

# THORPE HALL SCHOOL

## Relationships & Sex Education Policy

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### 1. Intent:

At Thorpe Hall School we are aware that healthy relationships are fundamental in helping to foster pupil wellbeing, while also developing resilience and character. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is a lifelong learning that covers relationships, emotions and the importance of looking after ourselves. It also covers different families, sex, sexuality and sexual health. We want all of our students to develop knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health, and relationships; empowering our pupils with the knowledge they need to protect themselves and others. We know our students will face many challenges throughout life and this RSE programme allows them to make informed choices when facing risks, challenges, and complex contexts. RSE has a key part to play in the personal, social, moral and spiritual development of young people and we want to build their resilience to know when to ask for help and where to source the correct help if needed.

### 2. Implementation:

Our guiding principles have been that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It will be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents while always with the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law.

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education will be accessible for all our pupils at Thorpe Hall School. With this in mind, we liaise with the SEND team within the school to ensure all our SEND pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the topics being taught. In some cases, we are aware that we may need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages.

In the Preparatory school, we will focus on the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online. This will sit alongside the essential understanding of how to be healthy.

This policy was produced by the Lead of PSHE and RSE through consultation with the Senior Leadership team, Heads of Year, Safeguarding Leads and feedback from parents and students. This will be assessed at Governors meetings.

At Thorpe Hall School, our PSHRE and RSE curriculum run simultaneously. All teaching at THS is delivered in an age appropriate manner and are entwined with the School’s Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Policy.

**By the end of Preparatory school:**

<p>Families and Close Positive relationships</p>	<p>Pupils will be taught:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About the roles different people (e.g. acquaintances, friends and relatives) play in our lives</li> <li>• To identify the people who love and care for them and what they do to help them feel cared for</li> <li>• About different types of families including those that may be different to their own</li> <li>• To identify common features of family life</li> <li>• That it is important to tell someone if something about their family makes them unhappy or worried</li> <li>• To recognise that there are different types of relationships (e.g. friendships, family relationships, romantic relationships, online relationships)</li> <li>• That people may experience emotional and romantic attraction towards others; that positive relationships are built on kindness, respect, and consent; and that such relationships may be between people of the same sex or of different sexes. Pupils should also understand that sexual orientation and gender identity are separate and different aspects of a person.</li> <li>• About marriage and civil partnership as a legal declaration of commitment made by two adults who love and care for each other, which is intended to be lifelong</li> <li>• That forcing anyone to marry against their will is a crime; that help and support is available to people who are worried about this for themselves or others</li> <li>• That people who love and care for each other can be in a committed relationship (e.g. marriage), living together, but may also live apart</li> <li>• That a feature of positive family life is caring relationships; about the different ways in which people care for one another</li> <li>• To recognise and respect that there are different types of family structure; that families of all types can give family members love, security and stability</li> <li>• To recognise other shared characteristics of healthy family life, including commitment, care, spending time together; being there for each other in times of difficulty</li> <li>• How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice</li> <li>• The concept of gender identity will not actively be taught in school as part of the Gender Identity Ban under the updated RSHE statutory guidance 2026; however, our school community will deal with such issues sensitively should the need arise.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to deal with change, loss and grief, recognising that this can cause a range of feelings and that everyone grieves differently.</li> </ul>
Caring friendships	<p>Pupils will be taught:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About how people make friends and what makes a good friendship</li> <li>• About how to recognise when they or someone else feels lonely and what to do</li> <li>• Simple strategies to resolve arguments between friends</li> <li>• About the importance of friendships; strategies for building positive friendships; how positive friendships support wellbeing</li> <li>• What constitutes a positive healthy friendship (e.g. mutual respect, trust, truthfulness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, sharing interests and experiences, support with problems and difficulties); that the same principles apply to online friendships as to face-to-face relationships</li> <li>• To recognise what it means to 'know someone online' and how this differs from knowing someone face-to-face; risks of communicating online with others not known face-to-face</li> <li>• The importance of seeking support if feeling lonely or excluded</li> <li>• That healthy friendships make people feel included; recognise when others may feel lonely or excluded; strategies for how to include them</li> <li>• Strategies for recognising and managing peer influence and a desire for peer approval in friendships; to recognise the effect of online actions on others</li> <li>• How friendships can change over time, about making new friends and the benefits of having different types of friends</li> <li>• That friendships have ups and downs; strategies to resolve disputes and reconcile differences positively and safely</li> <li>• To recognise if a friendship (online or offline) is making them feel unsafe or uncomfortable; how to manage this and ask for support if necessary and how to build positive relationships through kindness, respect and consent.</li> </ul>
Respecting Self and Others	<p>Pupils will be taught:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About what is kind and unkind behaviour, and how this can affect others</li> <li>• About how to treat themselves and others with respect; how to be polite and courteous</li> <li>• To recognise the ways in which they are the same and different to others</li> <li>• How to listen to other people and play and work cooperatively</li> <li>• How to talk about and share their opinions on things that matter to them</li> <li>• That personal behaviour can affect other people; to recognise and model respectful behaviour online</li> <li>• To recognise the importance of self-respect and how this can affect their thoughts and feelings about themselves; that everyone, including them, should expect to be treated politely and with respect by others (including when online and/or anonymous) in</li> </ul>

	<p>school and in wider society; strategies to improve or support courteous, respectful relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About respecting the differences and similarities between people and recognising what they have in common with others e.g. physically, in personality or background</li> <li>• To listen and respond respectfully to a wide range of people, including those whose traditions, beliefs and lifestyle are different to their own</li> <li>• How to discuss and debate topical issues, respect other people’s point of view and constructively challenge those they disagree with.</li> <li>• How to build relationships that are built around kindness, respect and consent.</li> <li>• To understand their bodies and the changes they may experience- including learning the correct names for body parts (including genitalia). Age limits have been removed and age-appropriate language will be taught to ensure safety and safeguarding.</li> </ul>
Safe Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils will be taught:</li> <li>• About the increased focus on personal safety, including education and identifying risks, online safety, and recognising abusive behaviour</li> <li>• To recognise that some things are private and the importance of respecting privacy; that parts of their body covered by underwear are private</li> <li>• That sometimes people may behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not</li> <li>• How to respond safely to adults they don’t know</li> <li>• About how to respond if physical contact makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe</li> <li>• About knowing there are situations when they should ask for permission and also when their permission should be sought</li> <li>• About the importance of not keeping adults’ secrets (only happy surprises that others will find out about eventually)</li> <li>• Basic techniques for resisting pressure to do something they don’t want to do and which may make them unsafe</li> <li>• What to do if they feel unsafe or worried for themselves or others; who to ask for help and vocabulary to use when asking for help; importance of keeping trying until they are heard</li> <li>• About privacy and personal boundaries; what is appropriate in friendships and wider relationships (including online);</li> <li>• About why someone may behave differently online, including pretending to be someone they are not; strategies for recognising risks, harmful content and contact; how to report concerns</li> <li>• How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts including online) whom they do not know</li> <li>• Recognise different types of physical contact; what is acceptable and unacceptable; strategies to respond to unwanted physical contact About seeking and giving permission (consent) in different situations</li> <li>• About keeping something confidential or secret, when this should (e.g. a birthday surprise that others will find out about) or should</li> </ul>

	<p>not be agreed to, and when it is right to break a confidence or share a secret</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to recognise pressure from others to do something unsafe or that makes them feel uncomfortable and strategies for managing this</li> <li>• Where to get advice and report concerns if worried about their own or someone else's personal safety (including online)</li> </ul>
<p>Managing Hurtful Behaviour and Bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That bodies and feelings can be hurt by words and actions; that people can say hurtful things online</li> <li>• About how people may feel if they experience hurtful behaviour or bullying</li> <li>• That hurtful behaviour (offline and online) including teasing, name-calling, bullying and deliberately excluding others is not acceptable; how to report bullying; the importance of telling a trusted adult</li> <li>• About the impact of bullying, including offline and online, and the consequences of hurtful behaviour</li> <li>• Strategies to respond to hurtful behaviour experienced or witnessed, offline and online (including teasing, name-calling, bullying, trolling, harassment or the deliberate excluding of others); how to report concerns and get support</li> <li>• About discrimination: what it means and how to challenge it</li> </ul>

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), follow the EYFS curriculum and encompass RSE into their Personal, Social and Emotional development (PSED). PSED lessons are taught in a variety of ways, from structured adult led discussions to incidental, 'in the moment' conversations. If a sensitive topic has been discussed that needs further support from Parents or Guardians, they will be informed. The aim of PSED in the EYFS is to provide a safe space to discuss topics and learn how to be a kind, considerate and thoughtful member of our school community.

### **Sex Education (Preparatory)**

The Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools. Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools and the content set out in this guidance therefore focuses on Relationships Education. The pupils in our Preparatory school will cover everything that primary schools should teach about relationships and health, including puberty; however, we understand that the school must provide parents with clear information about what is being taught, reinforcing the right to know and discuss curriculum content. Parents retain the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all areas of sex education.

### **Sex Education (Senior)**

In the Senior school, teaching will build on the knowledge acquired at primary and develop further pupils' understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs and alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex.

RSE will be taught within a number of subjects, including national curriculum Science (KS3 and KS4), PSHE lessons in Year 7, 8 and 9 (KS3), 10 and 11 (KS4) and in some assemblies and events delivered by specialist staff and outside speakers (KS3 & KS4). It will also be included in some Thought for the weeks within tutor time to allow students time to consolidate and develop their knowledge and understanding further.

**By the end of Senior school:**

<p><b>Families</b></p>	<p>Pupils will be taught:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.</li> <li>• How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.</li> <li>• The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.</li> <li>• The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Respectful relationships, including friendships</b></p>	<p>Pupils will be taught:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.</li> <li>• How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.</li> <li>• That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.</li> <li>• What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Online and media</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils will be taught:</li> <li>• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.</li> <li>• The impact of viewing harmful content.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.</li> <li>• How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.</li> </ul>
<b>Being safe</b>	<p>Pupils will be taught:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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).</li> </ul>
<b>Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health</b>	<p>Pupils will be taught:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.</li> <li>• That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.</li> <li>• That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.</li> <li>• The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.</li> <li>• The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.</li> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.</li> <li>• How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.</li> <li>• How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.</li> <li>• Puberty and menstruation. This will ensure male and female pupils are prepared for changes they and their peers will experience.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-care, the benefits of physical activity and time spent outdoors. This should be linked to information on the benefits of sufficient sleep, good nutrition and strategies for building resilience.</li></ul>
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There are three main elements;

Attitudes and Values	Personal and Social Skills	Knowledge and Understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.</li> <li>• Learning the value of family life, marriage and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.</li> <li>• Learning the value of respect, love and care.</li> <li>• Exploring, considering and understanding of moral dilemmas.</li> <li>• Developing critical thinking as part of decision making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.</li> <li>• Developing self-respect and empathy for others.</li> <li>• Learning to make choices based on an understanding of differences and with the absence of prejudice.</li> <li>• Developing an appreciation of choices made.</li> <li>• Managing conflict.</li> <li>• Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.</li> <li>• Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships.</li> <li>• Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services.</li> </ul>

### 3. Equal Opportunities

Within this framework we are ensuring that the following equal opportunities are clear to our pupils;

- We expect everyone to show respect for other people. We expect people to treat everyone as having the right to human dignity.
- We will not accept the use of language that abuses, degrades or demeans another person's race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, ability, appearance, age or disabilities. We all have the right to self-esteem.
- We will not tolerate the promotion of ideas or materials that degrade or exploit other people's race, gender, sexual orientation, regional or belief, ability, appearance, age or disabilities. We all have the right to self-respect.
- We will challenge misogyny.

The schools behaviour and policy will be followed if any of the above situations occur.

#### **4. Key roles and Responsibilities;**

##### **The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring:**

- All pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes
- The subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned
- The quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- Teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND
- Clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn from certain areas of 'Sexual Education'.
- The subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations of the implementation of the RSE policy.
- The RSE policy, as written does not discriminate, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- The RSE policy is reviewed annually.

##### **The Headteacher and senior leadership team:**

- Has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy.
- Will be responsible for the day to day implementation and management of the RSE policy.

##### **The Lead for PSHRE is responsible for:**

- Liaising with other staff and professional agencies to devise a suitable programme to ensure a comprehensive RSE education that achieves the aims laid out in this policy.
- Communicating content to pupils and parents.
- Ensuring staff are aware of content and receive the appropriate guidance on delivery.

##### **Class Teacher / Form Tutors are responsible for:**

Teachers responsible for teaching PSHE and RSE will receive training on sensitive topics and the school adopts an open door policy for the staff who teach this to discuss any concerns or worries with the DSL.

#### **5. Confidentiality and safeguarding**

The RSE programme is monitored and evaluated at regular intervals in partnership with pupils, staff, parents, and governors, to ensure the programme is appropriately set for the age and maturity of the pupils as well as reflecting their views and responding to issues raised.

Teachers and all those who contribute to RSE are expected to work within the principles outlined in this policy and in line with current legislation.

Young people need to develop their confidence in talking, listening and thinking about sex and relationships, so the teaching of the RSE programme should:

- Set ground rules to create a safe environment for all to feel included in discussions; These will be discussed and reiterated at the start of every lesson.
- De-personalise discussions;
- Establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate discussion points;

- Recognise when a pupil may need further support and arrange for this support to be made available;
- Teachers should be sensitive to students' questions about their own sexuality or sexual orientation. Teachers should not allow homophobic attitudes to go unchallenged.
- Staff teaching RSE need to be clear on the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. Absolute confidentiality cannot be offered or guaranteed and staff have an obligation to report any concerns to the DSL according to our safeguarding policy.
- Students need to know that teachers or other adults cannot offer complete confidentiality but also be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and supported as appropriate – students' best interests will be maintained.
- If staff have any suspicion of suspected abuse, or they have reason to believe the child is at risk of abuse, the school's safeguarding procedures must be followed, and the designated safeguarding officer must be informed.
- Health professionals are bound by their professional code of conduct with individual pupils, but in a classroom situation they must follow the school's confidentiality policy.

If a member of staff learns from an under 16-year-old that they are having, or contemplating having, sexual intercourse then:

- Staff should attempt to persuade the young person to talk to their parent or carer.
- Any child protection issues should be addressed.
- Ensure the young person has been adequately counselled and informed about contraception by passing on details to the named senior member of staff.
- It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that schools should be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge.
- Staff should be aware that some pupils with special needs may need more explicit teaching on some aspects of sex education and in this case we will liaise with the School SENDCO to ensure understanding.
- If staff feel unsure or anxious at any stage they must discuss their concerns with the PSHRE lead or a senior member of staff.

If teachers have concerns about a specific pupil in relation to self-harm or suicidal ideation or attempts, they must follow safeguarding procedures.

## **6. Assessment**

There will be no formal assessment within this subject; however, the following forms of informal assessment may include:

- Self & Peer assessment/oral feedback

- Online/Class presentations
- Project work
- Oral participation in lessons

## 7. Right to withdraw

Under DFE guidance;

*'You cannot withdraw your child from Health Education or the Relationships Education element of Relationships and Sex Education, because it is important that all children receive this content, covering topics such as friendships and how to stay safe.'*

We are aware, however, that there may be some parts of the Sex Education lessons delivered at senior school that you do not want your child to take part in. In some or all, you can ask that they are withdrawn. In this case we ask that you put your request in writing to the Headteacher who will consider this request and discuss it with you in person. Please also be aware that the DFE guidance also states that;

*'Up until three school terms before your child turns 16, your child can choose to receive Sex Education if they would like to, and the school should arrange for your child to receive this teaching in one of those three terms (unless there are exceptional circumstances).'*

The science curriculum and other areas of the curriculum may also touch on areas within the RSE content. For example, in Science content on human development, including reproduction, which there is no right to withdraw from.

## 8. Legal Requirements

Our RSE programme meets the legal requirements outlined within the following:

- The Equality Act 2010 & Schools: Departmental Guidance
- Duty to promote well-being (Children's Act 2004)
- Duty to prepare children for the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities of adult life (Education Act 2006)
- Ensure pupils learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and bringing up of children (Learning and Skills Act 2006)
- Protect pupils from unsuitable teaching and materials (Learning and Skills act 2006)
- Teach statutory RSE elements in the Science National Curriculum.
- Meet the school's safeguarding obligations.
- Make the policy available to pupils and parents (Education Act 2011).
- Right of parental withdrawal from all or part of RSE, except those parts included in the National Curriculum (Education Act 2011)
- Improve support for looked after children as per the Children and Social Work Act 2017

- Prevent discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups (Equality Act 2010)

## 9. Additional Support

[Guidance from the 2019 DFE Relationships education document](#)

[PSHE Association](#)

[Barnardo's – Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service-](#)

[NSPCC-Talk Pants](#)

## 10. References

[Education Act 2011](#)

[Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[Children Act 2004](#)

[DFE RSE 2019](#)

## 11. Policy Review

Policy reviewed:	Feb 2026
Policy Approved:	Feb 2026
Next Review:	Feb 2027