



St Mark’s C of E School

**Relationships Education Policy 2023**

*So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them*

**Genesis 1:27**

*I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness*

**John 10:10**

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| **Date ratified:** | June 2023 |
| **Review date:**  | June 2024 |
| **Signature:**  |  |

**Background**

**The Church of England’s Vision and Relationships Education**

The Vision contains four core strands:

* **Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills:** enabling discipline, confidence and delight in seeking wisdom and knowledge, and developing talents in all areas of life.
* **Educating for hope and aspiration:** enabling healing, repair and renewal, coping wisely when things go wrong, opening horizons and guiding people into ways of fulfilling them.
* **Educating for community and living well together:** a core focus on relationships, participation in communities and the qualities of character that enable people to flourish together.
* **Educating for dignity and respect:** the basic principle of respect for the value and preciousness of each person, treating each person as a unique individual of inherent worth.

Relationships Education promotes each of these four core strands through: the development of understanding which places our pupils in a position of strength; opening horizons ensuring that pupils are not oppressed by unhealthy relationships; enabling our whole school community to live well and disagree well together; and by ensuring that every member of the school community is respected and valued.

The colour coding throughout this policy is used to highlight the direct links with our approach to Relationships Education and the Church of England’s Vision for Education.

**Rationale**

In keeping with the Church of England’s vision and our own, we believe that all pupils have a right to an education which enables them to flourish and fulfil their potential, without fear, in a community where differences of lifestyle and opinion are treated with dignity and respect.

As a school, we understand that for pupils to flourish academically, their mental and emotional wellbeing is vital. We also recognise that in order to make our school a happy and nurturing learning environment and workplace for pupils and staff respectively, positive and healthy relationships between all members of our school community (including between pupils and adults) are important.

We also value the importance of working closely with parents and families and the essential role that families play in supporting our pupils to develop healthy relationships.

We welcome feedback and warmly invite suggestions on either the content of this policy (which will be taken into account when it is reviewed) or how the curriculum in any class may need to be adapted to take into account the temporary or permanent family circumstances of any of our pupils.

This policy is part of a suite of documents aimed at supporting our pupils’ emotional wellbeing, safety and personal development and promoting safe and healthy relationships and should be read in conjunction with our:

* Behaviour Policy;
* Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Procedures;
* Anti-Bullying Policy;
* Equality Information and Objectives;

**What is Relationships Education?**

Through our Relationships Education programme, pupils learn:

* to cherish themselves and others as unique and wonderfully made;
* to recognise what a healthy relationship looks like and how to form healthy relationships, ensuring respect and dignity for themselves and others;
* how to live well together, including behaving well towards others, disagreeing well, forgiving and repairing broken relationships;
* how to keep themselves and others safe;
* how to make sense of the world around them (including an online world and the changes to their bodies); and
* to develop the skills to express their own views and make their own informed decisions.

The focus of our teaching is on **family** (the importance and value of belonging to a loving family and the fact that families are all different); and **friendships** (the importance of having friends, knowing what it means to be a good friend, how to spot an issue and what to do about it, how to resolve issues and where to get help).

Much of our teaching is ‘on the spot’ either in the classroom or on the playground or lunch hall. Often the best Relationships Education is born out of reflecting on actual issues that have occurred and exploring together how to put them right or how we could do something differently going forwards.

Planned Relationships Education sessions which take account of the age of the pupils take place as part of our PSHE lessons and circle time.

We use the PSHE Association Question Based Model for teaching. Detailed information about the content of our Relationships Education programme in each year group can be found in an appendix to this policy.

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (“LGBT”) Relationships**

In keeping with our loving and inclusive Christian ethos, we believe that **every** pupil deserves life in all its fullness and is uniquely and wonderfully made. We teach our pupils to value and respect their peers regardless of their sexual or gender identity, and that of their parents, whatever it might be.

We expect (in line with our Behaviour Policy, our Anti-Bullying Policy and the Equality Act 2010) that **all** our pupils will feel valued and will be treated with dignity and respect by all other members of the school community.

To this end, as with all other areas of diversity, we celebrate the differences that make each of our school families unique. We help pupils to make sense of the ways in which their own family life is the same as, and different from, that of their friends and how to ask and answer questions sensitively and respectfully.

**Sex Education at our school**

**Our Curriculum**

We fully understand that parents and families often feel nervous about their child taking part in Sex Education lessons at school.

There are certain elements of Sex Education which, as a school, we are **legally** obliged to teach. These are set out in the National Curriculum for science (which is a statutory document) and involve teaching our pupils about the human body, including how it changes during puberty, the life cycles of animals and the processes of reproduction of animals.

At our school, we do not teach our pupils any Sex Education other than that prescribed in the science curriculum until Year 6 when we do deliver some Sex Education sessions in order to:

* Give pupils an opportunity to ask questions in a safe environment;
* Support the emotional development and wellbeing of our pupils who may be struggling to make sense of either the changes to their body, or of upsetting or distressing information they have received from friends, or read or seen online;
* Ensure that pupils understand, before they leave primary school, what is and is not acceptable in relation to how others treat their body, so that they are able to identify when someone is attempting to cross boundaries inappropriately;
* Make sure our pupils know where to get help if needed; and
* Ensure pupils understand the law about the acceptable use of social media and online relationships.

In our school, these sessions are delivered by the Class Teacher.

Parents will be informed in writing when these sessions will be taking place in order that they can support their child at home. Any parent wishing to discuss the content or materials used is warmly welcomed to make an appointment to do so with the class teacher.

**OR**

**Right to request the withdrawal of pupils from Sex Education sessions**

Pupils **cannot** be excused from Relationships Education. It is a compulsory subject.

Similarly, pupils **cannot** be excused from any elements of the science curriculum which deal with the human body or reproduction.

However, parents **can request** that their child be excused from Sex Education sessions which take place in Year 6. Any parent wishing to do so should put their request in writing to the Headteacher.

Whilst we respect the right of parents to make such a request, the school does not recommend that pupils miss these sessions. A lack of knowledge and understanding of sex makes it more likely that pupils will ask their friends and receive inaccurate information; turn to the internet and find information or images that are distressing; and potentially become prematurely sexually active.

Any parent requesting that their child is excused from the sessions will therefore be invited to attend a meeting with [the Headteacher] to ensure that they are certain of the implications for their child of missing these sessions.

**Pastoral Support for Pupils**

**Menstruation**

We understand that menstruation can be confusing or even alarming for girls if they are not prepared. Without proper teaching, girls are at risk of receiving further alarming or misleading advice from peers and others to whom they may understandably turn.

We therefore ensure that all female pupils in Year 4 are prepared for the onset of menstruation and, to uphold their dignity, know where in school they can find freely available sanitary products.

**Pupils with Special or Additional Needs**

The teaching of Relationships Education to some pupils with Special or Additional Needs will be particularly sensitive and will need to match carefully the age and understanding of the individual pupil.

Some pupils may need to be taught Relationships Education in a different way to the rest of their age group. As in all other cases of adapting the curriculum to meet an individual pupil’s needs, this will occur in consultation with the pupil’s family and will be regularly reviewed. Any parent with concerns about their child’s ability to engage with the planned curriculum should speak to the class teacher in the first instance.

**Monitoring**

Louise Hinton, Headteacher, is responsible for the Relationships Education and Sex Education curriculum at our school.

She monitors the effectiveness of the teaching of Relationships Education and Sex Education and is responsible for the monitoring of and review of this policy.

**Appendix**

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| **By the end of Primary School, pupils should know:** |
| **Mental wellbeing** | * that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability
* the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other’s lives
* that others’ families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children’s families are also characterised by love and care
* that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children’s security as they grow up
* that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong
* how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
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| **Internet safety and harms** | * that for most people the internet is an integral part of life and has many benefits
* about the benefits of rationing time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others’ mental and physical wellbeing
* how to consider the effect of their online actions on others and know how to recognise and display respectful behaviour online and the importance of keeping personal information private
* why social media, some computer games and online gaming, for example, are age restricted
* that the internet can also be a negative place where online abuse, trolling, bullying and harassment can take place, which can have a negative impact on mental health
* how to be a discerning consumer of information online including understanding that information, including that from search engines, is ranked, selected and targeted
* where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online.
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| **Physical health and fitness** | * the characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle
* the importance of building regular exercise into daily and weekly routines and how to achieve this; for example walking or cycling to school, a daily active mile or other forms of regular, vigorous exercise
* the risks associated with an inactive lifestyle (including obesity)
* how and when to seek support including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health.
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| **Healthy eating** | * what constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content)
* the principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals
* the characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health).
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| **Drugs, alcohol and tobacco** | * the facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use and drug-taking.
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| **Health and prevention** | * how to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss, or unexplained changes to the body
* about safe and unsafe exposure to the sun, and how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer
* the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and that a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn
* about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including regular check-ups at the dentist
* about personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and treated, and the importance of handwashing
* the facts and science relating to allergies, immunisation and vaccination.
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| **Basic first aid** | * how to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary
* concepts of basic first-aid, for example dealing with common injuries, including head injuries.
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| **Changing adolescent body** | * key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes
* about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.
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**Appendix: RSE Curriculum by year group**

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| **YEAR 1****Relationships****Unit 1**Ourselves and others; similarities and differences; individuality; our bodies**Key Question:**What is the same and different about us?**Relationships****Unit 2**Ourselves and others; people who care for us; groups we belong to; families**Key Question:**Who is special to us?**Health and Wellbeing****Unit 2**Keeping safe; people who help us**Key Question:**Who helps to keep us safe?**Living in the Wider World****Unit 2**How can we look after each other and the world | **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** what they like / dislike and are good at
* what makes them special and how everyone has different strengths
* how their personal features or qualities are unique to them
* how they are similar or different to others, and what they have in common
* to use the correct names for the main parts of the body, including external genitalia; and that parts of bodies covered with underwear are private
 |
| **Unit 2****Pupils learn:*** that family is one of the groups they belong to, as well as, for example, school, friends, clubs
* about the different people in their family / those that love and care for them
* what their family members, or people that are special to them, do to make them feel loved and cared for
* how families are all different but share common features – what is the same and different about them
* about different features of family life, including what families do / enjoy together
* that it is important to tell someone (such as their teacher) if something about their family makes them feel unhappy or worried
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| **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** who can help them in different places and situations; how to attract someone’s attention or ask for help; what to say
* how to respond to adults they don’t know
* what to do if they feel unsafe or worried for themselves or others; and the importance of keeping on asking for support until they are heard
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| **Unit 2****Pupils learn:*** how people grow and change and how people’s needs change as they grow from young to old.
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| **YEAR 2****Relationships****Unit 1**Friendship; feeling lonely; managing arguments**Key Question:**What makes a good friend?**Relationships****Unit 2**Behaviour; bullying; words and actions; respect for others**Key Question:**What is bullying?**Health and Wellbeing****Unit 1**Keeping safe; recognising risks; rules**Key Question**What helps us to stay safe? | **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** how to make friends with others
* how to recognise when they feel lonely and what they could do about it
* how people behave when they are being friendly and what makes a good friend
* how to resolve arguments that can occur in friendships
* how to ask for help if a friendship is making them unhappy
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| **Unit 2****Pupils learn:*** how words and actions can affect how people feel
* how to ask for and give/not give permission regarding physical contact and how to respond if physical contact makes them uncomfortable or unsafe
* why name-calling, hurtful teasing, bulling and deliberately excluding others is unacceptable
* how to respond if this happens in different situations
* how to report bullying or other hurtful behaviour, including online, to a trusted adult and the importance of doing so
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| **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** how to identify risky and potentially unsafe situations (in familiar and unfamiliar environments, including online) and take steps to avoid or remove themselves from them
* how to resist pressure to do something that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable, including keeping secrets
* how not everything they see online is true or trustworthy and that people can pretend to be someone they are not •
* how to tell a trusted adult if they are worried for themselves or others, worried that something is unsafe or if they come across something that scares or concerns them
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| **YEAR 3****Relationships****Unit 1**Friendship; making positive friendships, managing loneliness, dealing with arguments**Key Question:**How can we be a good friend?**Relationships****Unit 2**Families; family life; caring for each other**Key Question:**What are families like?**Health and Wellbeing****Unit 1**Keeping safe; at home and school; our bodies**Key Question:**What keeps us safe?**Living in the Wider World****Unit 1**Community; belonging to groups; similarities and differences; respect for others**Key Question:**What makes a community | **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** how friendships support wellbeing and the importance of seeking support if feeling lonely or excluded
* how to recognise if others are feeling lonely and excluded and strategies to include them
* how to build good friendships, including identifying qualities that contribute to positive friendships
* that friendships sometimes have difficulties, and how to manage when there is a problem or an argument between friends, resolve disputes and reconcile differences
* how to recognise if a friendship is making them unhappy, feel uncomfortable or unsafe and how to ask for support
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| **Unit 2****Pupils learn:*** how families differ from each other (including that not every family has the same family structure, e.g. single parents, same sex parents, step-parents, blended families, foster and adoptive parents)
* how common features of positive family life often include shared experiences, e.g. celebrations, special days or holidays
* how people within families should care for each other and the different ways they demonstrate this
* how to ask for help or advice if family relationships are making them feel unhappy, worried or unsafe
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| **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** that their body belongs to them and should not be hurt or touched without their permission; what to do and who to tell if they feel uncomfortable
* how to recognise and respond to pressure to do something that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable (including online)
 |
| **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** how they belong to different groups and communities, e.g. friendship, faith, clubs, classes/year groups
* what is meant by a diverse community; how different groups make up the wider/local community around the school
* how the community helps everyone to feel included and values the different contributions that people make

how to be respectful towards people who may live differently to them |
| **YEAR 4****Relationships****Unit 1**Respect for self and others; courteous behaviour; safety; human rights**Key Question:**How do we treat each other with respect?**Health and Wellbeing****Unit 3**Growing and changing; puberty**Key Question:**How will we grow and change?**Health and Wellbeing****Unit 3**Keeping safe; out and about; recognising and managing risks**Key Question:**How can we manage risks in different places? | **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** how people’s behaviour affects themselves and others, including online
* how to model being polite and courteous in different situations and recognise the respectful behaviour they should receive in return • about the relationship between rights and responsibilities
* about the right to privacy and how to recognise when a confidence or secret should be kept (such as a nice birthday surprise everyone will find out about) or not agreed to and when to tell (e.g. if someone is being upset or hurt)
* the rights that children have and why it is important to protect these
* that everyone should feel included, respected and not discriminated against; how to respond if they witness or experience exclusion, disrespect or discrimination
* how to respond to aggressive or inappropriate behaviour (including online and unwanted physical contact) – how to report concerns
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| **Unit 3****Pupils learn:*** about puberty and how bodies change during puberty, including menstruation and menstrual wellbeing, erections and wet dreams
* how puberty can affect emotions and feelings
* how personal hygiene routines change during puberty
* how to ask for advice and support about growing and changing and puberty
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| **Unit 2****Pupils will learn:*** how people can be influenced by their peers’ behaviour and by a desire for peer approval; how to manage this influence
* how people’s online actions can impact on other people
* how to keep safe online, including managing requests for personal information and recognising what is appropriate to share or not share online

how to report concerns, including about inappropriate online content and contact |
| **YEAR 5****Health and Well** **Unit 1**Identity; personal attributes and qualities; similarities and differences; individuality; stereotypes**Key Question:**What makes up our identity?**Relationships****Unit 1**Friendships; relationships; becoming independent; online safety**Key Question:**How can friends communicate safely? | **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** how to recognise and respect similarities and differences between people and what they have in common with others
* that there are a range of factors that contribute to a person’s identity (e.g. ethnicity, family, faith, culture, gender, hobbies, likes/dislikes)
* how individuality and personal qualities make up someone’s identity (including that gender identity is part of personal identity and for some people does not correspond with their biological sex)
* about stereotypes and how they are not always accurate, and can negatively influence behaviours and attitudes towards others
* how to challenge stereotypes and assumptions about others
 |
| **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** about the different types of relationships people have in their lives
* how friends and family communicate together; how the internet and social media can be used positively
* how knowing someone online differs from knowing someone face-to-face
* how to recognise risk in relation to friendships and keeping safe
* about the types of content (including images) that is safe to share online; ways of seeking and giving consent before images or personal information is shared with friends or family
* how to respond if a friendship is making them feel worried, unsafe or uncomfortable
* how to ask for help or advice and respond to pressure, inappropriate contact or concerns about personal safety
 |
| **YEAR 6****Relationships****Unit 1**Different relationships; changing and growing, adulthood, independence, moving to secondary school**Key Questions:**What will change as we become more independent?How do friendships change as we grow?**Health and Wellbeing****Unit 1**Looking after ourselves; growing up; becoming independent; taking more responsibility**Key Question:**How can we keep healthy as we grow?**Living in the Wider World**Media literacy and digital resilience; influences and decision making; online safety**Key Question:**How can the media influence people? | **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** that people have different kinds of relationships in their lives, including romantic or intimate relationships
* that people who are attracted to and love each other can be of any gender, ethnicity or faith; the way couples care for one another
* that adults can choose to be part of a committed relationship or not, including marriage or civil partnership
* that marriage should be wanted equally by both people and that forcing someone to marry against their will is a crime
* how puberty relates to growing from childhood to adulthood
* about the reproductive organs and process - how babies are conceived and born and how they need to be cared for
* that there are ways to prevent a baby being made
* how growing up and becoming more independent comes with increased opportunities and responsibilities
* how friendships may change as they grow and how to manage this
* how to manage change, including moving to secondary school; how to ask for support or where to seek further information and advice regarding growing up and changing
 |
| **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** how mental and physical health are linked
* how positive friendships and being involved in activities such as clubs and community groups support wellbeing
* how to make choices that support a healthy, balanced lifestyle including how to manage the influence of friends and family on health choices
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| **Unit 1****Pupils learn:*** how positive friendships and being involved in activities such as clubs and community groups support wellbeing
* that FGM is illegal and goes against human rights; that they should tell someone immediately if they are worried for themselves or someone else
 |