



Equality, Community, Growth

**The Oaks**  
Independent Primary School

**The Oaks – Relationships, Sex and Health Education Statement**

# Relationships, Sex and Health Education Statement



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**This policy is written to comply with the Independent School Standards and is based on the National Curriculum and Ofsted framework.**



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## **The Oaks – Relationships, Sex and Health Education Statement**

### **1. Rational**

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives seamlessly both online and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, as well as how to manage their academic, personal, and social lives in a positive manner.

'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 apply this knowledge in practice as they develop the ability to make informed 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: p. 8)

Young people with learning difficulties have increased vulnerability to exploitation. It is therefore vital that we teach our children and young people how to recognise and deal with problems they may face both now and in their futures.

### **2. What is Relationships, Sex & Health Education (RSHE)?**

RSHE is a lifelong learning approach to 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.

RSHE equips young people with essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline. It involves acquiring information, understanding the law, developing skills, and forming positive beliefs, values, and attitudes.

The term 'relationships, sex & health education' (RSHE) is used in this policy to emphasise that our approach extends beyond the provision of biological information to also focus on clarifying attitudes and values and developing self-esteem and the skills to manage and maintain relationships.

### **3. Principles and Values**

At The Oaks, we believe that RSHE should:

- Be appropriate to the pupil's age and cognitive ability of each individual pupil.
- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people.
- Encourage every pupil to contribute to our community and aim 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; it encompasses not just one model, such as the nuclear family. It includes a variety of family structures and the 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 promoting 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.



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- 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 included towards the end of this policy.
- 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.
- We support pupils to discuss and be aware of genders and gender identification.

#### **4. Aims**

We aim to enable our children and young people to build safe, healthy, and meaningful relationships that are well-managed and maintained. We strive to achieve this by providing balanced, factual, and unbiased information about relationships, reproduction, and broader contexts, encompassing emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions, across a range of topics. Our RSHE programme aims to prepare pupils for an adult life in which they can:

- Develop awareness of emotions and how they relate to the 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 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.
- Have an understanding of the physical aspects of reproduction, contraception and sexual health as appropriate to the 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.
- To develop an understanding of how social networks/media portray body image and sexuality.
- To develop knowledge of responses to peer pressure.



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### **5. Consultation and Engagement**

The Oaks recognises that the development of an appropriate curriculum requires consultation and engagement from all involved. 'To maximise generalisation of knowledge, it is also useful for the curriculum to include strategies that foster collaboration between educators and caregivers (Blanchett, 2002: p16). We have therefore provided recent opportunities for our young people (where appropriate), parents and carers and the staff body to put forward their suggestions about what the RSE curriculum should include.

Some of our young people recently engaged in a focus group, which allowed them to freely discuss their thoughts and opinions. One example included how pupils felt about the education they had received about puberty and menstruation, and how prepared they felt for these significant life changes. The information that focus groups like this produce is 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 RSHE curriculum forward.

Parents/carers were recently given the opportunity to complete an online parental view survey. In this communication, it was emphasised that we aim to work collaboratively with parents/carers to ensure a consistent approach. We strive to achieve this through regular and open communication, as well as by sharing our practices and resources. The findings of the above presented the concerns that caregivers have about the vulnerability of our children and young people, and that explicit teaching in this area is paramount.

Staff have recently taken part in RSHE consultation and training. Similar sessions are featured throughout the school year to ensure that staff feel confident in planning and delivering a range of RSHE topics.

### **6. A personalised approach**

As a result of consultation, a specialised programme of RSHE has been developed within The Oaks. All teachers have a copy of the whole school RSHE 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 among pupils at The Oaks, we believe that the most relevant aspects of the curriculum are covered based on the needs of each child or young person. For some pupils, it will be appropriate to teach only the functional aspects of the curriculum that are relevant to the individuals concerned. For a minority of pupils, it is more suitable to address specific areas of need as they arise and to continue working on early development objectives at other times.

RSHE 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 can submit a support referral form if they have a specific RSHE concern regarding a pupil. This can be a request from a parent/carer as a result of RSHE concerns at home. Referrals are reviewed weekly in the Senior Leadership and Designated Safeguarding Leads meeting.

### **7. Curriculum Intent, Implementation & Strategies**

The Oaks personalises provision for pupils in different curriculum pathways for their individual needs. Whilst some knowledge is taught in PSHE & RSHE lessons, many skills, knowledge, and understanding are taught or covered on a daily basis.

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.



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- 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 describe human anatomy and the processes of the body accurately.
- Where appropriate, 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 to which the staff body model is applied in our daily practice.

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 their skills and knowledge, ensuring learning is functional, purposeful, and reflective. We have a range of RSHE resources available to all pupils to further their understanding, engagement, and independence in various areas.

The topics covered in RSE are carefully planned and taught at the appropriate time for them in their journey to adulthood. Deeper Knowledge outcomes are taught when pupils have gained some independence and the foundation of knowledge.

### **8. Monitoring and Evaluation of RSE**

RSHE evidence is captured and assessed in the same way as other curriculum areas. Please refer to the Assessment policy for more information.

All teachers are responsible for planning and monitoring the progress of pupils for RSE. It is the responsibility of the Curriculum Lead and Executive Headteacher to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of RSE, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

### **9 . Right to Withdraw**

As stated by the Department for Education in statutory guidance published in June 2019, parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSHE. Please note that the right to withdraw is for sex education only and does not include content delivered as part of relationships and health education if a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their child from any part of sex education. In that case, they should contact the school to discuss the matter with the Headteacher, so that they can be made aware of the reasons and provide alternative arrangements. The request to withdraw a child from sex education can be made 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 should include the young person in sex education provision.

### **10. Confidentiality and Child Protection**

All staff members and external visitors who work with our pupils will be provided with a copy of this policy, as well as our school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead will have a discussion with any health professional or other adult before they begin working with our



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children. This is to ensure they are familiar with our policy and expectations regarding correct practice and how to respond to issues, including those related to Child Protection matters.

We make clear to pupils what our procedures are with regard to confidentiality. Similarly, if questions are asked in class or in assembly, adults will follow the agreed practice based on DfE Guidance 2000.

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Where child protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first. Pupils will be encouraged to allow teachers to liaise with parents/carers regarding issues that would benefit from being shared. Pupils will be informed in the eventuality that a confidence must be breached due to the seriousness of the disclosure.

Subjects of an intimate nature may prompt disclosures. Staff are provided with guidance on the procedures for establishing disclosure. When working with more-able pupils, staff are made aware of the fact that disclosures may occasionally be made relating to sexual matters, self-harming /depression, acts of aggression or drug misuse. Staff are instructed to liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and record concerns on My Concern, and will be advised on the appropriate course of action.

Where appropriate, pupils will be given support to access counselling and therapeutic services that are skilled in dealing with individuals with ASD or other specific learning difficulties.

#### **11. Links with other Policies**

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Assessment Policy