

Witton Church Walk CE Primary School
Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy



‘Where Every Door is Opened and Every Gift is Unlocked’

At Witton we are a partnership of school, church, home and community. We create a stimulating and caring environment, grounded in Christian belief and practice, so that all members of our school community feel happy, safe and secure. Time is taken to value and nurture each child educationally, creatively and spiritually. Children and staff are encouraged to aim for ‘Everyday Excellence’ and believe in themselves in order to achieve their full potential.

Our school works within the recommendations of The Equality Act 2010.

What is RSE?

The term **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)** is used in this policy rather than simply *sex education*. This reflects that our RSE programme is not solely about biological facts but about equipping children with knowledge, values, and skills to form healthy relationships, develop resilience, make safe and informed decisions, and build self-esteem while learning to manage relationships in a way that reflects our Christian ethos.

According to the Department for Education's statutory guidance, RSE is:

"High-quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. They can also enable schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, at school and in society."

(DfE, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, July 2025)

RSE also includes understanding how online activity and digital interactions can influence relationships, wellbeing, safety, and mental health, helping children navigate the challenges and risks of the digital world alongside those in everyday life.

The guidance suggests that RSE should have three main elements as follows:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Physical development and human growth.
- Healthy lifestyles, hygiene and personal safety.
- Reproduction and scientific knowledge through the Science curriculum.
- Personal safety in public spaces.

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- Online safety, digital resilience, and risks.

Attitudes and Values

- The importance of family, love and care.
- Respecting diversity in family structures and beliefs.
- Understanding rights, responsibilities and consent.
- Recognising and challenging harmful stereotypes and negative influences.

Personal and Social Skills

- Managing emotions and building resilience.
- Communication and empathy.
- Conflict resolution and healthy decision-making.
- Recognising and reporting abuse, harassment and exploitation.
- Awareness of the law, including around consent, harassment, and violence.
- Maintaining good mental health and identifying signs of unhealthy or unsafe relationships, including online.

The schools approach to RSE consists of:

- The taught RSE programme
- Pastoral support for pupils who experience difficulties
- Provision of appropriate information through leaflets and books in the library and display of posters

Aims of RSE at Witton:

- To provide accurate, age-appropriate knowledge about human development, relationships and health.
- To help pupils develop respect, empathy and care for themselves and others.
- To equip pupils with skills to manage emotions, relationships and personal choices safely and responsibly.
- To promote positive mental health and wellbeing, including awareness of both online and offline risks.
- To support safeguarding by helping pupils recognise and avoid exploitation, harassment and abuse.
- To celebrate diversity in families and communities, and challenge discrimination, bullying and stereotypes.

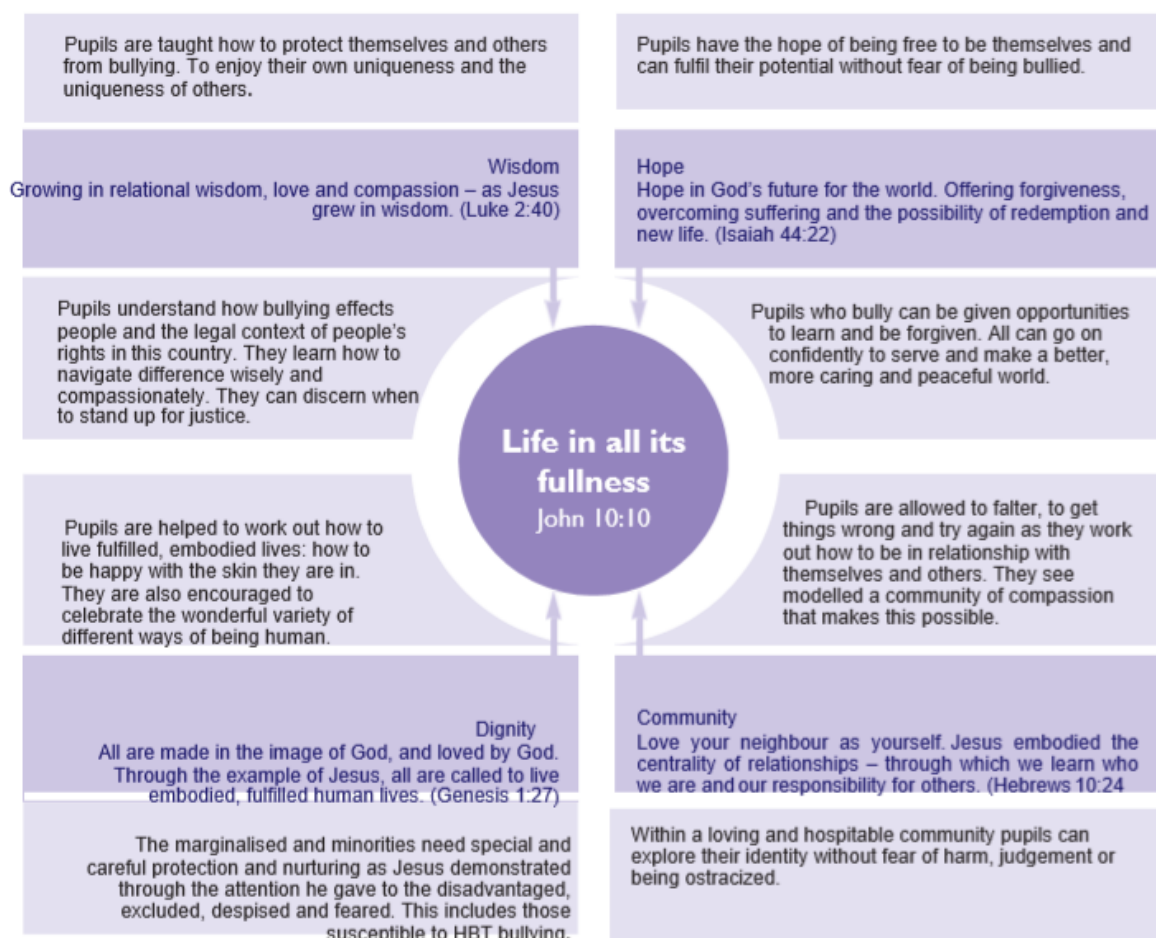
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"Church schools are built on the conviction that every child is created, loved and called into fullness of life by God by ensuring they offer a safe and welcoming place for all God's children"

Archbishop of Canterbury



Why RSE?

Obligations

It is best practice for primary schools to provide an age and development appropriate RSE programme as part of a planned provision for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). Parents have a right to withdraw their children from 'sex education' lessons that fall outside those covered in the National Curriculum Science.

The needs of children and the role of schools

The overall aims of the school and National Curriculum are:

- To provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve
- To promote pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life

The DfE 'Sex and Relationship Guidance' recommends that *'effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives.'* and that

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‘all primary schools should have a sex and relationship education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the children.’

The school has a key role, in partnership with parents/carers, in providing RSE. Research has shown that young people who feel good about themselves, and are knowledgeable and confident about sex and relationships, are likely to be more discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviours and more likely to have fulfilling relationships.

‘Research demonstrates that good, comprehensive sex and relationship education does not make young people more likely to enter into sexual activity. Indeed it can help them learn the reasons for, and the benefits to be gained from, delaying such activity.’ DfE ‘Sex and Relationship Guidance’

National and local support and guidance for schools to develop RSE

Rates of pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted infection in the UK are among the highest of all European countries. The Government has developed a comprehensive strategy to change this situation and RSE for pupils in both primary and secondary schools is seen, alongside other initiatives, as a key element. Our school’s approach to RSE is in line with the Government’s strategy and guidance given to schools in DfE ‘Sex and Relationship Guidance’.

Morals and Values Framework

Our approach to RSE will be conducted within a clear morals and values framework based on the following principles:

- The value of stable and loving relationships
- Respect, understanding and empathy towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, sexuality, feelings and views
- The development of relationships, including sexual relationships, based on mutual consent, rather than coercion
- The right not to be abused by other people or to be taken advantage of
- The right of people to follow their own sexuality, within legal parameters

We also believe that pupils have an entitlement to:

- Age and circumstance appropriate RSE
- Access to help from trusted adults and helping services

RSE involves consideration of a number of sensitive issues about which different people may hold strong and varying views. The school’s approach to RSE will be balanced and take account of, and be sensitive to, different viewpoints but will not be based on personal bias.

Equal Opportunities

Children may have varying needs regarding RSE depending on their circumstances and background. The school strongly believes that all pupils should have access to RSE that is relevant to their particular needs. To achieve this, the school’s approach to RSE will take account of:

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Ethnical and cultural diversity. Different ethnic and cultural groups may have different attitudes to RSE. The school will consult pupils and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for, and understanding of, the view of different ethnic and cultural groups.

Varying home backgrounds. We recognise that our pupils may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. We shall take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.

Sexuality. Pupils may go on to define themselves as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or may not identify to the gender assigned to them at birth. Some pupils may have gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents/carers, brothers or sisters, other family members and/or friends. All our pupils will meet and work with gay, lesbian or bi-sexual people. Our approach to RSE will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. We shall actively tackle homophobic and transgender bullying in line with our anti-bullying, e-safety and behaviour policies.

SEND. The RSE reflects and is in line with our equal opportunities policies and the school ensures that the RSE teaching programme is an inclusive one and is appropriate and relevant to all pupils. Where needed, RSE will be differentiated and personalised to meet the needs of children with SEND.

Whole School Approach

A whole school approach will be adopted to RSE that actively involves the whole school community. All groups who make up the school community have rights and responsibilities regarding RSE. In particular:

The senior leadership team (SLT) will endeavour to support the provision and development of RSE in line with this policy by providing leadership and adequate resources.

The designated RSE lead will maintain an overview of RSE provision and have overall responsibility for its development. This will include keeping up to date with developments and good practice, developing the provision to meet pupil's needs, providing support and resources for staff, arranging staff training, liaison with outside agencies and monitoring and evaluation.

Teaching staff. All teachers are involved in the school's RSE provision. Some RSE is taught through the PSHE programme and some through science and other curriculum areas. All teachers will be consulted about the school's approach to RSE and aided in their work by provision of resources, background information, support and advice from experienced members of staff and access to appropriate training.

Support staff may be involved in a supportive role in some RSE lessons and also play an important, informal pastoral support role with pupils. They will have access to information about the RSE programme and supported in their pastoral role.

Governors have responsibilities for school policies. They will be consulted about the RSE provision and policy and have regular reports at Governor Meetings.

Parents/carers have a legal right to view this policy and have information about the school's RSE provision. They also have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated sex education lessons if they wish. The school will seek and take account of parent/carer views and endeavour to adopt a partnership workshop approach with parent/carers. This will periodically offer information/education workshops for

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parents/carers. The school's approach to RSE will encourage dialogue between parents/carers and their children.

Outside agencies and speakers are involved in inputting to RSE lessons. The school will only work with agencies and speakers who are appropriate to pupil needs. We shall work in partnership with them and jointly plan their contribution to the school.

Pupils have an entitlement to age and circumstance appropriate RSE and to pastoral support. They will be actively consulted about their RSE needs and their views will be central to developing provision.

The Taught RSE Programme

The RSE programme will be delivered as part of the school's approach to PHSE and Citizenship, this can be found on the school's website.

Aims of the programme

The overall aims of the RSE programme are:

- To provide accurate information about, and understanding of, RSE issues
- To dispel myths
- To explore a range of attitudes towards RSE issues and to help pupils to reach their own informed views
- To develop respect for themselves and care for others
- To increase pupil's self-esteem and their self-worth
- To develop skills relevant to effective management of relationships and sexual situations. Examples include communication and empathy towards others, risk assessment, assertiveness, conflict management, decision making, seeking help and helping others

Place in the curriculum

The main RSE programme will be delivered through PSHE lessons. In addition certain biological aspects are delivered through Science lessons.

Content and learning objectives

The RSE programme is delivered in a developmental manner so that issues are explored in greater depth as pupils mature. Details of what is taught in which years is within our curriculum document.

Methodology and resources

Active learning methods, which involve children's full participation, will be used. This includes use of quizzes, case studies, research, role-play, video, small group discussion and use of appropriate guest speakers.

RSE takes place within mixed sex classes or single gender groups as deemed appropriate and relevant, with the pupils' usual class teacher. Should a teacher be absent RSE would not be undertaken by a short-term supply teacher.

Teaching is conducted in a safe learning environment through the use of ground rules and distancing techniques (see below) so that pupils are not on the spot or expected to discuss their own personal issues in class. Teaching resources are selected on the basis of their appropriateness to pupils.

Ground rules and distancing techniques

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Teachers are careful to ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes do not obstruct a balanced approach to teaching RSE. To this end ground rules have been agreed to provide a common values framework within which to teach. There are clear parameters as to what will be dealt with on an individual basis.

- Pupils will be given preparation so that they will know how to minimise any embarrassment they feel
- No one (teacher or pupil) should be expected to answer a personal question
- No one will be forced to take part in a discussion
- In most cases the correct names for body parts will be used
- Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way
- No one (teacher or pupil) is to share personal information from the lessons unless for safeguarding reasons

Answering children's questions

Children are bombarded by sexual imagery in the media and are aware, but often ill-informed and confused, about many sex and relationship issues. They may have genuine questions and concerns. In most cases teachers will attempt to answer children's questions and concerns in a sensitive, age and development appropriate manner. Individual teachers will use their skill and discretion in these situations and if necessary refer to the PHSE lead for advice and support. Teachers will also follow the following guidance:

- Teachers will establish clear parameters about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting
- If a child's question is inappropriate to address with the whole class the teacher should acknowledge the question and attend to it later on an individual basis
- If a question is too personal the teacher should remind the pupils of the ground rules
- Teachers will set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that pupils discuss issues in a way which does not encourage giggling and silliness
- Pupils will have opportunities to write down questions anonymously and post them in a question box. The teacher will have time to prepare answers to questions before the net session, and can choose not to respond to any questions which are inappropriate to address in whole class lessons
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk the Head teacher should be informed and the usual child protection procedures followed

Parental concerns and withdrawal of pupils

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated 'sex education' lessons. They do not have a right to withdraw their children from those aspects of RSE that are taught in National Curriculum Science, where RSE issues arise incidentally in other subject areas or from statutory Relationships or Health Education - 2021.

We will work in active partnership with parents/carers, value their views and keep them informed about our RSE provision. If a parent/carer has any concerns about the RSE provision we will take time to address their concerns and allay any fears they may have. If any parents/carers decide to withdraw their child we shall work with them and their child to explore possible alternative provision.

Monitoring and evaluation

The programme is regularly evaluated by the RSE coordinator. The views of pupils and teachers who deliver the programme are used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis.

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Pastoral support for pupils who experience difficulties

The nature of support available to pupils including those with SEND

The school takes its role in the promotion of pupil well being seriously. Staff endeavour to make themselves approachable and to provide caring and sensitive support for pupils in a number of ways. Staff may be approached for help on an individual basis. They offer a listening ear and, where appropriate, information and advice. The school nurse offers a health and support service to pupils. Where appropriate, pupils are referred to the school nurse and/or outside helping agencies. In all but exceptional cases (such as child protection) parents/carers are fully consulted and involved. The school will keep up to date about the development of local services and national helplines for children and form working relationships with local agencies that are relevant to pupils needs.

Confidentiality and informing parents/carers

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a pupil for help. Staff must make this clear to pupils. Child protection procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made.

Dealing with bullying

Bullying commonly includes inappropriate and hurtful comments and behaviours concerning sexism, homophobia, appearance and other sex/relationship issues. The school takes the issue of bullying very seriously. This is reflected in the school's behaviour and e-safety policies. Pupils will be encouraged to report any incidents.

Dissemination of the Policy

The policy will be shared with all staff, the Governing Body and may be accessed by parents at consultation events or by request at the school office.

Policy Review and Development Plan

The policy was reviewed in September, following consultation with staff, governors and parents. It will be reviewed no less than every two years, under the guidance of the PHSE coordinator.

Sources of Further Information

This policy has drawn on DfE 'Relationship Education Relationship and Sex & Health Education' (2019), Children & Social Work Act 2017, chapter 4, PHSCE Curriculum Sept 2013, Sex & Relationship Guidance – A Christian Perspective, Flourishing for All: Anti-bullying Guidance for Church of England Schools September 2024 (amended April 2025)

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