

Merton Junior School



'Be wise, together we succeed'

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Reviewed: November 2025		
Next review date: November 2026		
Headteacher	Signed:	Date: November 2025
Chair of Governors	Signed:	Date: November 2025
Reviews		
Parent Consultation November 2019		
Staff consultation November 2019		
Governor consultation November 2019		
Reviewed: September 2021		
Reviewed: October 2022- appendices corrected throughout. PDL leader amended. No changes to content of policy. Input invited from parents, staff and governors.		
Reviewed: October 2023- parents feedback requested and received. RSE overview updated – in line with Kapow which staff are now using to support their teaching.		
Reviewed: November 2025- updated section 6. Adding further detail in listening to views of the children and sharing greater depth into the pedagogy of PDL across the school. Updated that topics may deviate from the curriculum with current issues or needs of the children where appropriate, ensuring that parents/carers are informed of any change. Updated Appendix 1, to include artificial intelligence and fake news.		

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1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

This policy is inline with our school vision, which is to:

- develop well-rounded future citizens who are confident life-long learners;
- provide an exciting curriculum, which is full of hands-on, practical, real-life learning opportunities which promote a love of learning;
- ensure all of our children are provided with the skills they need to succeed in life, including those needed to lead happy and fulfilled lives;
- develop strong positive partnerships with parents and the local community.

We care about every pupil who attends our school and every child should feel safe and cared for. It is important to us that each child's emotional and mental wellbeing is supported and nourished through their time with us so that they can achieve their full potential and thrive.

2. Statutory requirements

As a maintained primary school, we must provide relationships education to all pupils under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

We are not required to provide sex education, but we do need to teach the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum.

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state, as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We must also have regard to our legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At Merton Junior School, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations

3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
4. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, healthy lifestyles and diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 (*Curriculum Overview*) and Appendix 2 but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary to suit the needs of different cohorts of children.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, pupils, staff and governors, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils.

If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online. If a teacher has any concerns about the content of questions or comments, this will be discussed with parents/carers. And, if appropriate, will be reported to a designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

Primary sex education will focus on:

- Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings
- How a baby is conceived and born

For more information about our curriculum, see Appendix 1 or Appendix 2.

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within the Personal Development Learning (PDL) curriculum.

Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

The school will make sure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of manageable size
- The required content is communicated to pupils clearly, in a carefully sequenced way and within a planned scheme of work
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge, so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations

Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful, kind relationships and consent
- Online relationships

- Being safe
- What to do if I feel uncomfortable with a relationship

Primary sex education will focus on:

- Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings
- How a baby is conceived and born

Throughout each year group we will use appropriate material to assist learning, such as:

- Diagrams
- Videos
- Books
- Games
- Discussions and practical activities

Teachers will make sure that all pupils' views are listened to, and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively, honestly and appropriately for the age of the pupils.

The programme will be designed to focus on boys as much as girls, and activities will be planned to make sure both are actively involved.

The school will make sure that all teaching and materials are appropriate for the ages and needs of the pupils including any additional needs, such as special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

We may amend our curriculum content to respond to the needs and context of our pupils, to discuss issues affecting them in an age-appropriate manner. We will inform parents and carers of any deviation from our published policy in advance, and share any relevant materials on request.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (i.e. families can include single-parent families, same-sex parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents among other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children, young carers or kinship carers).

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, radicalisation, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

6.1 Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences
- During lessons, makes pupils feel:
 - Safe and supported
 - Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:
 - A whole-class setting
 - Small groups or targeted sessions
-

- 1-to-1 discussions
- Digital formats

➤ Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

6.2 Use of resources

We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

7. Use of materials

We will make sure that an agency and any materials used are accurate, age and stage appropriate and unbiased and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

The school remains responsible for what is said to pupils. This includes making sure that any tools and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We will:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
 - Are age-appropriate
 - Are in line with pupils' developmental stage
 - Comply with:
 - This policy
 - The [Teachers' Standards](#)
 - The [Equality Act 2010](#)
 - The [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
 - The [Education Act 1996](#)
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on:
 - What they're going to say
 - Their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use

- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers

We **won't**, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The governing board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

8.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE (see section 9).

8.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a way that is sensitive, high-quality and appropriate for each year group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from RSE
- Modelling positive behaviour and avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and being conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher.

All class teachers (and cover teachers in their absence) are responsible for teaching RSE at Merton Junior School - see Appendix 3

8.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

9. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the components of sex education within RSE.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 4 of this policy and addressed to the Headteacher.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

10. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE in our continuing professional development calendar.

The headteacher may also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by PDL/RSE leader (Miss Fear) and the Headteacher through

- Learning walks
- Pupil conferencing
- Planning scrutiny
- Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the PDL/RSE leader and Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Body.

Appendix 1: Curriculum map

Relationships and sex education curriculum map

RSE Overview			
Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p><u>Family & relationships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to resolve relationship problems. • Effective listening skills and about non-verbal communication. • Looking at the impact of bullying and what action can be taken. • Exploring trust and who to trust and that stereotyping can exist. <p><u>Safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a responsible digital citizen. • Cyberbullying, identifying unsafe digital content. • Influences and making independent choices. • Sexual harassment (permission seeking and giving in relationships and reporting concerns) 	<p><u>Family & relationships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning that families are varied and differences must be respected. • Understanding physical and emotional boundaries in friendships. • The roles of bully, victim and bystander. • How behaviour affects others. • Appropriate manners and bereavement <p><u>Health and wellbeing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing emotional maturity. • Learning that we experience a range of emotions and are responsible for these. • Appreciating the emotions of others <p><u>Safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building awareness of online safety and benefits and risks of sharing information online. • Difference between private and public. • Age restrictions. <p><u>Changes in the body</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and emotional changes in 	<p><u>Family & relationships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an understanding of families, including marriage, of what to do if someone feels unsafe in their family. • Issues can strengthen a friendship. • Exploring the impact of bullying and what influences a bully's behaviour. • Learning to appreciate our attributes. <p><u>Safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about online safety, influence. • Strategies to overcome potential dangers. <p><u>Changes in the body</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the emotional and physical changes of puberty, including menstruation. • Sexual harassment (understand some issues related to online friendships including the impact of their actions and to recognise how attitudes to gender have changed over time) 	<p><u>Family & relationships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To resolve conflict, through negotiation and compromise. • Respect. • Understanding that everyone deserves to be respected. • Grief. <p><u>Safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the harm from online content • The reliability of online information and awareness of artificial intelligence and fake news. <p><u>Changes in the body</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The physical and emotional changes experienced during puberty. • How a baby is conceived and develops (Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the 'Main event' part of this lesson.) • Learn how a baby develops in the womb and is born. (Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the lesson.) • Sexual harassment:

	<p>puberty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn about some of the physical changes pupils will experience as they go through puberty. - Understand that physical change is part of growing up. - Identify the changes that males and females go through as they grow and develop from being a child to an adult. • Sexual harassment (physical/ emotional boundaries in friendships & permission seeking and giving in relationships and reporting concerns) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand that respect is two-way and how we treat others is how we can expect to be treated. - To explore other people's attitudes and ideas and to begin to challenge these. - To understand stereotypes and be able to share information on them. - To understand the biology of conception.
<p>How to help at home</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find time to talk, just the two of you – 'check in' with them while you're doing things together, so they get used to talking about their feelings. • You can help your children learn how to deal with their emotions in a healthy way by modelling coping skills at home. Activities such as deep breathing, using stress balls, art (painting, colouring, doodling) or going for walks can be great strategies for coping with feelings. • Uncertainty about day-to-day schedules can lead to a lot of stress or anxiety in a child's life. Creating a general routine at home can provide some relief and peace for your child, whether it's a schedule for daily meals or a weekly movie night. Having clear boundaries is also important for your child to know what is expected of them at home and can minimise feelings of frustration from both parent and child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children love to receive positive feedback and praise. Providing positive reinforcement for behaviours will often encourage children to repeat that behaviour. • Parental controls and privacy settings can help you manage how your child spends time online and help to keep them safe. Talk to your child before implementing any new settings and explain to them how different strategies can help to keep them safe. • Show children it's important to take care of their physical and mental health. Model good habits to them (e.g. "I can feel myself getting a bit wound up about that parking ticket again, so I'm going to have a walk / bath (or both!) to calm myself down!"). • Start talking with your child about relationships, body changes, and growing up from a young age. This helps to normalise conversations and build healthy habits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that everyone is human and makes mistakes. Model effective ways to deal with difficult situations (e.g. calming down, saying you are sorry, explaining that you recognise you made a mistake and what you'll do to make sure it doesn't happen again). They will learn from you that it's okay to make mistakes, build resilience and identify healthy ways to cope with emotions. • Find ways to include your child in decision-making processes. This can help children feel that they are heard and valued. Something as simple as asking them whether they think you should prepare rice or pasta for dinner can show them they have a voice and give them the confidence to use it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model safe and healthy internet use by using digital media and the internet in the way you want your child to use it now and in the future. • Emotional ups and downs are a part of life. One of the best ways to address the concept of mental health and wellbeing is to let your child know that sometimes you feel flat too. It can help just to say, 'I can see you're having a difficult day' letting your child know you are there to support them. • Check any age restrictions on applications and social media as many should not be used by children under 13 years old. • Discuss social media with your child and the risks of inappropriate content that they might see online. Encourage children to report anything that makes them feel uncomfortable to you, or via platforms, and take time to talk through why this content is offensive or inappropriate together.

Appendix 2: By the end of primary school pupils should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
<p>Families and people who care about me</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability • The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives • That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care • That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up • That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong • How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed
<p>Caring friendships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends • The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties • That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded • That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right • How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • The conventions of courtesy and manners • The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help • What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive • The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults
Online relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not • That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous • The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them • How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met • How information and data is shared and used online

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)• About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe• That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact• How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know• How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult• How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard• How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so• Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

Appendix 3 List of staff who will be responsible for the teaching of RSE

Mrs Reading	Headteacher
Mrs Dyer	SENDCo
Mrs Jimpson	Deputy Headteacher
Mrs Edwards	Class Teachers
Miss Fear (<i>PDL Lead</i>)	
Miss Grainger	
Mr Crockett	
Miss Slack	
Miss Hodgins	
Mrs Woods	
Miss Crass	
Mr Rowland	
Mrs Sidey	
Mrs Barnes	Cover Teachers
Miss Henson	

Appendix 4: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	