



## **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Policy**

### **1. Rationale and ethos**

This policy covers Talbot Specialist School's approach to relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). These subjects meet statutory obligations as outlined in revised Department for Education statutory guidance (2019). The guidance states that from September 2020, all secondary schools must deliver relationships and sex education.

Additional requirements on schools in law that have informed this policy and our approach include the Equality Act ([Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#)) and Keeping Children Safe In Education – Statutory Safeguarding Guidance (2016).

At Talbot Specialist School we define relationships and sex education as:

- the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships, including with family, friends and online, and at the appropriate time to sexual health and developing intimate relationships. This includes the importance of treating ourselves and others with kindness, consideration and respect.
- emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health.
- lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. This includes understanding the importance of friendships and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It also includes teaching about sex, consent, sexuality and sexual health.

RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or activity.

### **Our mission statement and values**

In the Talbot learning community young people are educated to become valued, resilient and fulfilled members of their community and equipped to reach their potential.

We do this by:

- Valuing all members of the learning community and recognising their individuality, diversity and strengths
- Developing and continuously assessing an aspirational and personalised curriculum which challenges and inspires learners
- Recognising and responding to the needs of each and every student with innovation and creativity
- Providing opportunities and high-quality professional development to build on the school's continued success
- Being creative and responsive in supporting our students and their parents in preparation for adulthood and life after Talbot
- Celebrating achievement at every opportunity to value the diversity of our learners
- Having excellent and aspirational leadership at all levels
- Being outward facing and building on our reputation for excellence
- Creating a supportive environment that nurtures wellbeing across the community

Relationships, sex and health education plays a key part in providing children and young people with the knowledge that enables them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-reliance. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives where they may need support. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support. Ultimately, helping our young people to be happy, healthy and safe now and in the future.

## **2. Teaching and Learning**

### **i) Delivery, monitoring and evaluation**

The PSHE Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND produced by the PSHE Association is used as the foundation of our curriculum. This is delivered in partnership with our Science Curriculum, Physical Education, Food Technology and Life Skills to offer learning opportunities that encompass

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ass the key knowledge and skills for our RSHE.

Much of this curriculum has been embedded for many years in the school curriculum plan. The school has completed a review of the curriculum offer to ensure our curriculum is fully in line with the statutory guidance for Relationship Education (Phase 1, Year 7-8) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Phase 2 and 3, Year 10-14). Where additional expectation was identified in the statutory guidance then this has now been added to the curriculum content plan. There is also an acknowledgement that Phase 1 will need to focus on the Relationship Education content before moving onto the Relationship, Sex Education in Phase 2-3. In addition, as with all other subjects there will be an opportunity for over learning.

The Planning Framework is organised into six sections:

1. Self-Awareness (Me, who I am, my likes, dislikes, strengths and interests)
2. Self-care, Support and Safety (Looking after myself and keeping safe; aspects of Relationships and Sex Education.)
3. Managing Feelings (Understanding feelings, and that how the way I feel and how others feel affects choices and behaviour; aspects of Relationships and Sex Education)
4. Changing and Growing (How I, and others, are changing; new opportunities and responsibilities; aspects of Relationships and Sex Education)
5. Healthy Lifestyles (Being and keeping healthy, physically and mentally)
6. The World I Live In (Living confidently in the wider world)

Each of the six sections is subdivided into topic areas, as set out below.

There is overlap between the topic areas and sections, for example, mental health and online safety are explicitly covered in some topic areas but are also integrated throughout all six sections where appropriate. The Sex Education aspect of the curriculum is taught explicitly in the Summer Term, pupils are allocated personalised groups based on our knowledge of the students and, where appropriate, they are taught in single sex groups.

In addition to the planned RSHE lesson, personalised sessions for short periods of intervention may be delivered to specific students or groups of students as and when needed.

Staff will use a variety of teaching strategies and approaches which are appropriate to the learning and emotional needs of the pupils, in keeping with their level of development and maturity.

The PHSE curriculum is structured in grids and each section identifies learning outcomes for each topic area in progressive stages, starting with first stage, 'Encountering', through to the final stage, 'Enhancement'. Each column builds on the one before, assumes that the pupil has met the previous column's outcomes, and in some cases introduces new or additional learning in successive columns.

- Encountering - effective engagement in the learning process
- Foundation - underpinning learning Core fundamental learning elements

- Development - increasing understanding of learning
- Enrichment - deepening of application of learning
- Enhancement - applying learning in different contexts

This means that based on teacher assessment the planned curriculum topics ensure throughout a student's time at the school that they have the opportunity to learn the full range of the curriculum content delivered at the right progressive stage for them from Pathway1, in Phase 1, to when they transition to adulthood at the end of Post 16.

The delivery of RSHE is monitored in a number of ways: by teacher reflections and evaluation of lessons and of the overall programme; through learning walks and drop ins; through reflections and evaluations by governors. We also value feedback and evaluation by pupils, including through 1:1 incidental conversations - pupil voice and feedback will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities.

## **ii) Inclusivity**

All pupils, whatever their experience, background and identity, are entitled to receive high quality and appropriate RSHE that helps them build confidence, a positive sense of self, and the knowledge and understanding to stay safe and healthy.

Talbot School's RSHE programme is underpinned by a good understanding of pupils' backgrounds, and positive relationships between the school, parents and the local community form the foundations for the teaching of these subjects.

All classes include pupils with different abilities and aptitudes, experiences, home situations, religious/cultural backgrounds, gender and sexual identities. To encourage pupils to participate in lessons, teachers will ensure the content, approach and use of inclusive language reflects the diversity of the school community and helps each and every pupil to feel valued and included in the classroom.

We will ensure RSHE is matched to the needs of our pupils by using a range of communication and teaching strategies including verbal communication supported by pictures, symbols, social stories, high tech and low tech communication aids. Resources used will reflect the diversity of the school and may include opportunities for cross-curricular learning.

We will ensure that we comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, when delivering these subjects to ensure equal opportunities for all. This includes, but is not limited to, awareness and consideration for;

- faith perspectives in the context of balanced debate
- cultural diversity
- disability
- varied family structures and home backgrounds
- gender identity, sexual identity and sexual orientation.

Teaching will reflect the law (including the Equality Act 2010), as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and some students are able to understand the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

At Talbot Specialist School we commit to respecting the views and wishes of our diverse communities. All learning centres on compassion; teaching our children respect and acceptance of difference, without infringing on the human rights of communities to their religious beliefs or to living their lives freely and openly as LGBT+ people.

At Talbot Specialist School we respect the rights of the LGBT+ community and teach tolerance and respect through our curriculum and through the ethos of the school. We support our students in recognising and being comfortable with their own identity and all teaching is sensitive, age appropriate and inclusive in approach and content.

Our school is multi-cultural and multi faith. We aim to make students aware of different faiths and beliefs and to show respect and understanding towards those students and staff of all faiths and of none. We celebrate all the main religious festivals in school through our curriculum and through shared experiences including assemblies and celebrations. The religious background of all pupils is taken into account when planning teaching, so that the topics in the subjects of RSHE are appropriately handled.

### **iii) Sensitivity, confidentiality and handling disclosures**

We understand that sensitive and potentially difficult issues will arise in RSHE as pupils share information and ask questions. When spontaneous discussion arises, it will be guided in a way that reflects the stated school aims and curriculum content for RSHE.

In order to support a safe learning environment,

- Teachers will set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and be clear what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting.
- Teachers and pupils will agree ground rules by discussion. These will be explained and be visible in the classroom. Teachers will refer back to these rules during discussions as appropriate.
- Distancing techniques may be used to help depersonalise the situations under discussion if appropriate. Being in a role, empathising with a character or speaking in response to the actions of others (real or imaginary) allows pupils to explore their feelings about issues safely, because they are not speaking or acting as themselves. This technique will not be helpful to some students but may be a useful tool for others and teachers should use their discretion and knowledge of the students
- Pupils will be encouraged to raise questions. This may include raising questions with staff on an individual basis if needed.
- Teachers will answer pupil questions which relate to the taught, planned curriculum for that group to the whole class.
- Teachers will answer questions relating to areas beyond the taught, planned curriculum for that group, in a sensitive and age appropriate way, only to the pupil or pupils who have asked the question. If a verbal question is too personal, staff will remind the pupils of the ground rules.
- If a question is too explicit or is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns, staff will acknowledge it and will speak to the student later on an individual basis. If necessary, this would be passed on to the safeguarding team.
- Staff will not provide more information than is appropriate to the level of

understanding of the pupil

- Pupils will be made aware that they have the opportunity to speak to a member of staff and ask questions on an individual basis
- If a member of staff is uncertain about the answer to a question, or indeed whether they should answer it, they will seek guidance from SLT or the DSL. Questions may be discussed with parents / carers if it is felt necessary.
- Staff will be supported by their line manager, the DSL or SLT in how to deal with difficult questions. Agreed phrases, where appropriate, will be used in response to difficult questions. There may still be times when staff are faced with a difficult question in class that they feel uncomfortable about or unable to respond to. In such situations, they may wish to put the question to one side and seek advice from the DSL or a member of SLT.
- Where a question or comment from a pupil in the classroom indicates the possibility of abuse or risk of harm, teachers will follow school policy and procedures for safeguarding and child protection.
- All staff teaching RSHE will be supported by DSL if they have any concerns.
- Pupils will be placed in appropriate groups. These groupings may change in response to the needs or wishes of the students

#### **iv) Assessment and review of learning**

RSHE is not formally assessed but ongoing assessment and reflection plays a key role in effective RSHE teaching and learning. Teachers will keep a note of pupils who have missed significant parts of RSHE teaching and learning due to absence. Pupils' development in RSHE focuses on knowledge as well as the development of skills and attitudes and it is monitored by class teachers through the use of class based records which can be shared with SLT.

Pupils will be encouraged to reflect and self-assess their own learning and progress where appropriate through discussion with the teacher.

The following questions may be helpful in supporting pupils in their reflections and to develop pupil understanding of what they have learned and the progress they have made.

- What new information have I learnt?
- What do I now think and believe?
- How did I feel about what I found out?
- How will it change my behaviour in the future?
- What do I now need to learn?

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The member of staff/coordinator for RSHE / PSHE is Karen Halford (Assistant Head)

The safeguarding team is Karen Halford (DSL), Georgia Lowe (DSD), Fran Whittaker (DSD) and Jacqui Crewe (DSD)

The named governor responsible for RSHE is the Safeguarding governor, Debbie Grainger-James

### **Governing Body**

Overseeing the provision around RSHE is the responsibility of the governing body,

who will provide appropriate challenge and agree on the content of this policy. The governing body will liaise with senior leaders to access appropriate training to fulfil the role.

### **Senior Leaders/Middle Leaders**

School leader will:

- develop this school policy and ensure it is reviewed as per the agreed timetable.
- Ensure appropriate training is offered to members of the governing body.
- Ensure that all staff are given regular and ongoing training on issues relating to RSHE and how to deliver lessons.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the curriculum and its delivery, this policy and any other guidance relating to RSHE.
- Provide support to staff members who feel uncomfortable or ill-equipped to deal with the delivery of RSHE to pupils.
- Ensure that RSHE is age appropriate and needs-led across all year groups; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as the pupils do and meets their developmental needs.
- Ensure that the knowledge and information regarding RSHE to which all pupils are entitled is provided in an appropriate and comprehensive way.
- Support parent/carer involvement in the development of the RSHE curriculum.
- Ensure that their personal beliefs, values and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSHE in school.
- Communicate freely with staff, parents/carers and the governing body to ensure that everyone fully understands the school policy and curriculum for RSHE, and that any concerns or opinions regarding provision at the school are listened to, taken into account and acted on as appropriate.
- Ensure that provision of RSHE at home works in partnership with the provision the school provides and communicate to parents/carers any additional support available where necessary or requested.
- The headteacher is responsible for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSHE
- Ensure that any external sources/visitors are credible, evidence based and enhance learning.

### **All Staff**

Teaching and support staff will:

- Ensure that they are up to date with this RSHE policy and curriculum requirements.
- Report back to senior leaders / lead members of staff on any areas that they feel are not adequately covered in the school's RSHE provision.
- Attend and engage in professional development and training around relationships and sex education provision, when appropriate.
- Encourage pupils to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal and emotional development in confidence and listen to their needs and support them.
- Follow the school's reporting systems if a pupil comes to a member of staff with an issue that they feel they are not able to deal with alone.



- Be aware of safeguarding procedure including being clear about managing confidentiality and handling disclosures.
- Deliver RSHE in a sensitive way ensuring that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSHE in school.
- Model positive attitudes to RSHE.
- Tailor their lessons to suit all pupils in their class, across the whole range of abilities, faiths, beliefs and cultures, asking for support should they need it.
- Monitor pupil progress in RSHE.
- Respond appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non- statutory components of RSHE.
- Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE, however if a member of staff has concerns about teaching RSHE they should discuss this with the headteacher.

### **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSHE and, when discussing issues related to RHSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity. Pupils will be given the opportunity to share their views on RSHE, and the findings from consulting with pupils will be shared with parents/carers, school staff and governors, whilst maintaining confidentiality.

### **Parents/carers**

At Talbot Specialist School we recognise the primary role parents and carers have in the RHSE of their young people. We aim to build positive and supportive relationships with parents/carers of pupils through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation.

To support this, parents/carers;

- should be aware that schools are legally required to provide a broad, balanced curriculum and to deliver RSHE.
- can access the school's policies online or request to view hard copies at the school.
- can ask staff questions they may have about the RSHE education of their child.
- will receive information about RSHE so they can support their child's learning at home.

By working together in partnership and through a mutual sharing of knowledge and information, pupils will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing responsibilities.

### **Health professionals/external agencies**

External visitors can have a valuable role in enhancing the teaching and learning of RHSE and at times may be involved in delivery of some aspects of the RSHE curriculum. This may include accessing external support from the school nursing service.

At Talbot Specialist School, when selecting any external visitors, we will;

- Be clear about our reason for working with the visitor.
- Ensure visitor selection and presence in school meets all requirements of our

safeguarding policy.

- Ensure any visitor is made aware of our policies.
- Ensure any visitor is adequately trained and competent and that external input is factually correct, and where relevant there is differentiation between fact and opinion.
- Be clear that responsibility for teaching and learning remains with the school.

#### **4. Training**

It is important that all school staff feel comfortable and confident in planning and delivering RSHE. We will ensure staff receive regular professional development and training in how to deliver relationships and sex education.

For RSHE specifically;

- Staff will be offered generic RSHE guidance; this includes guidance on handling controversial issues, responding to awkward questions, an introduction to the rationale of why teaching RSHE is so important, current law and guidance, learning outcomes and school policy.
- Staff involved in the delivery of aspects of the RSHE curriculum which may be seen as potentially more sensitive will be offered appropriate training to encourage confidence in dealing with matters of confidentiality, child protection, sensitive issues, and responding to difficult questions.

#### **5. Working together with parents/carers**

At Talbot Specialist School we work hard to build positive and open relationships with our parent/carers so that every parent/carer has full confidence in the school and our ability to meet their child's needs. Selected resources, such as books and film clips, may be used in the delivery of the curriculum which support and promote understanding. Parents/carers will be given the opportunity to view these materials and resources at parents evenings and at parents/carers information sessions. Talbot Specialist School will support parents/carers by providing resources and signposting to help parents/carers build their knowledge and confidence of discussing these matters with their children at home and to help support their learning. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSHE will be covered so that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

#### **Right to withdrawal**

Parents continue to have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSHE but not from relationships or health education.

**\*A child can request sex education without their parent's consent from three terms before their 16th birthday.** If at this point, the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

If a parent wishes to have their child withdrawn from sex education, they are required to put the request in writing, addressed to the headteacher. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents, and if appropriate with the student, to ensure that their wishes are heard and understood. The purpose of the discussion is to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum and understand the

reasons for the request for withdrawal.

A record of the meeting will be taken including the final agreed decision, which will be shared with the pupil's class teacher. Class teachers will ensure appropriate alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from RSHE.

SEND will not generally be considered as a reason for withdrawal, and we will ensure that learning is inclusive and differentiated in order to meet the needs of all pupils.

Talbot Specialist School is committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy and parents/guardians and all staff members will be notified of any updates. This policy will form part of the induction of all staff members and annual staff training. The Policy is also shared on our website.

**Links to other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy

The policy will be reviewed in 3 years.