



The Birtenshaw Group

Transforming Lives

Birtenshaw Education Services Relationships and sex education (RSE) policy

Document Title	Relationships and sex education (RSE)
Reference Number	ED22
Version Number	Version 2
Date of Issue	January 2020
Latest Revision	Sept 2023
Distribution	Education staff
Owner	Chief Executive
Policy Lead(s)	Head of Service: Head of School
Department	Education

This policy has been created in accordance with the Department for Education's **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance (2019)**

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the **Education Act 1996** and 'Preparing for adulthood' outcomes which are set out at section 7.38 of the **SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years**

Rationale:

'Today's children are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.'

- Ofsted 2019 Education Inspection Framework

The Curriculum at Birtenshaw School supports the mission statement: *'Transforming Lives'* by giving pupils the opportunity to learn and develop in a supportive and creative

environment in which there is a focus on recognising achievement and supporting progression and in which pupils feel safe and are happy.

The curriculum is intended to meet the long term aspirations for all pupils by being individualised, creative, innovative and flexible allowing for the needs of each pupil to be met. It aims to promote the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the pupils as well as their intellectual and physical development. This also includes a comprehensive and well-planned programme of relationships and sex education (RSE) to help pupils cope with their physical, emotional, moral and spiritual development and to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Pupils at Birtenshaw School, Bolton have complex needs including Autistic Spectrum condition, learning and physical disability and speech / language communication needs. Occupational Therapists (OT) and Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT) work closely with the education team to ensure that all education is delivered in a way that supports pupils understanding whilst maintaining a safe and happy learning environment.

We know that pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are happiest and achieve most when their routine is clear and when their learning opportunities build on their particular skills and talents. To this end, we tailor the sex and relationships curriculum to help pupils make progress in a way that best suits them. As a result, Birtenshaw School does not have a “whole school approach” to teaching pupils RSE but individualised programmes of support which are overarched by a comprehensive policy and a collaborative approach with parents and external professionals.

Some pupils will be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than their peers, and others may be confused about what is acceptable public behaviour. Pupils need help to develop skills to reduce the risks of being abused and exploited, and to learn what sorts of behaviour are, and are not, socially acceptable.

Teachers may find that they have to be more explicit and plan work in different ways in order to meet the individual needs of children with special educational needs or learning difficulties. It is important to take care not to marginalise relationship and sex education. It is also important that students with special educational needs are not withdrawn from health or relationship education.

Birtenshaw School will consult with parents and carers about what and how certain content is covered.

Definition of Relationship and Sex Education

- RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.
- RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values.
- RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Aims:

- Staff will receive the support and guidance that they need in order to be able to confidently and accurately deliver the RSE curriculum.
- Staff will work collaboratively with parents and external professionals to ensure consistency and sharing of accurate information.
- Pupils will access accurate information and be supported to develop skills to enable them to understand difference and respect themselves and others
- Pupils will develop an understanding of the difference between public and private to reduce the risk of situations and incidents where a young person may be vulnerable or at risk in the community.
- Pupils will learn to understand human sexuality, learn the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- Pupils will be supported to obtain appropriate advice on sexual health.
- Pupils will be supported to understand their own physical development, preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Delivery of RSE within the curriculum

All pupils at Birtenshaw School have an Education Health and Care Plan. To ensure the Relationship and Sex Education curriculum meets the needs of pupils we have to make a judgement as to if, when and how they are able to receive / understand information about certain RSE topics. This consultation will take place between education staff and parents / carers and will be authorised by Head of School.

RSE is taught mainly through the Science, SMSC and PSHE curriculum.

There are two main levels of learning:

- 1) Teaching pupils **about an issue**: the lessons that offer factual information
- 2) Teaching pupils **how to manage an issue**: the lessons that develop the strategies, language and skills pupils will need to manage situations.

The curriculum itself is realistic, relevant and non-judgemental

Relationship Education (Primary)	Relationship and Sex Education (Secondary)	Health Education (Primary and Secondary)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Families and people who care for me- Caring friendships- Respectful relationships- Online relationships- Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Families- Respectful relationships; including friendships- Online and medial- Being safe- Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mental wellbeing- Internet safety and harms- Physical health and fitness- Healthy eating- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco- Health and prevention- Basic first aid- Changing adolescent body

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).

For many pupils the RSE curriculum will be delivered in a more thematic and flexible way. It is essential that pupils' experience of RSE is not simply a series of 'one-off', disconnected sessions each on a different topic and focussing only on factual content. The RSE lessons are taught in PSHE lessons at a level appropriate to the level of understanding of the young people.

We liaise closely with partner organisations and the Learning Disability Nursing Team for specialist individual input and support.

Parents and carers right to withdraw

Parents and carers **do not** have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents and carers **do** have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE up until the third term before their 16th birthday. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this. For some children this will be agreed through

a best interests meeting with parents, carers, the school and any relevant professionals.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 2 of this policy and addressed to the Head of School.

Statutory components include:

- Relationships and health; including puberty
- Parts of the body
- The human body as it grows from birth to old age
- Reproduction in some plants and animals
- Preparation for the changes that adolescence brings
- The human life cycle
- How a baby is conceived and born.

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

Specific topics “tricky issues”.

Relationships in school

As an organisation Birtenshaw promotes ‘ordinary life principles’ and encourages social interaction between pupils. Some pupils have a limited understanding of appropriate relationships and often don’t recognise the qualities of a good relationship. This will form part of the RSE curriculum for pupils and will be supported through one to one sessions. If two pupils, within school, express that they want to form a relationship which extends beyond a friendship, staff will support them to understand appropriate and safe boundaries. These will be agreed through conversations with both parents / carers and any appropriate professionals. Pupils at Birtenshaw are supported at their assessed level of need throughout the school day and any relationship between pupils in school would be supported to ensure it did not negatively impact the academic, vocational, technical or personal progress of pupils.

Masturbation and inappropriate touch

Teachers and Learning Support Assistants will work closely with parents, carers and external professionals to identify if a pupil who is masturbating is demonstrating an attention-seeking behaviour, trying to fulfil a feeling/urge or if they are copying a behaviour they may have seen elsewhere.

Without this included in RSE, pupils may injure themselves intentionally / unintentionally or struggle to manage their emotional responses by demonstrating challenging behaviours. Teachers and Learning Support Assistants may need to explain this process in as simple of terms as possible using objects of reference,

Birtenshaw School RSE Policy

January 2020

Reviewed September 2023 – MF (ADE)

Next Review – September 2024

videos and social stories. Once a pupil is able to understand the process, from initial feeling to the end release, it can be used as an effective and healthy outlet.

In these situations the decisions and programme of support must be decided by a Multi-disciplinary team including parents and carers, OT, SALT, CAMHs and the Learning Disability Team.

Menstruation

Girls can begin menstruating from the age of 9 and sometimes earlier and the change in routine, associated pain / discomfort and “mess” can be challenging for some pupils, particularly those with Autistic Spectrum Conditions and sensory processing disorders to accept.

Education staff must work closely with parents and carers to ensure consistent messages and knowledge is being shared with pupils. Appropriate communication strategies will be used to support pupils’ understanding.

Birtenshaw School will support pupils to understand menstruation and understand what will happen to their bodies leading up to and during a period. Education staff will also support pupils to manage their periods as independently as possible; for example, when to change sanitary protection, how to change sanitary protection, disposing of it correctly and to wash their hands. Education staff will work with parents / carers to identify the most appropriate sanitary protection for pupils.

Pornography

Apart from educational resources; all websites, search engines and online platforms, which may contain sexual language, images or information, are blocked in all of Birtenshaw’s services. This is in recognition of the fact that pupils with a learning disability may not have the cognitive ability to determine what may be harmful and to mitigate the risk of exploitation.

More young people are now getting information about sex from online and this is providing an unrealistic and potentially dangerous view of sex and relationships. Through the RSE curriculum and one to one support, Birtenshaw School aims to challenge these views by educating pupils at an appropriate level. Education staff will treat all pupils’ questions as valid, and respond with enough information to answer fully but show regards to pupils level of understanding as to not to overwhelm in line with their level of understanding and cognition.

Responsibilities:

The Governing Body is responsible for:

Birtenshaw School RSE Policy

January 2020

Reviewed September 2023 – MF (ADE)

Next Review – September 2024

- Approving the RSE policy
- Holding the Head of School to account for its implementation.

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school
- Working with parents and carers requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE.

The class teachers and learning support assistants are responsible for:

- Differentiating the RSE curriculum to meet the individual needs of pupils
- Writing and overseeing the RSE plan for individual pupils.
- Liaising with external professionals
- Working collaboratively with parents and carers
- Using a range of teaching and learning strategies, techniques and resources
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress and understanding

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Head of School.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Head of School will oversee the RSE curriculum and ensure Teachers and Learning Support Assistants have the information and training they need to deliver the RSE curriculum confidently and accurately.

OFSTED is statutorily required under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 to evaluate and report on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at any school they inspect. This includes evaluating and commenting on a school's sex and relationship education policy.

Resources:

Resources are purchased alongside guidance from the Learning Disability Team, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist and CAMHs.

CPD:

All staff are provided with opportunities for professional development and training in line with the School Development plan and the organisational training needs analysis and strategy. Training needs will be linked to the school's performance management process.

Equal Opportunities:

Birtenshaw School supports the rights of all pupils/learners to equal access and opportunities regardless of age, culture, religion, gender, ability, disability or sexuality.

Birtenshaw promotes an ethos of respect for everyone.

Appendix 1

TOPIC	BY THE AGE OF 11 PUPILS SHOULD KNOW (AGE RELATED EXPECTATION USED AS A GUIDE ONLY)
Families and people who care about me	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Who is in their family / home and the role of family members- Who to go to for help if they feel unhappy or unsafe
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Different types of families; race, religion and culture- The meaning of marriage and different types of marriage- How to recognise if relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and who to go to for help if they feel unhappy or unsafe
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- That people are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability- That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences.- That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two 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">- What makes a good friend and a bad friend- How to resolve conflict, arguments and disagreements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The characteristics of friends, what does it mean to be in a friendship- How friendships develop and change- How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed
	<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, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties- That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded- That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right
Respectful relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What are 'manners' and why they are important- Knowing what makes themselves special; qualities and strengths- Who they can go to in school for help and support
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Understanding that differences in people should be respected- 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- Understanding what a stereotype is and how this can be a negative view

TOPIC	BY THE AGE OF 11 PUPILS SHOULD KNOW (AGE RELATED EXPECTATION USED AS A GUIDE ONLY)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs - Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships - The conventions of courtesy and manners - The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness - 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 those in positions of authority - 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 - What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive - The importance of permission-seeking with friends, peers and adults
Online relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand that you can speak to people online - Know what to do if someone tries to speak to you online that you do not know
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise that people do not always tell the truth online - Understand that not everything you read on the internet is true - Know how to be safe online and how to report risks - Understand how information and data is shared and used online
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not - 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 - 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
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who to speak to if they feel unsafe or unhappy - Know that their body is private
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is appropriate and inappropriate contact (types of greeting, hugs etc) - How to respond to unwanted physical contact - Understand that their body is private and belongs to them - How to report any concerns and worries about people they come into contact with and what they may need to say
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context) - About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is 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) whom they do not know - How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult - How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard - How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so - Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

TOPIC	BY THE AGE OF 16 PUPILS SHOULD KNOW (AGE RELATED EXPECTATION USED AS A GUIDE ONLY)
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That they are different types of relationships - The structure of a family tree

Birtenshaw School RSE Policy

January 2020

Reviewed September 2023 – MF (ADE)

Next Review – September 2024

TOPIC	BY THE AGE OF 16 PUPILS SHOULD KNOW (AGE RELATED EXPECTATION USED AS A GUIDE ONLY)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand what it means to be in a relationship - Recognise that there can be good and bad relationships - Understand what it means to be married and know that there are different types of marriages - The roles and responsibilities of being in a relationship and how these differ when couples have children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What makes a healthy friendship - That there are different people in the world – sex, race, religion - What is bullying and what to do if you feel bullied <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What makes a positive and healthy friendship. - Understand the importance of mutual respect - Recognise what bullying is, the impact it can have on others and where to get help from if you feel bullied - Understand that some types of behaviour should be reported to the police because they are criminal – including sexual harassment and sexual violence - Recognise that everyone is unique and equal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 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 - 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand that you can speak to people online - Know what to do if someone tries to speak to you or sends you something online that you do not know / do not want <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Know how to behave when using the internet - Understand the risks of being online - Recognise the risks of sharing information online - Understand that there is sexually explicit material online and that this is not a realistic representation of relationships - Know what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online

TOPIC	BY THE AGE OF 16 PUPILS SHOULD KNOW (AGE RELATED EXPECTATION USED AS A GUIDE ONLY)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 further and not to share personal material which is sent to them - What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online - The impact of viewing harmful content - 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 - That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail - How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand that their body is private and how to communicate if they feel unsafe
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the term 'consent' and what to do if they feel pressured into giving consent - Understand some concepts of the law including; 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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand public and private places - Recognise that men and women have different body parts - Understand their own feelings of arousal and what it means - Recognise the qualities of an appropriate relationship; mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook - Understand what is meant by the term 'fertility' and how life choices can impact this - Understand the term 'peer pressure' and what to do if you feel pressured into doing something you don't want to do - That having sex is a choice - Understand the consequences of having sex including STIs and pregnancy and what contraceptives are - Understand what it means to be 'pregnant' and the issues surrounding pregnancy including miscarriage - Know how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

TOPIC	BY THE AGE OF 16 PUPILS SHOULD KNOW (AGE RELATED EXPECTATION USED AS A GUIDE ONLY)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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

Appendix 2

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS	
Parent / guardian / social worker signature:	

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	
Head of School signature:	
Date:	