



Heron Academy

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

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INTRODUCTION

This policy has been written with reference to the Personal, Social and Health Education Association’s core themes of Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Living in the Wider World. We deliberately refer to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) rather than Sex and Relationships Education as we believe that the development of positive, healthy relationships is the cornerstone of a civilized society and will ensure that our pupils grow up respecting themselves and others.

WHAT IS RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) AT HERON ACADEMY?

RSE focuses on understanding the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills, understanding and positive attitudes and values. RSE is not Sex Education, which is provided through science lessons and focuses on the biological information surrounding reproduction. Sex Education is part of the National Curriculum and pupils cannot be withdrawn from this subject.

Parents will not be able to withdraw their young person from Relationships Education in secondary school

At Heron we base the teaching of science on the National Curriculum science, which includes some elements of sex education. Parents do not have a right to withdraw their child from this.

At secondary school level parents will be able to withdraw their child from sex education unless there are exceptional circumstances. However, a young person will also have a right to opt into sex education from their 15th birthday (specifically three academic terms before they turn 16)

If parents would like to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE, then in the first instance, we would encourage parents / carers to contact Alex Orfanou the Assistant Head (Pastoral Lead) via email alexandra.orfanou@heron.lseat.org.uk. Parent and carers will be encouraged to discuss their concerns, given that the teaching of RSE is done in an appropriate way and focuses on the level of understanding and needs of the individual pupil. If parents/carers still wish for their child to be withdrawn from the specific learning or activity they should then make this request in writing to the Head Teacher.

Heron Academy is committed to empowering young people with RSE and will provide parents and carers with advance information about RSE lessons. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at Heron Academy as we believe the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all young people to be taught.

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

1. To adopt a child-centered approach to the teaching of RSE as part of the So Safe and PSHE Curriculum through the provision of a safe, secure and comfortable environment in which pupils can begin to comprehend the world around them. This means that the starting point for learning on aspects of RSE will be based on the young person's level of understanding and awareness.
2. To dispel any misconceptions about relationships and sex, acquired through social media or otherwise, ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to form their own attitudes and opinions and develop healthy and appropriate behaviours.
3. To explore a range of attitudes towards gender stereotyping and sexual orientation, whilst not promoting any specific sexual activity or orientation.
4. To enhance a young person's communication skills to allow them to be more assertive, manage conflict and identify signs of an unhealthy relationship.

The school will:

1. Provide objective, factual information about the human body and its changes, including information about consent, reproduction, contraception and puberty.

2. Start RSE education when the pupil joins us in year 7 or at another starting point in an appropriate way - promoting personal space, good hygiene and teaching positive relationships to ensure later topics do not present as unfamiliar or uncomfortable.
3. Provide opportunities to discuss moral issues and everyday scenarios to engage with the views and options of others, encouraging empathy skills.
4. Develop pupils' self-esteem and assertiveness skills and increase their awareness of sources of help and support as well as pupils' confidence to use them.
5. Provide factual information concerning this aspect of their development and the Law.
6. Offer opportunities to challenge misconceptions, prejudice and ignorance within an atmosphere of trust and support, free from embarrassment and stigma.
7. Teach RSE adapted to the level of understanding of individual pupils and pathways.
8. Work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, and mentors to ensure access to appropriate support and advice for the pupils.

MORAL VALUES AND FRAMEWORK

The personal beliefs and attitudes of staff members delivering this aspect of the curriculum will not affect the delivery or content of the lessons in a way that is not compatible with the school ethos. At Heron Academy we see knowledge as something to be valued, therefore it is key that the information is appropriate to the needs, age and ability of a young person.

Staff will work within the following framework of expectations:

1. Valuing every young person as an individual.
2. Understanding of abuse and the exploitation of vulnerable people.
3. A respect for self and others.
4. A culture where we understand and explore the rights and responsibilities of others.
5. Teaching staff will include up to date information, fast responses to any concern and a feeling of safety in expression.
6. An understanding of diversity including religion, culture, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability and social class.
7. An understanding of the key building blocks of any relationship including trust and honesty as a foundation.
8. The significance of marriage and commitment without any stigma towards individuals' home circumstances.
9. Realistic discussion about the effects of early sexual activity and how to seek support should the situation arise.
10. An understanding about choice with regards to partner, parenthood and sexual activity and that those choices carry consequences.

SAFETY AND TRUST

All staff at Heron Academy have a role to play in creating a safe learning environment for young people, encouraging a sense of security and confidence in all. An emphasis on understanding feelings of self and others will always be integral to learning about physical relationships.

CONFIDENTIALITY & SAFETY

1. RSE will take part in a secure and supportive environment; however, staff will never guarantee confidentiality where the disclosure compromises the safety and wellbeing of pupils. All staff have received safeguarding training and are alert to signs of abuse, exploitation and neglect. Effective RSE may bring about disclosures which indicate that child protection measures are needed. All staff are aware of the importance and process of reporting their concerns.
2. Ground rules are agreed prior to any RSE session to implement boundaries to support in the safe learning environment.
3. Young people will always be informed should the information shared require further attention. Sharing information without consent is only permitted if in the best interests of the child and there is a clear risk of significant harm to an individual or others.
4. Although the age of consent is 16, any behaviours of concern relating to sexual behaviour, for example inappropriate touch, kissing etc, involving a pupil at Heron Academy will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
5. RSE plays a very important part in fulfilling the statutory duties all schools have to meet. RSE helps children understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships and equips them with the skills to get help if they need it.

RSE BY SCHOOL PHASE

At Heron the teaching of the RSE curriculum is underpinned by our school values: Trust, honesty, kindness, respect and independence.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Managing Feelings and Behaviour

Pupils talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride. - Making Relationships

Pupils play cooperatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children.

Me and My Community/ Understanding of the World

- People and Communities

Pupils are exposed to past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children do not always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions. - The World

Pupils are exposed to similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one to another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.

Strategies include

1. To take turns
2. To treat each other with kindness and respect
3. To establish positive relationships with a range of people
4. Families and people who care for me
5. Be able to name parts of the body and understand the difference between boys and girls
6. Being safe, including the difference between good and bad touches.
7. Develop simple skills to maintain safety, saying no.
8. Appreciate ways in which people learn to live and work together, listening, discussing,
9. Sharing and making friends.
10. Pupils' questions will continue to be answered as honestly as possible. Lessons will start to form part of a PHSE programme.
11. The So Safe programme structure.

(Where appropriate)

12. Begin to know and understand the physical, emotional and social changes which take place at puberty.
13. Understand different patterns of friendship.
14. Understand that families exist in many forms and that these are equally respected and valued.

Additional support

Lessons will continue to form part of the So Safe programme. Pupils are grouped according to their cognitive ability. There may be times in some Relationships and Sex Educations lessons where pupils will be taught in single sex groups. The content of the programme will differ depending on the abilities and needs of the pupils. It may include some or all of the above and:

1. Understanding different types of relationships.
2. Building and managing healthy relationships.
3. Further developing pupils' understanding of the physical, emotional and social
4. Changes which take place at puberty.
5. Understand that families exist in many forms and that these are equally respected and valued.
6. As appropriate, build factual knowledge around sex, sexual health and sexuality.

Key stage 5

Lessons will continue to form part of a PSHE programme. Pupils are grouped according to their cognitive ability. There may be times in some Relationships and Sex Educations lessons where pupils will be taught in single sex groups. The students are on a carousel of topics and receive a terms worth of lessons on Relationships and Sex Education each year. The content of the programme will differ depending on the abilities and needs of the students. It may include:

1. Understanding different types of relationships.
2. Building and managing healthy relationships.
3. Further developing pupils' understanding of the physical, emotional and social aspects of life.
4. Changes that take place at puberty.
5. Understand that families exist in many forms and that these are equally respected and valued.
6. As appropriate, build factual knowledge around sex, sexual health and sexuality.

7. As appropriate build factual knowledge about Lesbian, Gay, Homosexual and transgender relationships

In answering difficult questions, staff will respond with the aforementioned agreed values and establish ground rules from the outset. Please note that all topics are adaptable and changeable depending on the needs of the pupils and will be tailored to the understanding of the child. We acknowledge that each child develops uniquely and at its own pace.

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents and carers are key people in:

- Teaching their children about relationships
- Teaching their children the importance of respect and acceptance
- Maintaining positive relationships with their young people to ensure an open and honest attitude
- Supporting their children to cope with emotional and physical aspects such as puberty
- Preparing their children for the challenges and responsibilities that come with being an adult
- Engaging and involving staff in any changes in behaviours linked to RSE. Monitoring procedures

The teaching of RSE will be monitored in the following ways:

1. Informal discussions with class staff and parents
2. Lesson observations
3. Observations of behaviours of pupils relating to healthy and safe relationships 4. RSE planning documents and evaluations

Any safeguarding concerns which arise as a result of the RSE sessions will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Team and any misconceptions a pupil may have will be discussed with the child's parents. Ofsted is required to evaluate and report on the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum, which includes the teaching of RSE.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sexeducation-rse-and-health-education>

STAFF TRAINING

Heron Academy ensures continuing professional development in RSE/PSHE for staff. Our PSHE lead will deliver most of the training but training may also involve external practitioners where necessary and appropriate.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Heron Academy considers the needs of different groups within the school (boys and girls, varying home backgrounds, sexuality, SEN, Looked After status, faith, ethnicity and culture, as well as other protected characteristics as per the 2010 Equality Act).

Heron Academy is sensitive to the needs of all young people, and will not discriminate between different groups. For some young people it may not be culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular areas of the RSE curriculum in mixed groups – we will discuss this with parents/carers. We will deal sensitively with issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, and seek additional support where necessary.

We aim to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, with no discrimination or bullying on the grounds of gender, race, religion, colour, language, culture, social circumstances, appearance, sexuality, disability or ability.

RSE at Heron Academy will be taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination and will ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). Inclusive RSE at Heron Academy will foster good relations between pupils, tackle all types of prejudice - including homophobia and racism and promote understanding and respect.

RSE PROGRAMME

The RSE programme follows the guidelines from the National Curriculum and PSHE Association framework, differentiated to the needs, knowledge, skills and level of understanding of the pupils. Several topics are repeated across year groups, depending on the developmental needs and understanding of the pupils.

Delivery of RSE programme through:

1. Continuous informal reinforcement throughout the school day of positive relationships and school values.
2. Personalised Learning Plans
3. Wellbeing passports
4. The So Safe programme.
5. Specialist discrete PSHE teaching.
6. External agencies used where appropriate to enhance programme.

Assessment

Teaching and learning of RSE will be assessed by a combination of the following in line with individual learning and assessment arrangements:

1. Pupil self-assessment
2. Assessment for Learning
3. Teacher assessment
4. Evidence for Learning
5. PLIMS
6. Peer assessment

Monitoring

The RSE programme is monitored by:

1. Lesson planning and observations.
2. Teacher monitoring.
3. Pupil/parent feedback.

Working with outside agencies:

Heron Academy may use the expertise of outside agencies. Appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE.

RELATED POLICIES and LEGISLATIONS

1. Positive Relationships & Behaviour Policy
2. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
3. Equal Opportunities Policy
4. Keeping Children Safe in Education <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
5. Online Safety Policy
6. Section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)
7. The Equalities Act 2010

FURTHER INFORMATION

‘Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education’ (DfE, 2019) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationshipsand-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationshipsand-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-education-primary#sexeducation-primary>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationshipsand-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/implementation-of-relationshipseducation-relationships-and-sex-education-and-health-education-2020-to-2021>

‘Sex and Relationships Education for the 21st Century’, PSHE Association/Brook/Sex Education Forum (2014) <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/system/files/SRE%20for%20the%2021st%20Century%20%20FINAL.pdf.pdf>

Useful Websites and Support for Parents <https://www.bigtalkeducation.co.uk/parents/>

<https://www.bigtalkeducation.co.uk/parents/parents-of-children-with-autism-yourquestions-answered/>

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/useful-links>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-sex-and-health-educationguides-for-schools>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/development/sexual-development/sexualityteens-with-asd>

<http://www.autismforhvalley.co.uk/child-austim/relationships-and-sexual-health/>

<https://teenage-resource.middletownautism.com/>

<http://complexneeds.org.uk/modules/Module-4.2-Safeguarding---privacy,-dignityand-personal-care/All/m14p100c.html>

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/research-andstatistics/sexuality-research-and-statistics>