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# The Fierté Multi-Academy Trust

## Policy for Relationships Education (RE), Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (HE)

## Document Control

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## Version Control

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### Policy Statement:

This policy sets out the Trust's approach to teaching relationships and sex education (RSE). The purpose of this policy is to act as a central reference point to inform school staff, parent/carers, health professionals and visiting speakers of the Trust's, and each school's, approach to RSE within PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education).

It will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if the RSE curriculum is amended, in response to emerging themes, changing pupil needs, or introduction of new legislation and guidance.

Parents, within our schools, will be informed about the policy through annual RSE consultation events and links from school websites. If a hard copy of the document is required, the school will be happy to provide this upon request.

### Policy Aims:

RSE (within PSHE) is part of lifelong learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It aims to give pupils essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitive relationships and to stay safe on and offline. It enables exploration of attitudes and values, helps build self-esteem and confidence to view their sexuality positively.

It is the aim of the Fierte Trust to ensure that all children receive Relationships Education(RE), Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (HE). We aim to:

- Meet the social, physical, emotional and moral needs of all children
- Develop the children's understanding of the importance of family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care
- Promote positive attitudes to related health topics

### Roles and responsibilities:

Subject leads: (PSHE, Science, Behaviour, Citizenship, P.E. and ICT) will work together to support staff with their subject delivery and to be up to date with current initiatives in order to cascade information to the staff as a whole,

Head Teacher: To ensure staff are fully able to deliver RSE appropriately and that pupils are receiving their entitlement.

Curriculum Lead: To assist in the formulation of the long-term curriculum plan ensuring that RSE is embedded; links are made to other areas of learning and to monitor medium-term planning.

Teachers and Teaching Support Staff: To ensure (with support) appropriate delivery of RSE in line with the Policy (and Statutory Curriculum guidelines).

Governors: Agree and review the RSE Policy on a regular basis. To question and challenge staff to ensure that the policy is implemented and impacts positively on learning and teaching.

Pupils: Have a responsibility to take an active part in their learning responding positively and to extend their own learning at school and at home. To contribute and follow the agreed ground rules established, also respecting the views and opinions of other pupils.

Parents/carers: To realise that learning constantly takes place, not only within the classroom but in all environments; value and recognise their role in shaping children's attitudes and life-long learning experiences. To create positive relationships with all children and to recognise their impact on children's self-esteem.

To recognise their right to withdrawal from sex education lessons delivered as part of the RSE curriculum only having given careful consideration to this Policy and any representations from school staff. Furthermore, to recognise the vital contribution they have to RSE including responding to their own children's questions.

### **Legislation (statutory regulations and guidance):**

Secretary of State Foreword: (taken from the RE, RSE and HE Statutory guidance for the Department for Education 2019):

Today's children and young people 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.

This is why we have made the Relationships Education (RE) compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Educations (RSE) compulsory in all secondary schools, as well as

making Health Education (HE) compulsory in all state-funded schools. The key decisions on these subjects have been informed by a thorough engagement process, including a public call for evidence that received over 23,000 responses from parents, young people, schools and experts and a public consultation where over 40,000 people contacted the Department for Education.

Our guiding principles have been that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents while always with the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law.

In primary schools, we want the subjects to put in place the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online. This will sit alongside the essential understanding of how to be healthy.

Teaching about mental wellbeing is central to these subjects, especially as a priority for parents is their children's happiness. We know that children and young people are increasingly experiencing challenges, and that young people are at particular risk of feeling lonely. The new subject content will give them the knowledge and capability to take care of themselves and receive support if problems arise.

These subjects represent a huge opportunity to help our children and young people develop. The knowledge and attributes gained will support their own and others', wellbeing and attainment and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society.

### Curriculum design:

Our RSE curriculum is an integral part of our Trust's whole school PSHE education provision. Weekly/short term planning is developed from the long-term curriculum overview. Planning includes specific, child-friendly learning objectives, success criteria, differentiation, a description of activities and organisation, assessment opportunities and ICT links. Each of the Trust's schools may follow a Scheme of Work or software package to facilitate teaching but all will cover the same curriculum areas as outlined in the DfE Guidance 2019.

It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The DfE continues to recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes

that adolescence brings and, drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science, how a baby is conceived and born.

Currently PSHE, including SRE, is not formally tracked or assessed; however, class teachers monitor pupil contributions and appreciation in order to assess overall understanding.

At the beginning of a unit of learning, the prior knowledge of learners is assessed to determine their knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding. Their interests in terms of areas of learning are also discussed and identified. These are then used to determine the programme of learning to follow, adapting previous planning to ensure that it meets the learning needs and interests of specific cohorts and groups. The long-term plan ensures that knowledge is built upon year on year.

### Safe and Effective practice:

Research has shown that children cannot always rely on their parents to talk to them about puberty or sex. As a Trust, our schools will endeavour to be sensitive to what is culturally appropriate, guided by pupils themselves and their parents. No RSE content will be delivered without first highlighting to parents and learners that it will take place in the future and giving them time and opportunity to raise concerns/issues which may include those related to religion or culture. Parents/carers will also be given an opportunity to view any resources prior to their delivery to learners.

Children with special educational needs are included in RSE in the same way as all other learners. RSE should help all pupils understand their physical and emotional development and enable them to make positive decisions in their lives. Some pupils may be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than their peers or need more support to know how to behave in an acceptable public manner. Teachers, informed by specialist advice where necessary (e.g. from the Autism Outreach Service), will help learners to develop skills to reduce the risks of being abused and exploited, and to learn what sorts of behaviour are, and are not, acceptable. In order to meet the needs of SEN learners, planning is differentiated. This may include one to one or small group work to ensure that learning is made more explicit.

### Responding to sensitive issues and supporting children/young people:

*Sexual identity and sexual orientation:* DfE RSE guidance 2019 states that, 'schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics. The Act states;

'Schools need to make sure that all gay, lesbian or bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils. They should check that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of such pupils. For example, it would be unlawful for a school to refuse to let a gay pupil become a prefect because of his sexual orientation.'

Schools should ensure that all their teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum.

*Homophobic bullying:* is dealt with in the same way as any other form of bullying under each school's Anti-bullying Policy. Homophobic bullying is not tolerated and will always be responded to appropriately.

*Puberty:* Whole class and group activities in Year Six cover general physical and emotional changes including:

- periods
- voice breaking
- body odour
- body/pubes hair
- spots
- breast development
- wet dreams
- erections
- emotional changes/hormones

Teaching will include when these changes are likely to happen and the issues that may cause young people anxiety and how they can deal with these. However, any individual questions or issues will also be addressed, in line with the ground rules detailed below, as they arise.

*How a baby is conceived and born:* is covered in the Upper Key Stage 2 programme of learning. Questions relating to this are responded to sensitively and appropriately by staff.

*Contraception:* is referred to and on occasion learners will make more detailed reference to this through their comments and questions, however, it is not covered in detail as part of our programme of RSE. It is part of RSE at Secondary/High School.

*Abortion and miscarriage:* is not covered as part of our RSE programme. Questions that arise will be dealt with factually, sensitively and appropriately. However, care will be taken to ensure that the religious convictions of learners and parents are respected, and it is not debated as an issue or explored in any detail.

*Safer Sex, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections:* are not covered as part of our SRE programme. Questions that arise will be dealt with factually, sensitively and appropriately.

**Ground rules:** help teachers and others to create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from pupils. These are developed with each class or year group before any SRE take place. These could be as follows/similar to:

- No one (teacher or learner) will have to answer a personal question;
- No one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
- Only the correct names for body parts will be used; or where appropriate, acceptable familiar and commonplace age appropriate terms;

*and,*

- The meaning of words will be explained in a sensitive and factual way.

**Dealing with questions:** If a question is too personal, children should be reminded of the ground rules. If a pupil needs further support, they can be referred to another member of staff, parent, outside agency or service. If a teacher does not know the answer to a question, they should acknowledge this, and it may be suggested that they research it together at a different time. If a question is too explicit or feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have been treated with respect but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information.

### ***Safeguarding/Child Protection:***

At the heart of this subject there is a focus on keeping children safe and our schools can play an important role in preventative education.

Teachers and other adults involved in RSE will sometimes hear disclosures that suggest a child may be at risk of abuse. 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' makes it clear to staff to know what to do if a pupil tells them that they are being abused or neglected or are witnessing abuse. It is essential that all



staff within the Trust are aware of their school's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy. A copy of this is available on each schools' website or from the school's Designated Safeguard Lead. Where an adult believes a child may be at risk the Designated Safeguard Lead must be consulted before any further action is taken. The adult should note their concerns on their schools' recording system (e.g. 'My Concern') as soon as possible; this will then be followed up by one of the Designated Safeguarding leads. There may be rare occasions when a primary school teacher or member of staff is directly approached by a primary age child who is sexually active or is contemplating sexual activity. This will always be viewed as a Child Protection issue and the school's Designated Safeguard Lead informed as soon as possible.

Where a school invites external agencies in to support delivery of this subject, they must agree in advance of the session how a safeguarding report should be dealt with by the external visitor. It is important that children understand how confidentiality will be handled in a lesson and what might happen if they choose to make a report.

### Engaging Stakeholders:

The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. All schools within the Trust seeks to work in partnership with parents/carers to provide effective RSE and support for children/young people. Parents need to know that the school's RSE programme will complement and support their role as parents and that they can be actively involved in the determination of the school's policy.

Research shows that good, comprehensive RSE does not make young people more likely to enter into sexual activity. Indeed, it can help them learn the reasons for, and benefits to be gained from, delaying such activity.

Parents should be reassured that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers do not influence the teaching of RSE. Teachers and all those contributing to RSE are expected to work within an agreed values framework as described in this Policy which is in line with current legislation and guidance.

Parents are the key people in:

- teaching their children about sex and relationships
- maintaining the culture and ethos of the family
- helping their children cope with the emotional aspects of growing up; *and,*
- preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings

We understand that parents need support in helping their children learn the correct names of the body, talking with their children about feelings and relationships; and answering questions about growing up, having babies, feeling attraction, sexuality, sex and relationships.

Each school within the Trust is required to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their policies for Relationships Education and RSE, which will inform schools' decisions on when and how certain content is covered. This will give the space and time for parents to input, ask questions, share concerns and for each school to decide the way forward. Each school will listen to parents' views, and then make a reasonable decision as to how they wish to proceed. When and how content is taught is ultimately a decision for the school, and consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content.

Each school will hold a meeting for all parents to attend. A letter will be sent to notify parents of this.

There will be a separate meeting for all parents of children in Upper Key Stage 2 with a dual aim: to familiarise parents with the materials/resources used for teaching RSE and to offer them support in helping their children. Again, parents are invited to attend the session via a letter. This meeting will take place prior to the programme of learning and teaching in RSE being delivered. Parents are encouraged to attend.

This Policy is also placed on the school website so that all parents have access to and can refer to it.

### **Your right as a parent**

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from some, or all, sex education lessons delivered as part of the RSE curriculum, but not statutory science lessons and Head Teachers will automatically grant this.

Should parents consider taking this step, they are advised to talk it through with their child and then with the Head Teacher. Should parents decide this step is necessary, they will be accepting responsibility for educating their child about RSE or the element of this their child is withdrawn from in order to mitigate potential detrimental effects of withdrawal. There is no right to parents for them to withdraw their child from Relationships or Health Education.

The Head Teacher may discuss with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher.

This process is the same for pupils with SEND.

### **Monitoring, reporting and evaluation:**

Review of planning, pupil conferencing, staff conferencing and lesson observation/visits all form part of the monitoring and evaluation process.

The PSHE Forum will review the effectiveness and relevance of the policy which may lead to modification of practice and/or policy.

### **RSE policy review date:**

The policy will be reviewed by the PSHE Forum every three years, or sooner if the RSE curriculum is amended, in response to emerging themes, changing pupil needs, or introduction of new legislation and guidance. The Policy may also be reviewed at the request of the Trust Board.

### **Appendix/References:**

Department for Education Statutory Guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education 2019.

PSHE Association – Writing your school’s relationship and sex education (RSE) policy, September 2018.

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2019: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges. Part one: Information for all school and college staff.

The Equality Act 2010 and Schools, May 2014