


MERTON COURT SCHOOL



Relationships & Health Education Policy

To be reviewed November 2025 by: SMSC Co-ordinator, Headmaster, LT
Signed by the Headmaster/Proprietor: 
Shared with staff: 19.11.24
Put on the Website: 19.11.24

THIS RELATIONSHIPS AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY APPLIES TO THE WHOLE SCHOOL INCLUDING EYFS.

Legal Status: Complies with Part 2, paragraph 5 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations.

Related policies and documents:

- Personal, Social & Economic Education (PSHEE) and Citizenship
- Curriculum Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- RE Policy
- Science Policy

Documents that inform the school's Relationships & Health Education Policy include:

- Education Act (1996). Section 80A Education Act (2002)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (September 2024)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Changes to the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education and PSHE: A call for evidence – The Church of England Education Office (2019)
 - Behaviour in schools (July 2022)
 - SEND Code of Practice (2015)
 - SMSC requirements for Independent Schools (2019)

Availability: This policy is made available to parents, staff and children in the following ways: on the main school website, on the staff shared Drive and parents may request a copy from the School Office.

Monitoring and review: This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headmaster. The Headmaster/Proprietor undertakes an annual review of this policy and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year, or earlier if changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Relationships & Health Education

This policy covers our approach to Relationships & Health Education; a statutory component of PSHE, Citizenship taught at Merton Court as our 'Learning Skills for Life' curriculum from September 2020. It aims to set out the purpose of Relationships & Health Education and the intended outcomes for children, what is covered in our curriculum and how it is delivered.

We define Relationships & Health Education as learning about the many strands of relationships and growing up. Young people need to learn about (and have modelled for them) good, healthy relationships. They need to learn how to secure, develop and sustain healthy relationships and how to be able to recognise when and how relationships go wrong. They must be prepared for the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of being in relationships with other people. Relationship education and Health Education must give children the understanding, vocabulary and strategies they require to keep themselves safe and to thrive within good, stable long-term relationships of all kinds. RHE should give children accurate information to equip them for life in the modern world and to make sure they are not influenced by unrealistic, dangerous materials.

Purpose and Principles

At our school, we believe in providing every pupil with open, honest, accurate and age-appropriate lessons all about relationships, through the use of 1Decision materials. Through the school's ethos and values, we aim to develop children's knowledge, skills, opinions, strategies and confidence - enabling them to cope with life and live safely and happily in the modern world. As a school with a specific Christian character, we believe RHE is about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, healthy relationships, human sexuality and sexual health. It is also about the spiritual and moral aspects of relationships within a context of a Christian vision for the purpose of life.

We highly value the partnership between school and home and promote open and informative two-way communication. We aim to provide parents and carers with accurate information about what their child is learning in school and to provide the best learning environment and opportunities for our children.

Our Relationships & Health Education curriculum is inclusive and meets the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Through our comprehensive Relationships & Health Education provision, we aim to provide all children with:

- the knowledge and understanding of a variety of relationships;
- the ability to identify any concerns they have about a relationship;
- coping strategies and an awareness of how and where to seek support;
- an understanding of their rights and responsibilities within a range of relationships;
- an awareness of the process of growing up and the changes they and others will experience;
- an understanding of the characteristics of positive relationships;

The focus at Merton Court will be on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, as well as relationships with other children and with adults.

This starts with children being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. Building on their early education, children will be taught how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy.

Our teaching covers establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding, the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.

Respect for others will be taught in an age-appropriate way, in terms of understanding one's own and others' boundaries in play, in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources and so on.

From the beginning, teachers will teach explicitly about the features of healthy friendships, family relationships and other relationships which young children are likely to encounter and help them to recognise any less positive relationships should they encounter them.

The principles of positive relationships also apply online especially as, by the end of primary school, children will be using the internet as part of their learning with some level of independence. When teaching relationships content, teachers address online safety and appropriate behaviour in a way that is relevant to children's lives. Teachers include content on how information and data is shared and used in all contexts, including online; for example, sharing pictures, understanding that many websites are businesses and how sites may use information provided by users in ways those users might not expect.

Teaching about families requires sensitive and well-judged teaching based on knowledge of children and their circumstances. Families in their many forms, provide a nurturing environment for children. Care needs to be taken to ensure

that there is no stigma on children based on their home circumstances and needs to reflect sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them; for example, looked after children or young carers.

Through Relationships & Health Education, Merton Court will teach children the knowledge they need to recognise and to report abuse, including emotional, physical and sexual abuse. This can be delivered by focusing on boundaries and privacy, ensuring young people understand that they have rights over their own bodies. This should also include understanding boundaries in friendships with peers and also in families and with others, in all contexts, including online.

Children will know how to report concerns and seek advice when they suspect or know that something is wrong. At all stages it will be important to balance teaching children about making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online) whilst being clear it is never the fault of a child who is abused and why victim blaming is always wrong. These subjects are part of a comprehensive programme and whole school approach and this knowledge can support safeguarding of children.

Statutory Regulations

Since September 2021, all primary schools must now deliver Relationships & Health Education. Under the Education Act 2002/Academies Act 2010, all schools must provide a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of children at the school and of society, and
- prepares children at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Relationship & Health Education curriculum in our school will be led by our SMSC Lead and our Head of Pastoral Care, to cover both relationships and the changing adolescent body.

Our Relationships & Health Education Curriculum

Our inclusive Relationships curriculum supports the objectives set out by the PSHE Association which meet the statutory requirements for Key Stage 1 and 2. The teaching is planned from the programme of study in '1Decision'. It forms a core part of our comprehensive Personal, Social and Economic Education (PSE & RHE) curriculum, which we describe as 'Learning Skills for Life'.

Our Relationships Scheme of Work can be found in the '1Decision' scheme of work from EYFS to Yr 6, as well as through the Science curriculum and PSE.

Our lessons are differentiated and involves discussion and interactive videos, ensuring all children are able to participate fully. Children will be given the opportunity throughout the units of work to reflect on and evaluate their learning - assessment opportunities are built into every lesson, as is baseline assessment, at the start of each module.

RHE from EYFS to the end of the Senior School is linked with the whole curriculum and, the Science curriculum includes teaching about the main external parts of the body and changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age, including puberty.

Our Computing curriculum aims to ensure that all children can understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science, including logic, algorithms and data representation. It also covers online safety (through '1Decision'), with progression in the content to reflect the different and escalating risks that young people face as they get older. This includes how to use technology safely, responsibly, respectfully and securely; how to keep personal information private; and where to go for help and support.

The PE curriculum aims to ensure that children develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities, are physically active for sustained periods of time, engage in competitive sport and activities and lead healthy, active lives.

RHE complements our existing curriculum and the whole school approach to wellbeing and health. Health education supports what is taught through PE by developing core knowledge and broader understanding that enables people to lead healthy, active lives.

Delivering the Curriculum

Our RHE lessons are taught by form teachers weekly, alongside PSE lessons through the '1Decision' program. Special consideration will be given when teaching particularly sensitive content and staff will be fully aware of the children in their class and how they might relate to the lesson content. We work from the '1Decision' scheme throughout the school to deliver specific development of age-appropriate lessons.

We aim to create and maintain a safe environment within which all children feel able to ask questions and discuss issues openly. For any child wishing to discuss something confidential, relating to the lesson content, an opportunity will be provided. Mental Health Champions are elected in each from J3 to S4 and are trained to offer support to their peers. In EYFS support is available by use of the "Worry Bench" where peers can support each other alongside adults.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

RHE is accessible for all children. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised according to the baseline assessment in each unit, will be the starting point to ensure accessibility.

The School is aware that some children are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships & Health Education can also be particularly important subjects for some children; for example, those with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities.

As with all teaching for these subjects, Merton Court ensures that teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.

Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting

Self-assessment is an important part of learning in Relationships Education and PSE. Children reflect on their learning throughout the units and at the end of each module. We highly value pupil voice and will take into account the opinions and comments of our children about what they would like to learn.

Staff delivering the Relationships & Health curriculum will critically reflect on their teaching and best practice will be shared through lesson observations, monitoring of planning and children's work and training opportunities. The SMSC lead monitors all teaching throughout the year.

Comments on children's learning and progress in Relationships & Health Education, as part of their learning in PSE, will be reported to parents and carers through children's annual reports in the Summer Term and parents' evenings.

Safeguarding

Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. In this instance, teachers will consult with the designated safeguarding lead and in her absence, their deputy.

DSL / Head of Pastoral Care, Mrs A Macdonald

DDSL / Mrs T Langton

Visitors and external agencies which support the delivery of Relationships & Health Education will be required to adhere to the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and policies relating to the subjects they are teaching or contributing towards.

As part of our whole approach to RHE, parents are welcome to discuss content and resources used with form teachers informally and at information sessions.