



Nexus Education Schools Trust

Relationships and Health Education Policy

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Introduction

Nexus Education School Trust (NEST) consider that Relationships and Health Education (RHE) is an integral part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship curriculum and is linked to that for science. We aim to offer pupils a carefully planned programme on human development, relationships, age-appropriate sex education and family life within a safe, comfortable atmosphere and in a relaxed relationship between teacher and pupil. The programme is set within a moral framework and matched to the pupils' level of maturity.

This policy applies to all schools within Nexus Education Schools Trust and has been developed specifically to reflect the statutory expectations for Relationships Education and Health Education in primary schools. All content is delivered in an age-appropriate, safeguarding-led, and non-graphic manner, in line with pupils' developmental stages and the Department for Education statutory guidance (updated December 2025).

Statutory Requirements

As a primary academy within NEST, we must provide Relationships Education to all pupils under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. We do not have to follow the National Curriculum, but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including requirements to teach science. This would include the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum.

In teaching RSHE, we are required by our funding agreement to have regard to the Department for Education statutory guidance 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education' (updated December 2025), as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 404 to 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Policy Development

This policy was developed through consultation with staff, pupils and parents and carers. Relevant national and local guidance was reviewed to inform the policy, and school staff were given the opportunity to provide feedback. Parents and carers were invited to review the policy and share their views. Pupil voice was gathered in an age-appropriate way to help inform the approach to Relationships and Health Education. Following this consultation, the policy was amended where appropriate and formally ratified by Local Committees.

Aims

- To have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others.
- To understand about the range of relationships, including the importance of family for the care and support of children.

- To develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships.
- To be able to name parts of the body and describe how their bodies work.
- To be prepared for puberty.
- To teach pupils to understand what constitutes a safe and healthy lifestyle.
- To understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within relationships.
- To understand, acknowledge and appreciate difference and diversity.
- To be able to recognise unsafe situations and be able to protect themselves and ask for help and support.
- To help pupils to identify the characteristics of healthy relationships, how relationships may affect mental and physical health; and how to stay safe online.
- To understand the role the media plays in forming attitudes.
- To provide pupils with a toolkit for understanding and managing their emotions.
- To help pupils understand what healthy, kind and respectful relationships look like, and to encourage attitudes and behaviours that promote care, fairness and respect towards others.
- To support pupils in valuing equality and respect in all relationships, by helping them recognise and challenge unfair stereotypes and by promoting positive attitudes towards themselves and other.
- To help pupils stay safe in the digital world, by teaching them how to recognise unreliable or misleading information, unsafe online behaviours and harmful content, and by ensuring they know what to do and who to tell if they see or experience something that worries them.
- To build pupils' emotional resilience and wellbeing, by helping them understand and manage feelings linked to change, loss or loneliness, and by teaching them how and when to seek help and support.

Objectives

As part of RSE, pupils will be taught about the nature and importance of family life and strong, mutually supportive relationships.

- We try to ensure that no stigma is placed on children based on their home circumstances.
- We aim to provide accurate information and to help to develop skills to enable them to understand differences and respect themselves and others.
- We hope to prevent and remove prejudice. RSE should contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and within society, thus preparing them for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. We will work towards this aim in partnership with parents/carers and our local community.

Teaching and Learning including delivery of the Curriculum

For the purpose of this policy, 'relationships education' is defined as teaching pupils about healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online, as well as developing an understanding of human sexuality in Year 6.

'Health education' is defined as teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing, focusing on recognising the link between the two and being able to make healthy lifestyle choices.

The delivery of the relationships education and health education coincide with one another and will be delivered as part of the school's PSHE curriculum.

The scheme of work for RHE at NEST schools maps out a grid of lessons/units for each year group which progresses and returns to themes as children move through the school. Our planned curriculum is carefully sequenced and meets the DfE RHE expectation. (See Appendix 1.)

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Where appropriate we will link the teaching of RHE to other subject areas e.g. Science, P.E., R.E. and Computing.

Since RHE incorporates the development of self-esteem and relationships, pupils' learning does not just take place through the taught curriculum but through all aspects of school life including the playground. It is important that all staff understand they have a responsibility to implement this policy and promote the aims of the school at any time they are dealing with children.

Delivery of RHE

RHE is taught within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RHE are taught within the Science curriculum, and other aspects are included in Religious Education (R.E.).

The school will make sure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of manageable size
- The required content is communicated to pupils clearly, in a carefully sequenced way and within a planned scheme of work
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge, so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations

Relationships and Health Education focus on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships and healthy lifestyles including:

Relationships Education	Health Education
➤ Families and people who care for me	➤ Mental Wellbeing
➤ Caring friendships	➤ Internet Safety and harms
➤ Respectful relationships	➤ Physical health and fitness
➤ Online safety and awareness	➤ Healthy eating
➤ Being safe	➤ Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
	➤ Health and Prevention
	➤ Basic First Aid
	➤ Changing adolescent bodies

Personal safety education includes helping pupils learn how to recognise and reduce risks around roads, railways and level crossings, water environments (including the Water Safety Code), and when they are in public places. Online safety teaching focuses on helping pupils understand how to stay safe online by recognising unsafe or worrying content, understanding that information and images can sometimes be altered or misleading, and knowing what to do and who to tell if they encounter anything that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsure. This learning is taught in a safeguarding-led, age-appropriate and non-graphic way, in line with the updated statutory RSHE guidance for primary schools.

In Year 5 we place a particular emphasis on RHE, as many children start to experience puberty at this age. We teach the children about the parts of the body and how they work. We also explain what will happen to their bodies during puberty. We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it and

there are opportunities for single sex question sessions. The programme will be designed to focus on boys as much as girls, and activities will be planned to make sure both are actively involved.

Teachers do their best to answer all questions with sensitivity and care. By the end of Key Stage 2, we ensure that both boys and girls know how babies are born, how their bodies change during puberty, what menstruation is, and how it affects women. We always teach these with due regard for the emotional development of the children.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT 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).

Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences
- During lessons, makes pupils feel:
 - Safe and supported
 - Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:
 - A whole class setting
 - Small groups or targeted sessions
 - 1-to-1 discussions
 - Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

Use of resources

We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age and maturity of the pupils
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress
- Are politically impartial, including external providers' materials

We will make sure that when we consult parents/carers we provide examples of the resources that the school plans to use.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Committee

The Local Committee will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory/non-science components of RHE (see Parents and Carers' Right to Withdraw below).

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RHE in a sensitive way.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RHE.
- Monitoring progress.
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils.
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory / non-science components of RHE.
- Promoting respectful behaviour by challenging stereotypes and ensuring that all pupils feel valued, included and treated with kindness.
- Reporting any concerns that arise to the senior leadership team.

Parents and Carers' Right to Withdraw

Parents and carers do not have the right to withdraw their children from Relationships and Health Education. However, they do have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RHE.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Headteacher.

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

Language

Children should be introduced, at appropriate stages, to the correct terminology in their programme of sex education. It is important that acceptable and unacceptable terminology is clarified. After initial discussion, correct biological terms will be used at all times for teaching.

Pupils' Questions

Teachers will reply to, and answer, children's questions sensitively and openly. They will ensure that balanced information is provided which will take into account the different backgrounds, beliefs and views and avoid any negative impressions.

Teachers will need to answer questions that may arise through the direct teaching of sex education, as well as those that may be asked at other times. All questions will be handled sensitively and set within a general context.

Questions which teachers feel uncertain about answering should be discussed with a senior member of staff and answered at a later date. Consideration should be given to religious or cultural factors, and to parents' and carers' wishes before questions are answered.

Visiting Speakers

Any visiting speakers to the school, such as the school nurse or the Life Bus, should be familiar with the Relationships and Health Education Policy. All sessions run by a visiting speaker should also be attended by a teacher familiar with the policy.

We will make sure that any agency and any materials used are accurate, age and stage appropriate and unbiased and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

We will:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use are:
 - Age-appropriate and in line with pupils' developmental stage
 - Comply with this policy, The Teachers' Standards, The Equality Act 2010, The Human Rights Act 1998 and The Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses.
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum.
- Review any case-study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with.
- Be clear on what they are going to say and their position on the issues to be discussed.
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use.
- Know the named individuals who will be there and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people.
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers.
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session.
- Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session.
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers.
- Inform all external organisations that the school is legally obliged to share all content with parents and carers.
- Share all external materials with parents and carers.

We will not, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions.
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme.
- Work with agencies who don't allow their material to be shared with parents and carers.

Advising Parents/Carers

The school is committed to working with parents and carers and believes that it is important to have the support of parents and carers and the wider community for the relationships and health programme.

Parents and carers will be advised about forthcoming sex education lessons, with the option of viewing the resources before the lessons commence. Further details of the lessons will be provided to parents and carers upon request, and they will be invited to view any materials before the lesson.

Special Needs

Pupils with special educational needs will be given the opportunity to fully participate in RHE lessons, and a differentiated programme will be provided where necessary, to ensure that all pupils gain a full understanding.

Equal Opportunities

RHE teaching will ensure quality of access for all pupils, regardless of disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, so giving equal opportunities and avoiding discrimination.

Training

To ensure that Relationships and Health Education is delivered safely and effectively, all staff involved in teaching RHE will receive regular, phase-appropriate training. This will include RSHE-specific CPD focused on: establishing safe classroom environments; responding to sensitive or unexpected questions; teaching about respectful relationships and challenging stereotypes; supporting pupils' mental wellbeing, including understanding feelings related to change, loss and loneliness; and delivering the strengthened online-safety expectations in the updated statutory guidance, such as helping pupils recognise unsafe online behaviours, misleading or manipulated content, and knowing what to do if they encounter something that makes them uncomfortable or worried.

Training will also ensure staff understand the new emphasis on personal safety, including recognising risks around roads, railways, water and public spaces. Staff will be supported to develop confidence, access high-quality resources, and apply professional judgement in adapting teaching to the developmental stage and needs of primary pupils, as required by the updated DfE RSHE statutory guidance.

The Headteacher may also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses, to provide support and training to staff teaching RHE.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The delivery of RHE is monitored by the PSHE Lead and/or the senior leadership team through:

- learning walks and/or lesson observations
- looking at children's books
- talking to children about their learning

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

This policy and scheme of work will be regularly reviewed and any feedback from teachers, parents and carers and pupils will be considered.

Appendix 1 – Scheme of Work Outline

Needs individual school scheme of work inserted here

Appendix 2 – By the end of primary school pupils should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families and people who care for me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability • The characteristics of safe and happy family life, such as: commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives • That other children's families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their own, but they should respect those differences and know that other families are also characterised by love and care • That stable, caring relationships are at the heart of safe and happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up • That marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of 2 people to each other which is intended to be lifelong • How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed
Caring friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends • The characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security, including: mutual respect, truthfulness, trust and trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties • That healthy, caring and kind friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. Pupils should learn skills for developing caring, kind friendships • That not every child will have the friends they would like at all times, that most people feel lonely sometimes, and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it • That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened • About managing conflict with kindness and respect, and that violence is never right • How to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful, kind relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of respecting others, including in families and friendships. Pupils should be encouraged to discuss how we can balance the needs and wishes of different people, and why this can be complicated • The importance of setting and respecting healthy boundaries in all relationships with friends, family, peers and adults • How to communicate effectively: how to be assertive and express needs and boundaries and manage feelings, including disappointment and frustration • That they can expect to be treated with respect and the importance of respecting others, including those who are different (for example: physically, in character, personality or background), or make different choices, or have different preferences or beliefs • The practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support their relationships • The conventions of courtesy and manners • The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. They should have opportunities to consider issues like self-esteem and building a sense of their own identity • Pupils should have opportunities to discuss the difference between being assertive and being controlling, and the difference between being kind to other people and neglecting your own needs. • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help • How to seek help when needed, including when they are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust • What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive or lead to bullying and how to challenge a stereotype

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Online safety and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not and/or pretending to be a child • That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous • The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them • That there is a minimum age for joining most social media sites which protects children from inappropriate content or unsafe content with older social media users, who may be strangers, including other children and adults • That it's important to be cautious about sharing any information about themselves online, and how to use privacy and location settings to protect their information online • How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met • How information and data is shared and used online, including where pictures or words might be circulated • Online risks, including that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once a picture or words has been circulated there is no way of deleting it everywhere and no control over where it ends up • That the internet contains a lot of content that can be inappropriate and upsetting for children, and where to go for advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). This can include learning about boundaries in play and in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources for example • About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults, including that it's not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe • That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact • How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) including those they do/don't know • How to recognise when a relationship is harmful or dangerous, including skills for recognising who to trust and who not to trust • How to report concerns or abuse, about something seen online or experienced in real life, or feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so • Where to get advice, for example from their family, school and/or other sources