

# **Bramhall High School Relationships & Sex Education Statement**

Today's children 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 need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

*“To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. 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.”* (Department for Education, 2019: p8)

Children with learning difficulties have increased vulnerability to exploitation. It is, therefore, vital that we teach all pupils how to recognise and deal with problems they may face both now and in their futures.

## **What is Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)?**

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of healthy relationships, in their various guises, sexuality and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity.

RSE equips pupils with essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline.

Our approach goes beyond provision of biological information to also focus on clarifying attitudes and values, and developing self-esteem and the skills to manage and maintain healthy relationships. It involves acquiring information, knowing the law, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

## **Principles and Values**

At Bramhall High School we believe that RSE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all pupils.

- Encourage every pupil to contribute to our community and aims to support each individual as they grow and learn.
- Be set within the wider school context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.
- Encourage pupils and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure.
- The important values are love, respect and care for each other.
- Aim to present topics neutrally and without judgment. Pupils with SEND must not be made to feel ashamed of their sexual needs and desires.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- Recognise that parents/carers are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents/carers and pupils, consulting them about the content of programmes and sharing resources wherever possible. Additional information for parents/carers is available on the school website under the Safeguarding tab.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.
- Support pupils to discuss and be aware of genders and gender identification.

### **Aims of RSE at Bramhall**

We aim to enable our children to build safe, healthy and meaningful relationships that are well managed and maintained. We hope to do so by providing balanced, factual and non-biased information about relationships, reproduction and wider contexts including emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions for a range of topics. Our RSE programme aims to prepare pupils for an adult life in which they can:

- Develop awareness of emotions and how they relate to behaviour of self and others.
- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.

- Develop awareness of the differing nature and levels of relationships and the codes of conduct relating to them.
- Develop an awareness of different 'life choices' with regard to transitions from school and home in relation to the development of relationships as part of a wider context.
- Develop awareness of the physical self, how it functions and how changes occur over time.
- Develop practical strategies for self-management of body actions such as menstruation, puberty and related physical changes.
- Develop understanding of how physical changes can affect emotional responses (female & male hormonal changes) and to help pupils to self-manage these.
- Develop awareness of codes of conduct governing sexual expression & sexuality, particularly in relation to understanding the concepts and implications of 'public' & 'private' behaviours.
- Help pupils to develop strategies for 'keeping safe' and for protecting themselves against exploitation or abuse.
- Gain understanding of the physical aspects of reproduction, contraception and sexual health as appropriate to age and cognitive ability of the individual pupil.
- Communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.
- Develop awareness of themselves including their core beliefs and values, sexuality and opinions.
- Be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- Know how the law applies to a range of topics including alcohol, drugs, sex and consent.
- Develop an understanding of how social networks/media portray body image and sexuality.
- Develop knowledge of responses to peer pressure.

## **Consultation and Engagement in RSE at Bramhall**

We recognise that the development of an appropriate curriculum requires consultation and engagement from all involved. We have, therefore, previously provided opportunities for our pupils, parents/carers and staff to put forward their suggestions about what the RSE curriculum should include.

Some of our children (Personal Development Pioneers) are engaged in a focus group which is allowing them to freely discuss their thoughts and opinions. The information that focus groups like this produce will be shared amongst staff so that teaching priorities can be reviewed and updated. We recognise that obtaining, and most importantly listening to, pupil voice is crucial in moving the RSE curriculum forwards.

Parents/carers will be given an opportunity to attend another virtual RSE/PSHE and Personal Development event with the newly appointed Head of Department, Mrs Andrea Woods.

Information will also be collected from parents/carers via an electronic survey at the start of the 2023 academic year.

As with previous communications, these communications will emphasise that we aim to work collaboratively with parents/carers to ensure a consistent approach.

Staff have taken part in RSE consultation and training. Similar sessions will feature throughout the 2023\_24 school year to ensure all staff feel confident in the planning and delivery of a range of RSE/PSHE and wider Personal Development topics.

All teachers have a copy of the whole school Personal Development framework and access to recommended resources for teaching. The programmes of study are adapted and personalised appropriately to meet the needs of each pupil.

Due to the considerable diversity that exists between pupils at Bramhall High School, we believe the most relevant aspects of the curriculum are covered based on the needs of the child. For some pupils it will be appropriate to teach only the functional aspects of the curriculum that have relevance to the individuals concerned. For a minority of pupils, it is more appropriate to address specific areas of need as and when they occur and to continue to work on early development objectives at other times.

RSE interventions are also available and planned throughout the week for more focused and personalised sessions on a 1:1 basis for any pupils needing further support with a particular area of need. Staff and parents/carers can request support for a pupil via the relevant pastoral Head of Year. With parent/carer consent, referrals may be discussed at the regular Team Around the School meeting attended by key staff and external agencies.

The language we use is vitally important in conveying messages to our young people. It is also crucial for safeguarding. We commit to the following:

- The use of inclusive language. Convey to pupils with SEND the message that their needs are important and they deserve to learn this material.
- Provide pupils with resources that are representative of a variety of SEND (and feature different ethnicities, sexes, and sexualities).
- Use medically/scientifically correct language to accurately describe human anatomy and the processes of the body.
- Provide a glossary that explains the terms used (including pictures) and lists alternative language such as slang.
- Use straightforward, explicit explanations and language. Avoid euphemisms – some pupils with SEND may not understand them.
- Reinforce explanations visually wherever possible.

The relationships we have and how they are managed are the foundation of our interactions with one another. Being able to recognise our emotions and have the resilience to manage them, will ensure that relationships can develop and our young people can flourish. This is an aspect that the staff body model in our daily practise.

We provide an interactive learning environment which is motivating, allowing pupils to practise skills and to embed new information and knowledge. Pupils are provided with exciting and engaging opportunities to apply skills and knowledge to ensure learning is functional, purposeful and reflective. We have a range of RSE resources accessible to all pupils to further their understanding, engagement and independence in a range of areas.

The topics covered in RSE are carefully planned and taught at the appropriate time for them in their journey to adulthood.