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Woodpecker Court Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Version control

Version	Reviewed by	Future Review date	Comments	Approved by board
V1	ES	Jun 2022	Policy written and implemented	18/06/2020
V2	ES	Jan 2024	Policy reviewed and updated	06/01/2022

Introduction

This policy covers Woodpecker Court's approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) as set out in the DfE 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education' draft guidance (February 2019). This guidance will become compulsory from September 2020.

At Woodpecker Court Health Education (e.g., drugs and alcohol) is primarily taught through the provision's PSHEE programme, although in RSE keeping healthy in this context is included.

Parents/Carers are informed about the RSE policy as part of the admission process and is published on the website. Where appropriate, parents/carers will have the opportunity to discuss the policy at provision-based parent forums and reviews. A hard copy of the policy is always available for reference to parents/carers on request.

Rationale

As set out in the DfE guidance Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) begins with learning about healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships in all contexts, including online. This sits alongside the essential understanding of how to be healthy. At secondary school level students' further understanding of health is developed, as well as their knowledge about intimate relationships and sex.

Teaching about mental wellbeing is central to these subjects. Working alongside health professionals at Woodpecker Court we are able to identify the universal entitlement of students to learning that will enable them to live safe, fulfilled and healthy lives as well as ensuring that they are protected at all times from relationship-led or sexual harm.

Other contextual publications

Other publications which have informed the policy are listed below:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between students)
- Equality Act 2010 and schools
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)
- Alternative Provision (statutory guidance)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying) • Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools (advice for schools)
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC))
- SMSC requirements for independent schools (guidance for independent schools on how they should support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).
- National Citizen Service guidance for schools

Policy links

Our RSE programme complements our policies for:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Online Safety
- Marking and Assessment

Our values

Whilst the values of our RSE curriculum are underpinned by a promotion of the importance of stable relationships, and family life, they are closely linked to the overall values of the provision which promote the development of self-esteem, independence skills and an enthusiastic attitude to life and learning.

We will always ensure that students are offered a balanced programme by being sensitive to a range of views whilst at the same time accessing learning which ensures that they stay safe, healthy and where possible understand their rights.

Accordingly, we provide a culture, opportunities and forums for students to be able to discuss LGBT, (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender), or other sexual identity matters as appropriate to their needs at a timely point in students' lives. When appropriate we will encourage critical thinking and decision-making and challenge myths, misconceptions and prejudices should they arise. We will not encourage early sexual experimentation.

Working with parents/carers

Woodpecker Court values the importance of collaboration between provision and home. We are committed to working with parents/carers. We will offer (where appropriate) advice and materials designed to support the student's RSE learning. Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss key issues and ongoing concerns with staff, at parents' evenings and other parental forums. We will notify parents when particular aspects of the RSE curriculum will be taught helping prepare them for questions and changing behaviour.

We will communicate with parents/carers about their right to withdraw their children from RSE during the induction into the provision. If parents/carers request removal from RSE lessons the provision will provide alternative support. Some parents/carers prefer to take the responsibility for aspects of this element of education. They have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the RSE curriculum and lessons, except for those parts included in the statutory curriculum. Parents can exercise this right by requesting a meeting with the Principal or Vice Principal to confirm arrangements by phoning or emailing us.

Aims

The aims of the RSE programme closely mirror the aims of the broader PSHEE curriculum:

- to help all students develop as individuals in a wider society
- to understand their relationships with others
- to understand themselves physically, emotionally, socially and sexually

Learning about relationships and sex should be:

- an integral part of the lifelong learning process, with agreed aspects beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout adult life
- an entitlement for all boys as well as girls;
- those who are heterosexual or LGBT;
- those with physical, learning or emotional difficulties; and those with a religious or faith tradition
- everyone whatever their background, community or circumstance
- provided within a holistic context of emotional and social development throughout the provision community

At Woodpecker Court we are statutorily required to explore lifestyle choices our students may wish to make and, having made those choices we are required to develop appropriate language, strategies and skills that they may need to stay healthy and safe. The diversity of the needs in the provision, coupled with the additional vulnerability of our students mean the range of learning experiences should include:

- laying foundations of understanding about growth and change and respect for one another

- preparation for the changes of puberty, including menstruation (the onset of which can be confusing or even alarming for girls if they are not prepared).
- body knowledge
- understanding about sexual health, managing fertility and avoiding infection (as appropriate to the individual students’

Objectives

The learning objectives are:

- to be able to make choices and decisions
- to develop personal autonomy
- to demonstrate appropriate levels of responsibility and control over their lives
- to make a difference or make changes by their individual or collective actions
- to develop a range of self-help and independence skill

The overarching principle of the learning outcomes will be that students will:

- know and understand the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber bullying)
- be able to interact with peers and adults in a respectful, appropriate and safe way
- understand that they have a right to learn, to be heard and to be kept safe
- understand that they have a responsibility to listen and to respect others at all times

Student involvement

We will ensure equality of the RSE policy by being sensitive to the differing needs of students and by ensuring that the opportunity to evolve and adapt over time is built into the process, including listening to students, and encouraging their voice.

RSE curriculum

All students are entitled to a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum that meets their individual learning needs and promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development.

The teaching of RSE enhances learning by offering a range of opportunities to improve their knowledge and understanding of different types of relationships, their own emotions and the changes that they will experience as they grow up and become adults.

Using the curriculum mapping for RSE we will directly involve students by teaching a high-quality integrated programme that responds to many of the key issues associated with puberty, adolescence and becoming an adult. However, this approach may often require a closer examination of individual and group needs. This might include RSE being taught to same-gender groups.

Responsibility for teaching RSE

Whilst all staff have overall responsibility for RSE, the RSE curriculum will be taught by tutors. All of those who deliver RSE will regularly update their knowledge and expertise incorporating the support of other professionals including the school nurse, local sexual health services, and safeguarding professionals. Additional targeted INSET will regularly be available to all staff.

Following advice and guidance from the SLT, the provision will buy into any suitable recommended visiting projects that can help students with their Relationships and Sex Education. These may include theatre and role-play projects such as Sex FM.

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson.

When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

RSE programme outline

Our programme covers:

- the law (see separate section)
- equality in relationships
- sexual consent
- the importance of seeking and gaining mutual consent through positive and active communication, and go beyond teaching how to say 'no'
- students will be taught how to identify behaviour in a relationship which is positive and supportive and that which is exploitative and controlling.
- understanding the impact of a culture that reinforces stereotyped and gendered expectations for both boys and girls, including blaming victims for the abuse they experience and other cultural norms and negative stereotypes that they experience and observe.
- the skills for negotiating consent and managing the feelings associated with their experiences, and how to seek help and support if they need it
- relevant visual cues and role play
- learning that one's body belongs to oneself and that only we can say who has access to it. (i.e., 'public and private'). This is a key element in our approach to safeguarding.
- respecting boundaries (public and private) – their own and other people's – helps
- children to understand the need to obtain consent and that everyone has the right to offer or withhold their consent for any activity, sexual or otherwise.
- learning the correct biological/medical names for the genitalia and reproductive organs. Having the right language to describe the private parts of their body – and knowing how to seek help if they are being abused – are vital for safeguarding
- opportunities for students to discuss and explore sexual orientation choices in a safe environment; LGBT, heterosexual or questioning in terms of those exploring their sexual identity.
- being open and honest about the words for genitalia will support girls at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM).

Assessment of RSE

We will ensure that all of our students have equal access to the RSE programme by respecting students' unique starting points and providing differentiated learning that takes into consideration different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances.

We will assess students' learning through revisiting baseline data and through tutor observation noting changes of peer interaction, behaviour, awareness and attitudes.

Cross-curricular links

The programme is committed to relevant learning across the curriculum.

There are direct links with the online safety and acceptable use policies raising awareness of the personal risks associated with the use of technology, including emotional and physical wellbeing, safety and protecting a personal reputation as well as exploring the law as it pertains to downloading of images and information and exploring safe ways of sharing personal information, social networking, online dating and sharing images.

Safeguarding

If we have any reason to believe a student is a risk, we are required by law to refer the matter to the provision's DSLs, (Designated Safeguarding Leads), who will take over the management of the process.

Confidentiality, controversial and sensitive issues

The provision cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. In any case where safeguarding procedures are followed, the provision will ensure that the young person understands, that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first. Health professionals on site are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student.

The Law

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships, and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions. Students should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth- produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism/radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)

Monitoring and evaluation of RSE

It is the responsibility of the Head of Teaching and Learning to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of RSE in their team, in the context of the overall plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The Board are responsible for reviewing the revision of the Relationships and Sex Education Policy on a biennial basis.

Appendix 1

Woodpecker Court as an Independent Provider has taken the following guidance as to what students should be aware of by the end of secondary school to be what we deliver as part of our PSHEE programme paying special attention to the additional vulnerabilities that our students exhibit; also defined within the guidance.

What students should know by the end of primary and secondary school (DfE) from 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education' draft guidance, February 2019).

By the end of secondary school:

Families. Students should know:

- 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 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. Respectful relationships, including friendships. Students should know:

- 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 provision 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.

Online and media. Students should know:

- 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 and used online.

Being safe. Students should know:

- 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). Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
- 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.