



Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Date: November 2023

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Policy.

This policy covers:

Relationship Education for 5 – 11year olds

Sex and Relationship Education for students who are 11+

This policy has been written with regard to the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance published in 2000, and the Statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) most recently revised in September 2021.

In this policy, the Governors and the staff, in partnership with the parents and our older students, set out their aims and their approach to RSE in the school.

Following three consultation meetings with parents, staff and governors, a draft policy was agreed upon by all stakeholders. Added to the views expressed in the meetings and questionnaires, feedback from presentations of sample RSE lessons to parents, were also taken into consideration in adopting this policy.

Details of the policy and content of the RSE curriculum will be published on the school's website. Copies of the policy will be available to all registered parents on request and a copy is available in the school office.

INTRODUCTION

The Branch Christian School commits to the education of the whole child and we believe that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is an integral part of this education ensuring that they are prepared for life in modern Britain. It is in this context that we commit ourselves, in partnership with parents/carers, to provide all our young people with a positive and God-honouring RSE curriculum that increases their confidence and self-esteem, helping them to learn and practice decision-making skills, including those necessary for resisting pressure from peers and others to behave in potentially damaging ways. Sex and Relationship Education, and Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education (PSHE) can help to provide students with the key knowledge to:

1. ensure that they can keep themselves safe.
2. develop healthy and positive relationships.
3. maintain good mental health.
4. build resilience.
5. manage their finances.
6. Prepare for the workplace
7. know the law (particularly with regard to the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010),
8. know and implement British Values, and
9. successfully navigate the changing world in which they are growing up.

From September 2020, and subject to making the regulations, all primary schools (maintained, academies or independent) are required to provide Relationships Education ReEd and all secondary schools (maintained, academies or independent) are required to provide Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). Before this point, the Branch Christian School has not taught Sex Education and has not been under any obligation to do so.

Our focus in the primary area of the school is on building healthy relationships and staying safe in all aspects including online safety.

Our focus in the secondary area of the school is to deepen the students' understanding of healthy adult relationships, with sex education delivered in that context and in accordance with our faith. Online harms and safety will also be taught and embedded into the curriculum to equip students with the right skills to successfully navigate the increasingly complex world of technology that we live in.

We aim to develop an integrated approach that is sensitive to the needs of our students and the school community in general. As a Christian school, we believe that any teaching on relationships, love and sex should be delivered in accordance with our faith and within the context of the Bible, the Word of God.

As a Christian school, we believe that any teaching on these subjects must be within the whole context of our faith in God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ. In sex and relationship education, we place the emphasis on the understanding and formation of respectful, loving relationships which exist between friends and within families. Understanding how relationships work and developing relationship skills gives a context for understanding human sexuality and sexual health. One such relationship is marriage. Marriage is the sacred vow between two people that Christians and the majority of cultures/ religions understand as the context for safe, healthy, enjoyable sexual and family life. It is a shared commitment of loyalty and closeness, into which the gift of life may be brought.

Matthew 19:4-6 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁴ And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning 'made them male and female,' ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Whilst we will be teaching predominately from a Biblical viewpoint, we will also teach what the British law is regarding marriage and promote respect for all people regardless of their lifestyle choices and marriage decisions. We will actively discourage any hate attitudes in regard to the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act (2010) which are:

- a. age
- b. disability
- c. gender reassignment
- d. marriage and civil partnership
- e. pregnancy and maternity
- f. race
- g. religion or belief
- h. sex
- i. sexual orientation

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

Definition:

'Sex and relationship education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of loving and caring relationships.' Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DfE 0116/2000)

As a Christian school, we believe that parents have the right to have a say in what sex education their children should be taught. In this regard, the school confirms that it will teach sex education in a way that

takes into consideration the views of the parents. Parents will also have the right to withdraw their child from sex education other than sex education in the PACE Curriculum as part of science, but not from learning about relationships in primary or secondary. discussions have taken place with the headteacher, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if 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.

We believe that children and young people have not yet attained full maturity and are not always able to assimilate this information; therefore, staff will keep this in mind when delivering sex education and ensure that the information comes at an appropriate time and in a manner matched to their age, needs, physical and psychological maturity. Awareness of where each child is in their development and their individual differences will be key factors in choosing when to deliver this education.

We will provide our students with clear, helpful and accurate sex education which is compatible with the ethos and values of the school. Sex Education will reflect the values of the PSHE requirements. It will be taught in the context of adults, within committed, long-term, loving relationships. In addition, it will promote self-esteem and emotional health and well-being and help pupils form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the wider community. All questions will be answered openly but sensitively.

There will be sensitivity and respect shown for all people whether married, non-married or in same-sex relationships. When teaching issues around LGBT, we will ensure that our 11+ students, whatever their developing attractions, feel that the teaching meets their needs. Our students will learn that there are different types of relationships, in a way that is sensitive to their needs; and in accordance with our faith. We will ensure that it is inclusive and meets the needs of all our 11+ students. We will also adhere to our duty towards the nine Protected Characteristics under the Equalities Act (2010) and Public Sector Equality Duty.

The aims are:

1. to provide our students with a knowledge and understanding of Biblical teaching on relationships and sexual love, depending on their age and maturity levels
2. to provide our students with a positive understanding of what constitutes good, loving relationships
3. to clarify and reinforce existing knowledge
4. to provide our students with a knowledge and understanding of the biological facts about human reproduction, depending on their age
5. to provide our students with the skills and confidence to defend themselves against unwanted pressures to be sexually active and to keep them safe in line with the Government's aim of reducing the instance of teenage pregnancies
6. to provide our senior students with an understanding of sexual health including how to protect themselves against unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), depending on their age and maturity levels and their faith and the teachings they have received from this.
7. to teach our senior students the Biblical view of refraining from sexual intercourse outside of marriage, whilst also providing them with a clear understanding about contraception
8. to raise students' self-esteem and confidence, especially in their relationships with others
9. to help students understand their feelings and behaviour, so they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives
10. to help students develop skills (language, decision making, choice, assertiveness) and make the most of their abilities
11. to provide the confidence to be participating members of society and to value themselves and others
12. to help gain access to information and support
13. to develop skills for a healthier safer lifestyle

14. to develop and use communication skills and assertiveness skills to cope with the influences of their peers and the media
15. to respect and care for their bodies
16. to help students understand that they have rights (and should have control over who touches their bodies) and increase communication skills about these
17. to provide information about pubertal changes (physical, emotional and social), to discuss all the implications and give help in adjusting to these changes
18. to enable students to accept that variation in growth rates, size and ages at which puberty starts is normal
19. to reduce or eliminate any teasing about sexual or non-sexual matters, which might amount to bullying
20. to foster respect for other people's beliefs, feelings and needs
21. to develop personal relationship skills and belief in the value of many kinds of friendships, including platonic friendships, and in everyone's right to choose not to be sexually active
22. to challenge media stereotypes of gender, raise awareness of potential sexism and prejudice, and the value of equal opportunities for males and females
23. to develop pupils' understanding of the moral issues involved in human sexual behaviour, and explore those held by different cultures and groups
24. link sex and relationship education with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour such as drugs, smoking and alcohol
25. raise awareness of risk factors in our society today, including online grooming and (Child Sexual Exploitation) CSE
26. to be aware of the national and local provisions for health care, including family planning, maternity and childcare, and prevention of disease
27. to evaluate the sex education programme regularly and revise it in the light of pupils' and parents' responses
28. to provide appropriate in-service training for those involved in teaching health, sex and relationships education.

The teaching of health education including sex and relationships education takes place in mixed sex classes. This is deliberate and appropriate and enables boys and girls at an early age to gain an understanding of male and female sexuality, growth and development and to explore issues of sexuality in an open atmosphere. Senior students were specifically asked about this in November 2019 and said that they are comfortable in mixed groups. Should students or staff feel the need for a topic to be taught to single sex groups, we reserve the right to do so.

TEACHING FOLLOWING THE LEGAL REDEFINITION OF MARRIAGE (*Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013*)

Recent guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) provides helpful clarification that the traditional, Biblical nature of marriage can continue to be taught in schools.

"Maintained secondary schools have a legal requirement to teach about the 'nature of marriage'" and in so doing they "must accurately state the facts about marriage of same sex couples". However, "no school, or individual teacher, is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same sex couples."

As an independent school this requirement is not aimed at us; however, due to the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act (2013), and with regard to the British Values, this topic will be discussed with consideration to the age and maturity levels of our students. Students will be made aware that the Marriage Act (2013) extends civil marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales, although the law prevents ministers of the Church of England carrying out Same Sex Marriage (SSM). Nothing in the act affects the rights of Christian schools to teach on marriage or on same sex relationships in accord with Biblical principles, provided it is done in an appropriate and sensitive way.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) also states:

“Teachers, other school staff, governors, parents and pupils are all free to hold whatever personal views they choose on marriage of same sex couples, including a view that marriage should only be between a man and a woman. The Government recognises that the belief that marriage can only be between a man and a woman is a belief worthy of respect in a democratic society.”

“Schools with a religious character can continue to deliver sex and relationship education in accordance with their particular religious doctrines or ethos. They must do so in a sensitive, reasonable, respectful and balanced way.”

CURRICULUM PLANNING

The School Leadership and Management will:

1. Ensure that all aspects of the programme reflect the school's value and ethos.
2. Ensure that all aspects of the programme are covered in sufficient depth.
3. Ensure that the programme is delivered in a range of creative themes and projects to meet the various learning styles of the students.
4. Ensure that there are sufficient resources, including human, practical equipment and teaching resources to enable high standard delivery of the curriculum.
5. Establish clear guidelines on how the programme will be reviewed and evaluated so that what is working well can be encouraged and areas where improvement is needed may be reviewed.

We have always made our teaching materials available to our parent but in particular, following the letter sent from Gillian Keegan, the Education Secretary on 24th October, we want to be absolutely clear that this is something we are already doing.

The Education Secretary [writing today, 24 October, to all schools in England](#) to make clear that they can and should share relationships, sex and health (RSHE) curriculum materials with parents.

In addition, she has penned an [open letter to parents](#) – which encourages them to have confidence in their right to know what their children are seeing and being taught in the classroom.

The letter makes clear that companies providing teaching resources cannot use copyright law to forbid schools from sharing materials, and any attempt to do so through contract terms would be unenforceable and void.

If a provider were to attempt to forbid sharing with parents when asked, schools should continue regardless, because a blanket ban would contradict the clear public interest in parents being aware of what their children are being taught.

In the event that a school is faced with contractual clauses, the Education Secretary is backing schools defending parents' rights with a practical sample letter that all schools can adapt and send to external providers making clear such clauses are void on the grounds that they are unenforceable.

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan said:

No ifs, no buts and no more excuses. This government is acting to guarantee parents' fundamental right to know what their children are being taught in sex and relationships education.

Today I'm writing to schools and parents to debunk the copyright myth that parents cannot see what their children are being taught.

Parents must be empowered to ask and schools should have the confidence to share.

The Following will be taught at the Appropriate Levels. We will use our knowledge of the pupils to decide when they are ready and if they have gaps in their learning we will endeavour to build their knowledge before they progress (for full details of our curriculum, refer to our website or ask in the school office):

EYFS

God loves each of us in our uniqueness.

Children learn about the concept of male and female and about young animals.

They develop skills to form friendships and think about relationships with others.

Years 1 – 2 (approximately ages 5-7)

Through work in science, children:

- learn about life cycles of some animals.
- understand the idea of growing from young to old and learn that all living things reproduce.
- learn about the importance of personal hygiene to maintain good health.

Through work in PSHE, children:

- reflect on family relationships, different family groups and friendship.
- learn about rituals and traditions associated with birth, marriage and death and talk about the emotions involved.
- begin to co-operate with others in work and play and begin to recognise the range of human emotions and ways to deal with them.
- learn about personal safety.

Years 3 – 6 (approximately ages 7-10)

Through work in science children:

- build on their knowledge of life cycles and learn about the basic biology of human reproduction including birth of a baby in years 5 & 6.
- learn about the physical, emotional and social changes at puberty, which include personal hygiene.

Through work in PSHE children:

- develop an understanding of relationships within a family, between friends and the community and that there are different patterns of friendship,
- develop skills needed to form relationships and to respect other people's emotions and feelings,
- consider how to make simple choices and exercise some basic techniques for resisting pressures,
- focus on the development of skills and attitudes not just the acquisition of knowledge.

Years 7+ (approximately from age 11+)

Attitudes and Values

- The importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.
- The value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- The value of respect, love and care.
- The exclusivity of keeping sex within a Christian marriage.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.

Personal and Social Skills:

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Managing conflict.
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.
- Being able to speak up against sexual harassment and other abusive behaviour towards self and others.
- Respecting personal boundaries and consent.

Knowledge and Understanding:

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships within the context of God's new creation and the institution of marriage.
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception, unplanned pregnancy and support services, in line with orthodox Christian teaching.
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity until marriage, and the benefits to be gained from such delay.
- The law relating to sexual violence, aggression and other criminal behaviour.

Our sex and relationship education is embedded into our main curriculum and enhanced by focused afternoon lessons.

It will not encourage early sexual experimentation, teaching young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It will enable our young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. It will build up knowledge and skills that are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on young people.

In light of this, sex education will be taught from age 11+ according to statutory guidelines; this will include any such teaching to do with same-sex relationships. However, to promote tolerance, children under this age will be made aware that people may legally choose to identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual, or may choose to be in a same-sex marriage. This will be taught depending on their age and maturity levels.

A detailed scheme of work for each group is available on the school website, showing the content that will be taught each term over 3 years. Mrs Ncube will be preparing all the curriculum material, some of which she may invite other external professionals to deliver, with her in attendance.

Teaching strategies

Sex Education is delivered through Science PACEs, Devotions and PSHE. Strategies to deliver the content could include:

1. creating a safe space for students by establishing “ground rules” with the students, which respect all individuals in the learning space e.g. - no-one will have to answer a personal question - no-one will be forced to take part in discussion - only correct names of body parts will be used and explained factually
2. establishing what pupils already know at the start of a lesson or topic, and then building onto that knowledge. Topics will be revisited as necessary.
3. using “distancing” techniques to de-personalise discussions e.g., role play, case studies, videos.
4. knowing how to deal with unexpected comments or questions e.g. - by establishing clear parameters about what is appropriate for a whole class setting. - by being prepared to discuss the matter later on an individual basis or to refer the pupil to an appropriate person if necessary.
5. using group discussion, case studies and other structured activities.
6. encouraging reflection e.g. - by asking pupils what they have learned from the discussion and / or from the experience of others and the extent to which this has helped them.
7. use of approved external agencies to promote positive attitudes.
8. to support pupils by signposting and raising awareness of suitable external advisory agencies as appropriate.

Use of Outside Agencies

BCS will only use outside agencies that are consistent with our Christian faith. Love Wise, NSPCC, Values Foundation and Protect Young Minds may be used. We may invite medical professionals in under Mrs Ncube’s supervision with prior agreement from the Headteacher, where to do so will give our students a more informed program of study.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Headteacher is the designated teacher with responsibility for coordinating sex and relationship education.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body, working with the Headteacher and RSE Team, to ensure that the sex and relationship education must be in accordance with the teachings of the Bible and the wishes of the parents. This will be achieved through careful monitoring of the teaching resources used.

Therefore, in considering the resources which will be used to teach this subject, governors should take into account:

- the need to support parents and guardians by providing education which is faithful to the teachings of the Bible and appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the students.
- the extent to which specific materials can be used to illustrate the beauty of the human being created by God in His image.
- the values implied by specific resources and the way in which they may be used to enhance students’ understanding of human development and Biblical teaching.
- the accuracy and clarity of material presented.

Sex and relationship education is delivered through science PACEs, PSHE, and Citizenship, taught by classroom teachers, and if appropriate, outside visitors.

A range of teaching methods which involve student's participation are used to teach sex and relationship education. These include use of mini-lecturers, videos, group discussions, pair-work, worksheets, looking at case studies and role-play. Where appropriate outside speakers may be used.

The latter are always checked beforehand for suitability and teachers are present to ensure that balanced information is given. It is important that any external visitor to the school is also clear about their role and responsibility while they are in a school. Such visits should complement the school's current programme. Visitors may need guidance to ensure that sessions they deliver are respectful of this policy.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

Parental Consultation

- Full details of the sex and relationship education provided by the school are available on request.
- By checking the school website, parents are able to know when specific aspects of the sex education programme are going to be taught and given the opportunities to view the videos and resources being used beforehand, if they choose to do so.
- By working in partnership with parents, they recognise the importance of this aspect of their child's education. Parents do, however, have the right to withdraw their children from those aspects of sex education, not included in the Science PACE Curriculum. In this case, alternative work would be set for the child.

Parents' Right to Withdrawal

- Some parts of sex and relationship education are contained within the students' Science PACEs and are compulsory. However, parents may withdraw their children from any complementary activities focused on sex education, if they choose to do so.
 - If discussions have taken place with the headteacher, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if 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.
 - Students are given the next half-term schedule of complimentary activities in advance. Parents can check the school website for details of the specific RSE scheme of work that their child will be covering that term. They will have the right to withdraw their children from these lessons providing they make this request in writing three school days before the activity, to allow time to make other provisions for their child.
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Child Protection / Confidentiality

- Teachers need to be aware that effective sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, may lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.
- The staff member will inform the Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the school's procedures for child protection.
- A member of staff should not promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

Dealing with Difficult Questions

- Ground rules are essential to provide an agreed structure to answering sensitive or difficult questions. Sessions may use an anonymous question box as a distancing technique.
- Teachers will endeavour to answer questions as honestly as possible but if faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, provision would be made to meet the individual child's needs.

Children with Special Needs

Teaching and resources will be differentiated as appropriate to address the needs of SEN children, in order for them to not be disadvantaged in having full access to the content of sex and relationship education.

Complaints

Where parents and guardians have complaints which cannot be resolved through informal discussion, they may choose to follow our school's complaints policy.

Links with Other Policies

This policy is linked with the following policies:

- PSHE & Citizenship
- SMSC
- Equal Opportunities
- Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Confidentiality
- Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying

These policies can be provided on paper by contacting the school office.

Policy Review Information:

Review date	Changes made	By whom	Date of next review
November 2019	This is the first policy on RSE with a view to start teaching in September 2020	Mrs J Holt	November 2020
February 2020	Following meeting with parents on 6 th February 2020.	Mrs J Holt	February 2021
June 2020	Minor changes after Trustees meeting.	Mrs J Holt	June 2021
October 2020	In line with the new guidance issued 24 th September 2020 that has suggestions for what schools 'may wish to include in their policy'. Parents were informed that they can access a detailed scheme of work for the	Mrs J Holt	October 2021

October 2020	current terms teaching content for each group through the school website.		
October 2020	None	Mr Hodgson	October 2021
	None	Mrs L Cox	October 2021
May 2022	-Reference changed to the most recently updated version of the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DfE, 2021) -Specific details of curriculum preparation planning, condensed to overall outcome. -Inclusion of sexual harassment and violence in curriculum planning -Reference made to changes from termly RSE SOW on website to 3year plan	Mrs J Holt w/ Mrs J Ncube	May 2023
May 2022	None	Mrs L Cox	May 2023
May 2023	none	Mrs JE Holt	September 2023
November 2023	Addition of the directive from the Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan, which is in line with our current practice.	Mrs JE Holt Mrs JN Ncube	November 2024