

Mercia School

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education



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<i>This guidance has been approved by the Local Governing Body and has been signed by the Chair of Governors</i>	
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Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

1. The Mercia Commitment

At Mercia, we believe pupils 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. We want pupils to be emotionally literate and knowledgeable about sexual health issues, so that they can be safer in the world and grow into responsible and caring adults.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2020) 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education'
- DfE (2015) 'National curriculum in England: science programmes of study'
- DfE (2020) 'Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)'
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, "relationships and sex education" (RSE) is defined as teaching pupils about developing healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, and helping them to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.

For the purpose of this policy, "health education" is defined as teaching pupils about how they can make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, and how physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked.

4. Core Principles

The foundations of the Mercia School RSE and health education curriculum will be knowledge based and will be built on our core principles of academia, inclusivity and respect for all.

Subject content will be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It will 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.

Parents will be informed of the specific timing of RSE and health education lessons and will receive a summary of curriculum content.

5. Mercia commitment to RSE and health education knowledge

Mercia School recognises the importance of providing excellent Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education to all pupils. RSE and health education forms an important part of the PSHE education provided.

The majority of the RSE and health education curriculum will be delivered during mastery time by mastery tutors. Some statutory elements will be taught in science lessons as part of the science curriculum.

Pupils will cover the following topics, as stated in guidance, but also as accepted age appropriate topics for pupils.

- ✓ Families- the foundation of respect in society
- ✓ Respectful behaviours- navigating relationships and boundaries
- ✓ Online safety and laws- knowledge around expectations, privacy and accountability
- ✓ Sexual health- safety and responsibility
- ✓ Laws around consent etc – the foundations of respect in relationships
- ✓ Physical health and wellbeing – health as a prelude to happiness
- ✓ Menstruation/Menopause/ Pregnancy- changes throughout life
- ✓ Drugs/Alcohol abuse- strategies for coping with stress, impact of poor choices etc
- ✓ Friendships- respect and communication, importance of relationships
- ✓ Mental health- knowledge of issues, coping strategies, support and how to maintain wellbeing

6. Mercia commitment to Parental Engagement

Parents, school leaders, teachers and governors all have a role to play in ensuring that all voices have been heard and that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils.

The school will ensure that:

- The context and views of the wider local community are considered when developing the curriculum so that it is reflective of issues in the local area, where appropriate.
- The religious background of all pupils are considered when planning teaching, to ensure all topics are appropriately and sensitively handled.
- Parents are given the opportunity to understand the purpose and content of RSE and health education lessons.

Mercia School understands that the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum may be of interest to parents and believes that ongoing open discussion between all parties is essential. Such discussions allow for clarification of any misconceptions and the emergence of mutual understanding that will strengthen the curriculum. If parents have comments, questions or concerns regarding RSE and health education they should contact the Assistant Headteacher, Ruth Hollingsworth. rhollingsworth@merciaschool.com

The following guide provides more information for parents.

English

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907640/RSE_secondary_schools_guide_for_parents.pdf

Arabic

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843480/RSE_secondary_schools_guide_for_parents_v3_AR.pdf

Urdu

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843484/RSE_secondary_schools_guide_for_parents_v3_UR.pdf

7. Right to Decline/ Withdraw from sessions

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Parents do not have a right to withdraw their child from the relationships or health elements of the programmes.

Requests to withdraw a child from sex education must be made in writing to the Headteacher. Before granting any such request it is essential that the school is able to clarify the nature and concerns of the parent. The Headteacher will discuss the request with the parent and, as appropriate, the pupil, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The Headteacher will inform the parent of the benefits of their child receiving RSE and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have. This could include any social and emotional effects of missing the lessons, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly taught by the teacher. All discussions with parents will be documented and the records will be held securely.

Once any discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, Mercia School would respect the parent's request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the pupil 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. This is a legal obligation.

Pupils who are withdrawn from RSE will receive appropriate, purposeful education during the full period of withdrawal.

For requests concerning the withdrawal of a pupil with SEND, the Headteacher may take the pupil specific needs into account when making their decision.

8. Roles and Responsibilities - Headteacher, Senior Leadership, Teachers, Parents and Governors

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring parent/carers are fully informed of this policy.
- Reviewing all requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory elements of the RSE and health education curriculum.
- Discussing withdrawal requests with parents, and the child if appropriate, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, including the benefits of receiving the education.
- Ensuring withdrawn pupils receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Reporting to the governing board on the effectiveness of this policy and the curriculum.

The Senior Team is responsible for:

- Overseeing the delivery of RSE and health education.
- Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate and of high-quality.
- Monitoring the learning and teaching of RSE and health education, providing support to staff where necessary.
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the curriculum.
- Organising, providing and monitoring CPD opportunities in the subject.
- Ensuring the correct standards are met for recording and assessing pupil performance.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subject and providing reports to the Headteacher.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with, and promoting, this policy by receiving training and embracing the opportunity to deliver quality knowledge teaching
- Delivering RSE and health education in a sensitive way and that is of a high-quality and appropriate for each year group.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE and health education and working with parents to support the aims of the curriculum
- Liaising with the SENCO about identifying and responding to the individual needs of pupils with SEND
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the DSL.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the teaching of RSE or health education to the RSE and health education curriculum leader.

Mercia School believes that parents' role in the development of their child's understanding about relationships and health is vital. Parents are responsible for

- Encouraging and supporting their child in all areas of their school education
- Understanding the statutory requirements placed on the school in relation to RSE and health education and informing themselves of the school's safeguarding and legal responsibilities.
- Respecting the school and its curriculum aims by immediately raising any queries or concerns directly with the school.

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring the delivery of an effective RSE and health education curriculum. It is responsible for:

- Ensuring RSE and health education is resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that Mercia School can fulfil its legal obligations.
- Ensuring the quality of provision through regular and effective evaluation.
- Ensuring that teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils including those with special educational needs.
- Ensuring parents are provided with clear information on the subject content and their right to request that their child is withdrawn.