RUSSET HOUSE SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make relationships education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and relationships and sex education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. They also make health education compulsory in all schools, except independent schools. Russet House School will therefore not teach any sex education topics.

As an integral part of pupil's emergence into adulthood, pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) must have the same opportunity to benefit from a relationships and health education.
It is acknowledged that autistic children have particular differences in social interaction which may affect their abilities to form and maintain relationships. They may have difficulty in interpreting and understanding signals, intentions and boundaries and how their own actions are interpreted by others, which can make them vulnerable.

Russet House School is committed to providing a Relationships Education and Health Education curriculum that meets all statutory requirements, including the updated Department for Education guidance effective from September 2026. Our curriculum reflects the needs of our pupils and our wider school community.

Policy Statement

Relationships education is designed to equip pupils with knowledge that will help them in making choices about their wellbeing, health and relationships; and keep safe whilst building positive relationships in school, home and the community. It is a life-long learning process of acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs and attitudes about different types of relationships and families. It is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up and relationships. Some aspects are taught through science and aspects of physical education whilst the majority are taught as part of our whole school Life Skills curriculum.

Health education aims to give pupils the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, to recognise issues in themselves and others, and to seek support as early as possible when issues arise.

At Russet House School our autistic pupils will receive Relationships Education and Health Education that is appropriate to their needs and developmental understanding. Teaching and resources will be differentiated as appropriate to meet the needs of individual pupils.
High quality, evidence-based teaching of Relationships Education and Health Education can help promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural (SMSC), mental and physical development; thus, preparing them for the responsibilities and experiences of a happy adult life. Effective teaching will support pupils to develop positive character traits, including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness, and trustworthiness.

Aims

The aim of our Relationships Education and Health Education is to:

- Support the emotional, personal and social development of all pupils in order that they enjoy positive relationships based on mutual respect and consent.
- Provide pupils with age-appropriate information, as an entitlement, in line with their physical development and understanding.

- To give pupils an understanding that they are engaged in a range of different relationships and support pupils to grow up to enjoy the positive benefits of loving rewarding and responsible relationships.
- To enable pupils to recognise and understand different types of relationships and how to behave appropriately in different contexts.
- To help pupils become aware of and manage bodily changes relating to adolescence and to manage personal hygiene.

We will work collaboratively, in partnership with parents/carers in order to achieve these aims.

Organisation
Relationships Education and Health Education will not be delivered in isolation but firmly embedded in our Life Skills Curriculum and also taught through other subjects e.g. in P.E pupils will learn about their own body and how to stay healthy.
In Year 5 and Year 6, as part of the science curriculum we include teaching about developing bodies and what will happen to it during puberty, for example, voices changing or menstruation.

Relationships Education and Health Education is delivered by class teachers in a balance of individual and group sessions. For specific sessions pupils may be separated by gender e.g. the Pink Bag programme for girls who are starting menstruation. Pupils need to learn the correct biological/medical names for the genital and reproductive organs. Having the right language to describe the private parts of their body and knowing how to seek help are vital for safeguarding. Visual supports including pictures and models will be used to support understanding.

Effective teaching will break down core knowledge into manageable and well-sequenced steps of learning, including opportunities for pupils to embed new knowledge so that it can be used in real life situations. The Life Skills curriculum is planned to build on knowledge pupils have previously acquired, with regular feedback provided on pupil progress. Lessons are planned so that all pupils are challenged, and the school's formative assessment system identifies where pupils need extra support. Pupil progress will be monitored through the gathering of evidence against the relevant criteria in the Life Skills Knowledge and Skills Pathways.

As part of the Russet House Life-skills Curriculum:
Relationships education will focus on:
- Families and people who care for us (including different types of relationships and families, for example LGBTQ+ families)
- Caring friendships (including social interaction through play and collaboration)
- Respectful, kind relationships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe (including recognising unsafe situations, consent, and know how to ask for help from trusted adults)
- Social Rules

Health education will focus on:
- General wellbeing (including emotional regulation, resilience, self-worth, coping strategies, personal health and self-care)
- Wellbeing online (including how Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies influence online content and interactions/safeguarding).
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping
- Health protection and prevention (e.g. exposure to the sun, sleep and dental hygiene)
- Personal safety
- Basic first aid
- Developing bodies (included as part of the science curriculum – Yrs 5-6)

External providers, for example dental practitioners, St John's Ambulance, fitness coaches will be invited into the school to support the delivery of these topics.

There will 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 topics, the school will ensure teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination
The Deputy Headteacher for Quality of Education will produce and evaluate the Relationships Education and Health Education Policy in line with government statutory guidance, as well as the overall planning for and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The Subject Lead will ensure the topics and learning aims are challenging, relevant and appropriate for our autistic pupils. All staff involved in delivering Relationships Education and Health Education receive updated training to ensure they are confident and knowledgeable about the latest statutory requirements and best practice.

All staff members, parents and governors have access to the policy, via the school website and any policy feedback from parents, staff and governors will be taken into account. The Governing body will approve the policy, and it will be reviewed every 3 years.

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the Governing Body will make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes
- curriculum content and teaching materials are aligned with this statutory guidance
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content, teaching materials and external providers

Equal opportunities
At Russet House School, we are committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils and staff, ensuring that every pupil's unique strengths and needs are recognised and celebrated within our autism-specialist primary setting.

We aim to create an inclusive, nurturing environment where all pupils, regardless of their background or protected characteristics (including age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation), are supported to achieve their full potential.

We actively promote a culture of understanding, acceptance, and respect, and we expect all members of our school community to uphold these principles. We fully comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, with a particular focus on eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity for all pupils.

The Role of Parents
The school is committed to working closely with parents and is aware that the primary role in pupils' relationships and health education lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. We invite parents to have an open discussion about the contents of this policy, to view curriculum materials and answer any questions.
Parents of year 5/6 pupils will be invited to a puberty workshop delivered jointly by our OT and Speech and Language Teams in the Summer Term to provide families with helpful information, set expectations, and offer guidance on how they can support their children throughout the program.

Withdrawal: As we are not teaching sex education parents/carers *do not* have the right to withdraw their child from relationships education and health education.

Agreed at Governing Body meeting 4th March 2021
Amended and agreed at Governing Body meeting 14th November 2024
Amended and agreed at Governing Body meeting 25th September 2025

Signature: V S Manning