

The Cowplain School – Relationships, Sex and Health Education and Careers

Rationale and Content Overview

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

The aim of RSHE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.

This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

Effective RSHE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSHE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

Knowledge about safer sex and sexual health remains important to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This should be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment. Many teachers use approaches such as distancing techniques, setting ground rules with the class to help manage sensitive discussion and using question boxes to allow pupils to raise issues anonymously.

RSHE should provide clear progression from what is taught in primary school in Relationships Education. Teachers should build on the foundation of Relationships Education and, as pupils grow up, at the appropriate time extend teaching to include intimate relationships. Alongside being taught about intimate relationships, pupils should also be taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult. This teaching should enable pupils to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful.

Pupils should understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect. Through gaining the knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, they can be empowered to identify when relationships are unhealthy. They should be taught that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing.

As in primary, secondary Relationships Education can be underpinned by a wider, deliberate cultivation and practice of resilience and character in the individual. These should include character traits such as belief in achieving goals and persevering with tasks, as well as personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice, underpinned by an understanding of the importance of self-respect and self-worth. There are many ways in which secondary schools should support the development of these attributes, for example by providing planned opportunities for young people to undertake social action, active citizenship and voluntary service to others locally or more widely.

Pupils should be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. All pupils should feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Sexual orientation and gender identity should be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner. When teaching about these topics, it must be recognised that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. There should be an equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships. This should be integrated appropriately into the RSHE programme, rather than addressed separately or in only one lesson.

It is recognised that there will be a range of opinions regarding RSHE. The starting principle when teaching each of these must be that the applicable law should be taught in a factual way so that pupils are clear on their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Schools may choose to explore faith, or other perspectives, on some of these issues in other subjects such as Religious Education.

Pupils should be well informed about the full range of perspectives and, within the law, should be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs. Key aspects of the law relating to sex which should be taught include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy.

Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, should also be addressed sensitively and clearly. Schools should address the physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM). They should also be taught where to find support and that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM or fail to protect a person for whom you are responsible from FGM. As well as addressing this in the context of the law, pupils may also need support to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk. Schools should also be mindful that for pupils who are or have experienced unhealthy or unsafe relationships at home or socially, the school may have a particularly important role in being a place of consistency and safety where they can easily speak to trusted adults, report problems and find support.

Internet safety should also be addressed. Pupils should be taught the rules and principles for keeping safe online. This will include how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues. Pupils should have a strong understanding of how data is generated, collected, shared and used online, for example, how personal data is captured on social media or understanding the way that businesses may exploit the data available to them.

Some pupils are also exposed to harmful behaviours online, and via other forms of media, which may normalise violent sexual behaviours. A focus on healthy relationships and broader Relationships Education can help young people understand acceptable behaviours in relationships.

By the end of secondary school

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary.

Families

Pupils should know:

- a) that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.

- b) how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- c) what marriage is, including their legal status – for example, that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- d) why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- e) the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- f) the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- g) how to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships), how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Pupils should know:

- a) the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as:
 - a. trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict
 - b. reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
- b) practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- c) how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- d) 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 people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs
- e) about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- f) that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- g) what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- h) the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

Online and media

Pupils should know:

- a) their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- b) about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- c) not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- d) what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- e) the impact of viewing harmful content
- f) that specifically sexually explicit material, for example pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- g) that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- h) how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

Being safe

Pupils should know:

- a) the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- b) how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Pupils should know:

- a) how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
- b) that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- c) the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause
- d) that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- e) that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex

- f) the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- g) the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- h) that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)
- i) how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- j) about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- k) how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- l) how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

The Law

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse

- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)

Physical health and mental wellbeing

The aim of teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing is to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. It should enable them to recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others and, when issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

Physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked, and it is important that pupils understand that good physical health contributes to good mental wellbeing, and vice versa.

It is important for schools to promote pupils' self-control and ability to self-regulate, and strategies for doing so. This will enable them to become confident in their ability to achieve well and persevere even when they encounter setbacks or when their goals are distant, and to respond calmly and rationally to setbacks and challenges. This integrated, whole-school approach to the teaching and promotion of health and wellbeing has a potential positive impact on behaviour and attainment.

Effective teaching should aim to reduce stigma attached to health issues, in particular those to do with mental wellbeing. Schools should engender an atmosphere that encourages openness. This will mean that pupils feel they can check their understanding and seek any necessary help and advice as they gain knowledge about how to promote good health and wellbeing.

Physical health and mental wellbeing: Secondary

It is important that the starting point for health and wellbeing education should be a focus on enabling pupils to make well-informed, positive choices for themselves. In secondary school, teaching should build on primary content and should introduce new content to older pupils at appropriate points. This should enable pupils to understand how their bodies are changing, how they are feeling and why, to further develop the language that they use to talk about their bodies, health and emotions and to understand why terms associated with mental and physical health difficulties should not be used pejoratively. This knowledge should enable pupils to understand where normal variations in emotions and physical complaints end and health and wellbeing issues begin.

Teaching about the impact of puberty, which will have started in primary school, should continue in secondary school, so that pupils are able to understand the physical and emotional changes, which take place at this time and their impact on their wider health and wellbeing.

Menstruation

The onset of menstruation can be confusing or even alarming for girls if they are not prepared. Pupils should be taught key facts about the menstrual cycle including what is an average period, range of menstrual products and the implications for emotional and physical health. In addition to curriculum content, schools should also make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls prepare for and manage menstruation including with requests for menstrual products. Schools will need to consider the needs of their cohort of pupils in designing this content.

Emphasis should continue to be given to steps pupils can take to protect and support their own health and wellbeing. They should know that there is a relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing and that this can also influence their ability to learn. Teachers should cover self-care, the benefits of physical activity and time spent outdoors. This should be linked to information on the benefits of sufficient sleep, good nutrition and strategies for building resilience.

Pupils should know the contribution that hobbies, interests and participation in their own communities can make to overall wellbeing. They should understand that humans are social beings and that outward-facing activity, especially that with a service focus (for example, work, volunteering and participation in organisations such as the scouts or the girl guiding movements, the National Citizen Service or the Duke of Edinburgh Award) are beneficial for wellbeing. This can also contribute to the development of the attributes for a happy and successful adult life. Pupils should be supported to recognise what makes them feel lonely. Self-focused or isolating lifestyle choices can lead to unhappiness and being disconnected from society for those who have greater need for companionship and relationships.

Pupils should also be taught about problems and challenges. This should include factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental and physical health conditions, drugs, alcohol and information about effective interventions. Schools may also choose to teach about issues such as eating disorders ¹.

Teachers should be aware of common 'adverse childhood experiences' (such as family breakdown, bereavement and exposure to domestic violence) and when and how these may be affecting any of their pupils and so may be influencing how they experience these subjects. The impact of time spent online, the positive aspects of online support and negotiating social media, including online forums and gaming, should also be included. Teachers should understand that pupils who have experienced problems at home may depend more on schools for support.

Pupils should be taught how to judge when they, or someone they know, needs support and where they can seek help if they have concerns. This should include details on which adults in school (e.g. school nurses), and externally can help.

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

Mental wellbeing

Pupils should know:

- a) how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary
- b) that happiness is linked to being connected to others
- c) how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns

- d) common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression)
- e) how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health
- f) the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness

Internet safety and harms

Pupils should know:

- a) the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image), how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online
- b) how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours

Physical health and fitness

Pupils should know:

- a) the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress
- b) the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardio-vascular ill-health
- c) about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation

Healthy eating

Pupils should know:

- a) how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer

Drugs, alcohol and tobacco

Pupils should know:

- a) the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions
- b) the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances

- c) the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood
- d) the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency
- e) awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks
- f) the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so

Health and prevention

Pupils should know:

- a) about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics
- b) about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist
- c) (late secondary) the benefits of regular self-examination and screening
- d) the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination
- e) the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn

Basic first aid

Pupils should know:

- a) basic treatment for common injuries
- b) life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR ²
- c) the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed

Changing adolescent body

Pupils should know:

- a) key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing
- b) the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health

Careers Education: The Gatsby Benchmarks:

- 1. A stable careers programme:** Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers.
- 2. Learning from career and labour market information:** Every student, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities.
- 3. Addressing the needs of each student:** Students have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each student. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.
- 4. Linking curriculum learning to careers:** All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.
- 5. Encounters with employers and employees:** Every student should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.
- 6. Experiences of workplaces:** Every student should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.
- 7. Encounters with further and higher education:** All students should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.
- 8. Personal guidance:** Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a qualified career adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made.