listening, thinking and communicating about feelings and relationships
- Developing pupils' abilities to make informed decisions about their lives
- Encourage the skill of making relationships and an appreciation of their value
- Increase pupils' personal and social skills and abilities to the highest possible level for each individual, in order to create the widest possible range of social opportunity for each individual
- Learning how to be safe in different social environments

Knowledge and understanding

- Recognising the distinction between myself and another
- Recognising and naming parts of the body
- Developing an understanding of the reproductive system and childbirth
- Developing an understanding of bodily changes in childhood and puberty
- Considering the changes in thought and feelings associated with maturation and puberty
- Developing an understanding of behaviour that carries risk
- Provide opportunities for pupils to ask questions and clarify misinformation.

Content Delivery & Organisation

RSE is one of 3 key areas of PSHE. The RSE curriculum is tailored to meet the age range and needs of all pupils at Downs View School sites and Downs View Link College. It is up to the teacher delivering the programme to use the scheme of work and adapt learning/ plan according to the needs of the pupils/ students whom they are teaching.

Relationships Education in Primary. Knowing me/ my body- Primary. Sex Education within KS3/ 4 as appropriate according to needs of students. RSE schemes of work reflect key areas of learning:

Knowing me- about me, emotions, positive image and self-esteem, likes, dislikes

Relationships-family, friends. People who help me. People I know and trust, keeping safe, being alone

Relationships and appropriate greetings- family, friends, people I meet, partners, relationships and responsibilities, keeping safe

Knowing my body- naming body parts, body changes, growing up age differences, gender differences, keeping clean, keeping healthy and safe

Public and private- body/ places – keeping safe/ safe touch, being private-being safe, social behaviour and expectations, including private time- choice/ safety, private, hygiene, appropriate behaviour

When appropriate- sexual relationships/intimacy/ contraception/ law/ consent/ respect

Mixed and single gender groups

Generally RSE will be taught in mixed groups. It is important that both boys and girls know about (say) the experience of puberty for the opposite gender. However, there will be opportunities for single gender sessions to explore gender specific issues such as management of periods and puberty. Single gender sessions provide an opportunity for "embarrassing" questions to be asked. Sensitive issues such as masturbation, personal hygiene, "wet dreams" and so forth will usually be covered in single gender sessions

Religion and ethnicity

We accept that pupils and adults in Downs View may hold very different religious and cultural beliefs about RSE. We intend to encourage consultation with parents and carers to ensure that different views are respected. We will work with parents to accommodate their wishes, and we accept that parents can exercise their right to withdraw their children (under 18) from RSE outside NC science.

Delivery issues

As discussed above, teachers and staff will use a range of strategies to deliver RSE. Staff will be trained to use RSE specific techniques as, for example, setting ground rules for discussion or using distancing techniques. In dealing with unexpected or embarrassing questions and comments the careful application of ground rules such as 'no-one will have to answer personal questions' and referring questions to specialist colleagues at a later time will be applied. Staff will be trained in these skills.

Teachers who deliver RSE must be aware that different views may legitimately be held on issues around RSE. Teachers should know about the availability of school services and outside agencies. Any teacher who has

concerns about sexual abuse must follow the school's child/adult protection procedures.

Co-ordination of RSE/role of the RSE co-ordinator

RSE at Downs View is overseen by the PSHE co-ordinator. Together with the curriculum co-ordination, s/he is responsible for the development of policy, curriculum framework and scheme(s) of work in collaboration with teaching colleagues. S/he is responsible for the monitoring, planning and delivery of content. Together with the curriculum co-ordinator, the Head teacher and the responsible governor committee (PCQ) and named governor, s/he is responsible for oversight of the delivery of an effective RSE curriculum. The RSE co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating training for staff on RSE issues (together with the responsible deputy head). The RSE co-ordinator is responsible for keeping up-to-date on materials and guidance and liaising with external support agencies. S/he is responsible for the RSE budget and co-ordinating resources.

Recording and assessment

Recording and assessment will be implemented through the use of Onwards and Upwards and target setting through Areas of Learning and EHCP targets. Some recording and assessment may also be done within accredited courses, such as ASDAN Life Skills Challenge and Towards Independence courses and NOCN.

Monitoring and evaluation

Teachers evaluate their lessons to aid future planning on an informal basis. The PSHE co-ordinator will monitor RSE lessons on a regular basis. Other RSE lessons will be observed in the course of regular departmental/key stage monitoring.

Staffing

Class teachers will normally deliver RSE lessons, assisted by teaching assistants. Outside speakers (e.g., FPA) may be invited.

Training and development needs

Downs View will provide appropriate training for all staff and governors whenever necessary (including induction packages) and at least every three years.

Confidentiality

Pupils (where their understanding allows) will be told about the extent and limits to the confidentiality of their conversations with teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers and teaching assistants can keep confidentiality except where the safety of a child is concerned. Teachers and teaching assistants will be aware that teaching sex and relationship education can lead to pupil disclosures. All staff must be aware that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality to pupils / students in the school/college. All staff must be aware of Downs View's child protection /Safeguarding procedures. Staff must reassure children that if confidentiality is broken they will be informed first and supported.

Partnership with parents and carers

Downs View School recognises its shared responsibility with parents and carers in supporting young people in their development. We are confident that good communication and sharing our philosophy and aims will enable parents and carers to support our RSE programme. We will consult in order to understand the range of views that may be held by the parent/carer community regarding RSE. We will use the school newsletter to inform parents of the contents of the RSE programme, their right to withdraw (see above) and to invite all parents to a consultation meeting. In this meeting parents and carers will be given opportunities to present their views, view the policy, ask questions and be informed of their right to withdraw. We will do our best to support parents in talking to their children about sex and relationships. It is especially important when more sensitive issues are to be addressed that parents and carers:

1. Are informed beforehand of the content of the lessons.
2. Are agreeable and willing for their child to ask questions at home.
3. Agree with the school's policy and the attitudes being expressed.

Vocabulary

It is extremely important when delivering a sex and relationships programme that there is some consistency in the language used by staff and taught to pupils.

When referring to specific body parts during personal care and toileting sessions, for example, staff need to be comfortable with the terminology they use.

Language may change as a pupil moves up through the school and the use of "pet" names for specific parts when in key stage 1 may no longer be appropriate at key stage 3 and beyond.

As students enter puberty, they should be encouraged to learn or at least be aware of the correct terminology. At post 16, students are encouraged to think about terms related to sexual parts of the body and in what context they should be used and begin to understand how some words can cause offence.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

The following has been taken from the GLYNE GAP school PSHE guideline no. 11 and prove a very useful reference point for discussing specific concerns.

- **DIGNITY**

Retaining the pupil's dignity through everyday care routines is essential e.g. ensuring wherever possible that female students are changed by female staff and males by males. Ensuring privacy at appropriate times, facilitating age appropriate activities, and fostering personal relationships that are meaningful to the students.

With students who have profound and multiple learning disabilities, it is important to remember that whilst their development and skills are at very early levels, they are still young adults and should be treated as such.

- **RELATIONSHIPS**

We believe our pupils have exactly the same rights as their peers. This includes forming close friendships, although this would not mean condoning or facilitating sexual relationships within the school setting. Helping such relationships and planning for their continuance and development beyond school will necessitate working closely to support parents and carers. In such cases we believe we should always be mindful of the young adult's own wishes and rights.

By the same token, in order to avoid unrealistic hopes, students should be made quickly aware if it is unlikely that their feelings will be reciprocated, e.g. fantasies about pop and film stars, or feelings for a fellow student who does not feel the same way. Coping with disappointments in relationships is a complex matter but none the less need to be discussed in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

- **PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF SEXUALITY**

Occasionally pupils masturbate, touch and fondle inappropriately in public. Maintaining a calm response in these circumstances is essential – the guiding principle is that certain behaviours although acceptable in private, are unacceptable in public.

- **CUDDLING, KISSING AND INAPPROPRIATE GREETINGS**

Many of our pupils are naturally affectionate and do not have awareness of and inhibitions about inappropriate behaviour. Hard and fast rules are difficult, but as a basic principle we must acknowledge that affectionate greetings by a nursery or infant child are acceptable, but as children grow older they must learn to behave appropriately.

Some older pupils often want to greet 'friends' with handshakes-after an absence this seems acceptable, but when meeting regularly eye contact and a smile are better. The rule is that greeting strangers is always to be discouraged unless they are being introduced.