

Relationships and Sex Education

The PSHCE scheme of work includes specific teaching on RSE in each of the two-year rolling cycle, but it features in most of the sessions in some form or another. The importance of 'positive relationships' underpins the entire ethos of Red Balloon, particularly with regards to its impact on mental health, and the future implications for personal, professional and social relationships in later life.

The aim of RSE 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 students 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. The skills needed for developing positive relationships with others include self-efficacy, perseverance, trustworthiness, humility and kindness, as well as a recognition of the importance of these traits in others.

Effective RSE 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 RSE also equips young people to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life.

At Red Balloon:

- Students are taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. This particularly includes 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.

- When the time is right, students are taught about the laws around grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including female genital mutilation.
- Sexual orientation and gender identity are explored in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner.
- Students explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex and opposite-sex relationships, treated equally.
- Students are taught their rights and responsibilities as citizens.
- Depending on the needs of the students and the relevance to their own experiences, we may explore faith, culture, historical influences and other factors influencing perspectives on relationships.
- Students take part in discussions about the rights of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs, within the law.
- Students learn to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships in a domestic setting, including coercive or controlling behaviour, abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and neglect), honour-based violence and forced marriage. They learn how to find support for themselves or a friend.
- Students discuss the risks of using the internet, and learn strategies for keeping themselves safe online.

By the time students leave Red Balloon they will have covered the following:

Families

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships;
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children;
- what marriage is, including the legal rights of married people – 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;
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into;
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships;
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting;

- 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

Students will be supported to understand:

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict; reconciliation and ending relationships (this includes different non-sexual types of relationship);
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships;
- 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);
- 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;
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help;
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control;
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable;
- 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

Students will be supported to understand:

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online;
- 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;
- that they should not provide material to others that they would not want shared further or share personal material which is sent to them;
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online;
- the impact of viewing harmful content;
- 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;
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including imprisonment;
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

Being safe

Students will be supported to understand:

- 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;
- 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

Students will be supported to understand:

- 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;
- 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;
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause;
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others;
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex;
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available;
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage;
- 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);
- 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;
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment;
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour;
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

The Law: It is important that students 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.

Students are 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).

Parents' Right to Withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, Red Balloon will arrange this. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing to the Head/Coordinator, who will discuss the request with the parents and take appropriate action. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed on the student's file.