

PSHCE Policy

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Introduction

At Red Balloon Educational Trust - Norfolk, (RBET – Norfolk) we believe that Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship, and Economic education (PSHCE) is a vital aspect of our students' overall growth and development. Rooted in our ethos of kindness, responsibility, and resilience, the PSHCE curriculum aims to support students in becoming not only thoughtful and compassionate individuals but also active and engaged citizens who can confidently navigate the challenges of life as independent adults. In addition to the statutory elements contained in the DfE guidance - Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Feb 2019), it incorporates the non-statutory areas of economic wellbeing, citizenship and careers guidance, in accordance with the PSHE Association's Programme of Study. The curriculum is underpinned by schemes of work, to ensure thorough planning for effective provision.

Principles and approach

The core principles of our PSHCE curriculum are:

1. Inspiring Young People to Grow and Flourish We encourage our students to develop the emotional intelligence, empathy, and confidence needed to become responsible and kind citizens. We seek to equip them with the tools to thrive in all areas of life—at home, in school, and in the wider world.
2. Supporting Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural Growth (SMSC): Our curriculum promotes the holistic development of our students, helping them to explore their personal values, deepen their sense of social responsibility, and build resilience. By fostering a strong sense of belonging and community, we help them to develop the skills to manage life's complexities and demands with confidence.

Our approach to PSHCE is both proactive and responsive, meaning that while we prepare our students for the future, we also support them in navigating the challenges they face right now. Through a range of activities, open discussions and targeted support, we work to ensure that they are equipped with a broad understanding of the world and the skills to respond with thoughtfulness and confidence.

Student Voice is central to our approach. We actively listen to and engage with students to ensure that our curriculum reflects their needs, interests, and experiences. By collaborating with external agencies, we ensure that our curriculum is well-resourced, forward-thinking, and fully aligned with the diverse needs of our student body.

Our PSHCE programme is designed around active participation. Rather than simply absorbing information, students are encouraged to think critically, ask questions, and reflect on their own values and beliefs. We create spaces for open dialogue, helping students to develop their

interpersonal skills and rehearse real-life scenarios where they can practise the values of respect, empathy, and collaboration.

This policy is the result of ongoing collaboration with staff, students and parents¹, including the following avenues:

- Department Review and Feedback
- Professional Development e.g. PSHE Association, Sex Education Forum, Norfolk County Council, Leeway, LGBT Norfolk
- Parent Voice through a parent forum
- Student Voice opportunities in curriculum time and PSHCE Centre-wide time Community
- Ongoing Feedback from pastoral staff, therapeutic staff, SENDCO and Safeguarding Lead

Safe and effective practice

At RBET Norfolk, we believe that PSHCE and RSE should be deeply connected to our students' real-life experiences, offering them the opportunity to reflect on and make sense of the world around them. We are committed to creating a safe, supportive, and respectful learning environment where students feel comfortable exploring sensitive topics with confidence. Each session will be underpinned by clear, agreed-upon ground rules that foster trust and open dialogue, ensuring that every student's voice is heard and valued.

Staff delivering PSHCE and RSE will be vigilant in recognizing when students may need additional support. We shall always respond with care, compassion, and confidentiality, working closely with our pastoral teams to ensure that students who are at risk or need extra help receive the appropriate guidance and care. Our approach will always be in line with the Safeguarding Policy, prioritizing the wellbeing and safety of every individual in our community.

We take a holistic approach to student wellbeing, supporting our students not just academically, but emotionally and socially as they navigate the complexities of life. We strive to create an environment where students feel empowered to seek help, ask questions, and engage with important life topics in a supportive, empathetic space.

Curriculum provision

Key Stage 3: These students attend two PSHCE sessions per week and one ASDAN Citizenship/Careers session per week.

Key Stage 4: These students attend two PSHCE sessions, one ASDAN Citizenship session and one ASDAN Careers session per week, as well as attending one impartial Careers advisory meeting at some point in this key stage.

¹ Wherever the term "parent" is used in the policy, it means any person with parental responsibility for the young person.

PSHCE

The curriculum is curated as a spiral curriculum so students will build their knowledge on a solid foundation and revisit themes and topics each year so that they can develop their skills and knowledge in a broad manner. Each half term the theme is based on an exploratory question and sessions are run in line with the negotiated curriculum style of Red Balloon where students can dictate their preferences for learning while still following the core curriculum. Students who cannot yet undertake the curriculum will complete an ASDAN PSHE Short Course, which takes into consideration the age and stages of students as well as the amount of time missing in education to ensure that gaps can be covered as best possible. The themes it covers are:

What is Wellbeing? Mental health and emotional literacy

What is Healthy Living? Holistic body wellbeing

What is Safe Living? Boundaries and Safety

What are Healthy Relationships? Relationships and Sex Education

What is Personal Development? Resilience and Mindset

Citizenship and careers

Students will progress through ASDAN short courses on Employability, Wider Key Skills, Citizenship and Personal Social Development depending on needs and access. Further details of this can be found in our Careers policy.

Equality of opportunity

Our approach to teaching and curriculum delivery at RBET Norfolk is rooted in a commitment to inclusivity and respect for each student's individual needs and experiences. We recognise that every student is unique, and take into account factors such as their age, competence, cultural background, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their readiness to learn. Our goal is to ensure that all students have equal access to learning opportunities and that these are meaningful and relevant to them.

Our Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship, and Economic Education (PSHCE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programmes are integral in promoting understanding of diversity and equality for all. We deliver these subjects with sensitivity and care, ensuring that our approach is fully aligned with the principles of the Equality Act 2010. The curriculum addresses key issues such as gender equality, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and challenges to discrimination, aiming to foster a safe and supportive environment where all students feel valued and respected.

Our PSHCE and RSE programme also covers important topics related to health, safety, and rights, including puberty, reproductive health, and legal protections against practices such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). We present impartial, fact-based information on these topics, ensuring that students understand their rights and how to protect themselves and others. In doing so, we respect the diverse religious and cultural perspectives

within our community, while maintaining a focus on the universal principles of equality, safety, and wellbeing.

We are committed to creating a supportive space where our SEND students are encouraged to explore and develop their own identities. Our policy supports students in understanding and expressing their gender identity and sexual orientation, recognising that these aspects may be fluid and evolving. We aim to foster an environment where students feel safe to be themselves and are encouraged to express their individuality, free from discrimination or bullying.

In all that we do, the needs of our students drive our policies and practices. Our curriculum, including PSHCE and RSE, is designed to ensure that every student, regardless of background or identity, has the support and resources they need to thrive both academically and personally. We believe that inclusion, respect, and empathy are essential in helping each student make progress.

Relationships and sex education

While the PSHCE scheme of work includes specific teaching on RSE in each year, it features in most of the sessions in some form or other. The importance of 'positive relationships' underpins the entire ethos of RBET Norfolk, particularly with regard 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 ones. 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, the growth of intimate relationships and resistance to 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 RBET Norfolk:

- Students are taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. This 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.
- Students are taught about the laws around grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including female genital mutilation at age-appropriate stages

- 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.
- 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 RBET Norfolk they will have covered the following issues.

Families

- 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 in an unregistered religious ceremony for example.
- 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 those 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 should 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, including violent behaviour and coercive control, are criminal;
- 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 helped 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 much sexually explicit material 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 helped 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 helped 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 is 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 for 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 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 certain topics are being taught at an age-appropriate stage in the curriculum. These include:

- 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 they turn 16. After this point, if the student wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, RBET Norfolk will arrange this. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing to the Headteacher, 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.

Legislation and guidance that informs this policy

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE, Feb 2019)
- Careers Guidance and Access for education and training providers (DfE Oct 2018)
- Independent Schools Regulatory Requirements (Jan 2015)
- Guidance on Promoting British Values in Schools (DfE, Nov 2014)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Children and Social Work Act (2020)

Other RBET Norfolk policies that should be read in conjunction with this one

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Dealing with allegations of abuse
- Careers
- E-Safety

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