An OPEN Academy

# Policy: RSHE

## (Relationships, Sex and Health Education)

November 2024

**Introductory statement**

This policy covers Cholsey Primary School's whole school approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

RSHE is vital for the personal, social and emotional development of pupils. It equips children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, respectful and enjoyable relationships and empowers them to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

All children and young people have a right to holistic, inclusive and needs-led RSHE. Through providing high quality RSHE, Cholsey Primary School upholds the ethos and values of our school and its commitment to equality and celebration of difference.

We are currently participating in the Oxfordshire relational schools program which will further enhance the children's knowledge and ability to form healthy relationships.

This policy was produced in consultation with staff, trustees, pupils and parents/carers. The policy was effectively communicated to all stakeholders, including being published on the school website.

The information below complies with statutory obligations to deliver RSHE under sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It also has due regard for the DfE's (Department for Education) statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance and other relevant guidance.

The policy will be reviewed and approved by Cholsey Primary School's trustees every three years to ensure that it is in line with the current Government guidance and legislation and that the RSE programme continues to meet the needs of all pupils.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Child Protection and Safeguarding;

Anti bullying;

Equality;

Positive Behaviour.

**Equality, Inclusion and Social Justice**

*'Schools should consider what they can do to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls; and provide an environment which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic, including through these subjects and as part of a whole school approach.'*

(DfE Guidance, p14)

RSHE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. Cholsey Primary School's RSHE is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes, sexism and sexual harassment in school. These issues are addressed as a matter of importance to ensure that the content on gender equality is embedded throughout the curriculum.

Cholsey Primary School is committed to RSHE that makes every pupil feel valued and included and is relevant to them. The school is committed to LGBTQIA+ [1] inclusion and SEND[2] inclusion and is mindful of the SEND Code of Practice 2014 when planning for this subject.

Staff will ensure that consideration is given to the religious and cultural background of all pupils when teaching RSHE.

Inclusive RSHE at Cholsey Primary School will seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

**Definition of Relationships and Sex Education**

*'The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.'*

(DfE Guidance, p25)

Cholsey Primary School, takes a positive, inclusive and affirmative approach that accepts children's and young people's experiences and enables them to be explored sensitively.

To meet the aims outlined in the DfE Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education Guidance, pupils are equipped to build positive relationships online and offline. The curriculum gives pupils the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help them to:

- value their health, wellbeing and dignity
- build self-esteem and self-worth
- accept and value their personal and identity and the personal identities of others
- understand and make sense of the real-life issues they are experiencing in the world around them
- manage and explore difficult feelings and emotions
- consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others
- develop as informed and responsible citizens
- understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

High quality, comprehensive RSHE does not encourage early sexual experimentation but in fact builds young people's confidence and self-esteem and helps them understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity.

1 LGBTQIA+ refers to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, and to people with gender expressions outside traditional norms, including nonbinary, intersex, asexual, and other queer people (and those questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation).

2 SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability.

Evidence shows[3] that effective RSHE plays a role in behaviour change, including reducing unprotected or unwanted sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

**Subject content**

Cholsey Primary School's curriculum programme is developed in conjunction with the views of teachers, pupils and parents/carers.

At Cholsey Primary School, the learning objectives and content outlined in the DfE Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education Guidance are taught. All content will be delivered in a timely way and will be age and developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of all pupils, including those pupils with SEND.

**Subject Delivery**

*'Effective teaching in these subjects will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to pupils, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme or lessons.'*

(DfE Guidance, p8)

RSHE will be delivered at Cholsey Primary School as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all keystages, using a spiral curriculum approach (a course of study in which pupils will see the same topics throughout their school career, with each encounter increasing in complexity and reinforcing previous learning).

The curriculum team will work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas (e.g. Science, Computing and PE) to ensure a holistic and joined up approach to what is taught in RSHE.

Learning is supplemented using a whole school approach and utilising time outside of the classroom. For example, through assemblies, Art of Brilliance programme, mindfulness sessions, whole school topics and other events.

[3] https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/evidence/sre-evidence - Briefing which aims to provide an accessible and accurate summary of the research evidence relating to relationships and sex education (RSE), particularly the contribution of RSE to behaviour change. It includes findings about RSE from the third British National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal).

RSHE will address aspects of relationships and sex in an integrated way within a single topic. Learning about real life and online relationships will not be artificially separated when it is appropriate to integrate this teaching and explore a topic in both contexts. Where an issue is experienced exclusively or disproportionately in an online context, this will be drawn out.

External agencies are used, where appropriate, to deliver aspects of Relationships and Sex

Education (see 'Working with visitors and external agencies' section below).

The programme will be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way, using the correct medical terms where appropriate (e.g. for external body parts). School staff will not express or be expected to express their personal views or beliefs when delivering the programme.

All staff who have responsibility for delivering RSHE will undergo training to ensure they are up-to-date with the RSHE policy and curriculum requirements regarding RSHE.

In addition, CPD will be offered in response to staff surveys.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

*'Schools should have the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas.'*

(DfE Guidance, p43)

RSHE planning is regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, that the curriculum is meeting the national requirements under the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance, and that learning outcomes are reflective of pupil need.

This policy will be reviewed by the school's leadership team in conjunction with the curriculum team, and trustees on a regular basis. If changes are needed, members of staff, parents/carers and pupils will be consulted, and any amendments clearly communicated.

The School's Leadership Team monitors and evaluates the implementation of the programme and pupil's knowledge and understanding through:

- Pupil Voice (e.g. using pupil interviews, questionnaires/ surveys, focus groups or using pupil question boxes)
- Evidence from lesson observations / Teacher evaluation of lessons and the overall RSE programme
- Analysis of behaviour incident records (e.g. prejudicial bullying)
- Analysing pupil engagement in lessons

**Pupil voice**

*'Listening and responding to the views of young people will strengthen the policy, ensuring that it meets the needs of all pupils'*

(DfE Guidance, p12)

Pupil voice is central to the culture and ethos of Cholsey Primary School. Pupil Voice is used to evaluate how relevant and engaging RSHE is to children's lives.

Throughout the teaching of RSHE, pupil voice practices are embedded to enable pupils to express their views on the range of topics and issues that RSHE covers and to ensure that they listen to other opinions and evidence, reflect on their own perspectives and take a broader view.

Cholsey Primary School ensures that all pupil voices are heard but that those views that are hurtful, offensive or exclusionary do not dominate and are addressed appropriately and without delay. The school ensures there is a culture where human rights, social justice, inclusion and diversity are promoted.

**Answering Pupil Questions**

*'The school's policy should cover how the school handles [difficult] questions. Given ease of access to the internet, children whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information.'*

(DfE Guidance, p23)

RSHE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from pupils. Questions are viewed as a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others.

To ensure pupils have every opportunity to ask any question they might have and to avoid loss of dignity for all, school staff may offer pupils the chance to contribute questions anonymously in advance of specific lessons (e.g. on puberty). This will enable staff to research questions and respond with factually accurate information.

As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, it will be answered to the whole group. There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class. If school staff do not feel in a position to immediately address questions, they may defer a question and seek more information before responding to pupils.

Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way and take into account whether a parent/carer has requested their child to be removed from sex education lessons. If school staff have concerns about pupil contributions or questions, they will inform parents/carers as appropriate.

School staff will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their pupils that could make either party vulnerable.

An open approach to answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and older pupils. Cholsey Primary School believes that exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSHE. Children are better protected from harm and abuse when they can discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

**Working with Parents/Carers**

*'All schools should work closely with parents when planning and delivering these subjects. Schools should ensure that parents know what will be taught and when.'*

(DfE Guidance, p17)

*'All schools must have in place a written policy for […] RSE. Schools must consult parents in developing and reviewing their policy.'*

(DfE Guidance, p11)

Successful teaching of RSHE involves parents/ carers and schools working together. Parents/ carers can play an important role in the RSHE of their children through exploring discussions at home that have taken place in school.

Cholsey Primary School's RSHE policy has been developed through consulting parents and carers.

If parents/carers have any concerns or special circumstances that the school should be aware of,

or would like any further information about the curriculum, time can be designated to discuss this further and to address any issues.

Examples of key resources used may be shared with parents/carers to reassure them of the content and to enable them to continue the conversations started in class at home. If parents/carers wish to view resources, this can be arranged via the school office.

**Parental Right to request their child be excused from Sex Education**

*'All schools should work closely with parents […] and clearly communicate the fact that parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.'*

(DfE Guidance, p17)

As outlined within the Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSHE.

Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education.

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of Relationships Education, Cholsey Primary School aims to encourage parents to see the value of RSHE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice.

Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, they should first speak to the headteacher to discuss their concerns. The headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum.

If parents/carers decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this.

The information above is based on the Relationships, RSE and Health Education guidance that becomes statutory from April 2021. Up until April 2021, the parental right to withdraw remains the same under existing legislation and Sex and Relationships Education Guidance (2000). This means that parents will have a right to withdraw from some or all of sex education lessons in primary schools. For secondary schools, a parent can withdraw their child from some or all of sex education. A head teacher cannot overrule a request for withdrawal. This includes children above the age of 16. For more information please see: gov.uk/government/publications/sex-and-relationship-education

**Working with Visitors and External Agencies**

*'Working with external organisations can enhance delivery of these subjects, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with young people […] It is important to agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with school policy.'*

(DfE Guidance, p18)

From time-to-time Cholsey Primary School may invite external experts and visitors to deliver parts of the RSHE scheme of work.

External visitors will be selected in order to enrich and supplement RSHE by bringing particular skills, methods and expertise to the classroom and the whole school. External visitors may include NSPCC, Art of Brilliance staff and School Nurses.

A teacher will always be present throughout these lessons to build on the pupil's learning after the session/s as well as answer any questions the pupils may subsequently have.

Any external visitor will be expected to comply with this policy and other related policies, including the school's Data Protection and Child Protection policies.#

Cholsey Primary School will ensure that:

- There is appropriate planning, preparatory and follow up work for the session.
- The visitor understands the cohort of children involved, including the different ability levels and diversities in identities across protected characteristics. They will also be made aware of any specific issues relating to child protection.

**Safeguarding and Child Protection**

*'At the heart of these subjects there is a focus on keeping children safe, and schools can play an important role in preventative education [...] Good practice allows children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports.'*

(DfE Guidance, p42)

Cholsey Primary School acknowledges that RSHE is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the school and for meeting statutory obligations as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020).

RSHE helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing abuse or have experienced abuse.

The school recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSHE covers, some pupils could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory training around child protection and will follow the schools Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures.

It is recognised that some children may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSHE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes to their personal life. For those children, additional support will be given to prevent them being affected by the scenarios or topics in their planned lessons.

While Cholsey Primary School wants to create a learning space that feels safe for children and young people to disclose, it is also important to protect children's privacy. At Cholsey Primary School this is achieved by using a number of teaching techniques including the use of a working agreement, where rights respecting ground rules are created with pupils on what makes a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Once ground rules have been agreed, they will be in place throughout the scheme of work and actively referred to. Through the use of ground rules and other approaches, such as distancing techniques, the school can create a supportive environment for discussions, which can be sensitive or difficult.

**Statement by the Governing Body/Trust**

The Trustees of Cholsey Primary School adopted this policy on 04/12/2024

It will review the policy on or no later than December 2027

In adopting this policy, the Trustees recognise their responsibility for ensuring the policy is implemented effectively, including that the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way the ensures that the school fulfils its legal obligations.