

Elysian

Relationships and Sex Education Policy



Reviewed: September 2023

Consultation completed: 26th September 2023

For the purposes of this policy, where the term Elysian is used, it refers to Elysian Animal Assisted Interventions Ltd including Elysian School and Elysian Animal Assisted Therapy and Learning. This policy is applicable to both the Westland and Liss sites.

Elysian is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Rationale for RSE at Elysian.

We want all our Young People at Elysian to be independent, safe and to be able to lead happy, healthy, and successful lives. We know that RSE is crucial to safeguarding our children. Good quality RSE aims to equip children and young people with the information, skills, and values they need to lead safe, fulfilling, and enjoyable relationships. It teaches them to take responsibility for their health and well-being and to contribute to behaviour change, including reducing unprotected and unwanted sex. Good RSE also helps to reduce harmful behaviour, including sexual offences such as assault and abuse. By teaching them RSE within the safe and nurturing environment of school, our Young People get the opportunity to explore who they are, the values that they have, their relationships and their future decisions.

Our guiding principles are led by the DFE guidance, stating that all content must be age appropriate and more importantly, developmentally appropriate. All PSHE and RSE sessions that are provided use tailored content and teaching methods to suit each individual. We ensure that teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law. Where possible, we use the context of the farm animals to discuss themes such as consent, families, reproduction, development and many others.

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.

Delivery of the RSE programme

- At Elysian RSE is taught using class based, teacher led learning alongside sessions provided on a 1:1 basis and in paired sessions.
- RSE is taught in a safe, non-judgmental environment where adults and Young People are confident that they will be kept safe, and their views respected.
- Class teachers teach elements of RSE as part of the PSHE and science curriculum and all pupils have access to at least one Personal Development lesson each week.
- Most sessions are in mixed gender groups but are supplemented with single sex sessions throughout the year when appropriate.
- Staff have access to a wide range of subject specific and SEND appropriate resources.
- Ground rules are used in all PSHE and RSE lessons and the issue of confidentiality is revisited to ensure understanding.
- Correct medical vocabulary will be used throughout the RSE and PSHE curriculum.

- RSE is delivered through a varied range of activities and resources that ensure the curriculum is accessible to ALL our Young People. These include: drama, themed discussions / debates, role play/scenarios, card sorting, creative tasks, and sensory curriculum tools.
- The delivery of RSE is tailored to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages. This is taken into consideration by offering more lessons depending on each child's curriculum pathway to ensure all statutory areas are covered in a conscious and sensitive manner.
- The Seesaw app is used by Teachers to keep track of the content each Learner has accessed in order to address any gaps. This ensures each Learner receives the knowledge they need to stay safe and build healthy relationships.

Working with parents / carers

Throughout the academic year, school staff will regularly liaise with parents and carers to inform them of RSE related topics that will be covered in following terms. This will ensure that parents and carers are aware of the discussions and subject matter that each Learner will be involved with and for them to ask any questions about specific content, resources etc that may be used. It will also provide both staff and parents and carers the opportunity to work together and plan bespoke RSE sessions for individual Learners, where appropriate. We value the support of the parents and carers in ensuring that we are providing a robust and appropriate curriculum for each and individual Learner.

Content of the RSE programme

Lessons are tailor made to each Young Person and their developmental age. They are carefully designed to safeguard and support all Young Persons, whilst building their knowledge and life skills. The aim is that over time we prepare Young Persons for issues they will face as they grow up.

The curriculum helps to equip our young people to:

- Develop moral understanding
- Encourage Young People to feel positive about themselves, develop confidence and self esteem
- Develop respect for self and others
- Learn the value of respect, care, and love
- Encourage Young People to make positive choices
- Help Young People to develop healthy relationships within a moral framework
- Help Young People understand how relationships are formed, maintained, and managed
- Prepare Young People for change, physically and emotionally
- Teach Young People about appropriate / inappropriate behaviour, public and private spaces
- Encourage assertiveness
- Help Young People stay safe
- Help Young People to understand emotions and feelings
- Develop an awareness of family life and the responsibilities of parenthood
- Acceptance of same sex unions as also offering stable, loving, and committed relationships to nurture children
- Develop an understanding and acceptance of diversity
- Understand diversity regarding religion, gender, culture, and sexual orientation in line with the 2010 Equality Act and the schools' safeguarding and child protection protocols.
- Help Young People develop the communication skills and vocabulary required to discuss their thoughts and concerns regarding relationships and sex.

Specific areas of focus are listed below and are delivered in a highly differentiated way.:

- Families and people who care for me (Importance of families, healthy family lives, different types of families and marriage)
- Caring friendships (Characteristics of friendships, respect, healthy and unhealthy friendships, peer pressures, rebuilding friendships, trust and managing conflict)
- Respectful relationships (Importance of respecting difference in others, how to treat others, self-respect, and self-care, bullying and cyberbullying, stereotypes, permission seeking and giving)
- Online relationships (Keeping safe, recognising, and managing risk, reporting unsafe activity, risks in the online world, personal information)
- Being Safe (Boundaries, public and private, appropriate behaviours, secrets, keeping safe, asking for help and where to get support) Laws on consent, coercion, abuse, how to understand and communicate consent, private and public, appropriate behaviours, safety in all types of relationship and online safety. Pornography, sexting, definitions of assault,
- Intimate and sexual relationships (Healthy relationships, consent, trust, health is affected by choices we make, mental health, reproductive health, pressures, delay, pregnancy and responsibilities, sexual health, alcohol and drugs, factual knowledge about sex, sexual health and sexuality, importance of relationships, how to access help and support)

These areas of learning are taught with a respect for diversity, taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

We recognise that young people will bring prior learning and real-life experiences to their learning. Our programme respects and builds on these, providing units of study that reflect both the universal and unique needs of our pupils. In this way, we recognise and respect pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture (which may, depending on their age and maturity, not be something they have yet considered or may be emerging) or the sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture of their immediate family, close friends and wider community.

Answering Difficult Questions

At our school, all personal beliefs and values are respected. We acknowledge that RSE is a sensitive topic and one that may evoke differing views and opinions. Despite this we ensure that all teaching is respectful of difference and is presented using a variety of views and beliefs, without bias. This allows our Young People to be able to form their own, informed opinions whilst respecting the views of others. We expect such respect of diversity to be modelled by our staff.

During formal PSHE /RSE sessions and when staff are asked questions in this subject, staff answer questions only if it is appropriate to do so. Staff will consider Young Persons age, developmental ability, and maturity prior to answering. Any answers may be given on a whole class, small group, or individual basis where appropriate. The aim is for Staff to provide information and guidance, but not instruction. Staff will respond honestly but not using personal experience. If a staff member does not feel comfortable to do this, this can be passed to the Teacher to follow up. Dialogue between the Teaching team and Therapeutic staff will ensure that any pupils who are thought to be 'at risk' are supported through sensitive discussion of topics. Pupils are also able to take a timeout if a topic is in anyway distressing for them. They will not be made to discuss this, rather they will be offered support if wanted.

If any staff member is concerned with any content/ topic discussed or feels that a Young Person may be at risk, a referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made.

Confidentiality and Child Protection Issues

Where possible and appropriate during RSE sessions, confidentiality is maintained by the teacher or member of staff. RSE discussions may prompt a Young Person to disclose about related incidents; for example, FGM, Forced marriage, child exploitation or abuse. If the member of staff believes that the child is at risk or in danger or has concerns about any information disclosed, she/he talks to the named Designated Safeguarding Lead who takes action as laid down in the Child Protection Policy. All staff are familiar with the policy and know the identified members of staff with responsibility for safeguarding and Child Protection issues.

The child will be fully supported throughout such disclosures. Clear communication will be given to the child so that they fully understand why confidentiality is being breached. Young Person and staff safety and welfare will be carefully monitored at this point and support given.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

We strive to make the RSE curriculum an inclusive one, appropriate and relevant to all Young People regardless of age, culture, gender, ability, disability, sexual orientation, religion, experiences, or family background. The RSE policy and curriculum reflects and is in line with the schools' equal opportunities policy.

All school staff ensure that the content, approach, resources and use of inclusive language reflect the diversity of the school community, and help all Young People feel valued and included. RSE strives to meet the needs of all Young People regardless of their developing sexuality and deals honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answers appropriate questions, and offers support. Bullying of all kinds is not tolerated and any instances are challenged and dealt with as part of our commitment to promoting inclusion, gender equality and preventing bullying.

Parents right to withdraw

Relationships Education and Health Education is a statutory subject however parents/carers do have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE (except for those parts included within the National Curriculum for Science).

We share with parents that the RSE curriculum helps us as a school to fulfil our statutory duty to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of their children,
- advance the 2010 Equality Act,
- encourage the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of Young People, ☑ foster British values, and
- prepare children and young people for the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities of adult life

Any parent/carer wishing to exercise the right to withdraw their child from sex education elements are invited to discuss this with the Head of Education and Learning in the first instance. Many concerns can be resolved with some explanation, modification or reassurance.

As stated in the DfE guidance 'Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education: FAQs - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)' From up to three terms before the child turns 16 'if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.' At this stage, the parent can no longer withdraw their child from Sex Education.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Education to ensure this policy is updated Annually, or as needed, to ensure compliance with changing guidance.

All amendments and revisions of this policy will be fully consulted on with parents/carers of registered pupils.