

Community Academies Trust
Birchwood Primary School Policy



Relationships Education Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy outlines the provision of Relationships Education at Birchwood, ensuring compliance with the 2014 National Curriculum, statutory guidance, and inspectorate expectations. Relationships Education is a statutory component of the curriculum, supporting pupils' personal development, safeguarding, and preparation for life in modern society. The policy reflects the requirements of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, DfE Statutory Guidance (2020), Equality Act 2010, and the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework. It aims to provide a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment, where pupils develop the knowledge, skills, and values needed for healthy relationships.

Relationships Education plays a fundamental part within our whole school ethos at Birchwood Primary School. The purpose of Relationships Education is to ensure that our children are safe, whilst equipping them with the skills, knowledge and values to create healthy and respectful relationships. Through providing high quality Relationships Education, we are upholding the ethos and values of our school and its commitment to the consideration and respect of equality and celebration of difference.

Children at Birchwood will learn about the characteristics of positive and respectful relationships (with the main focus being placed upon friendships, family relationships and relationships with other children and adults); this will also teach children the importance of relationships for mental health and wellbeing. As children at Birchwood get older, they will learn about online friendships and the necessary precautions to take when communicating with others online. At Birchwood, we believe

that all children and young people have a right to an inclusive and age-appropriate Relationships Education.

2. Aims

- To enable pupils to develop age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships, respect, and personal safety.
- To foster positive attitudes, empathy, and respect for others, including those with protected characteristics.
- Build a sense of self-esteem and self-worth.
- Explore and value their personal identity and the identities of others
- Explore a range of family structures, including LGBT+ families, single parent families and the many other family structures.
- Understand and make sense of the real-life issues they are experiencing in the world around them.
- To equip pupils with the skills to recognise and manage emotions, communicate effectively, and resolve conflicts.
- To promote understanding of consent, privacy, and personal boundaries, including online safety.
- To ensure Relationships Education is accessible, inclusive, and sensitive to the needs of all pupils.
- To support safeguarding by teaching pupils how to stay safe and seek help when needed.
- To engage parents and carers in the development and delivery of Relationships Education.

3. Statutory Requirements

- Relationships Education is statutory for all primary pupils, as per the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Content areas must include: families and people who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships, and being safe.
- The curriculum must comply with the DfE Statutory Guidance (2020), Equality Act 2010, SEND Code of Practice (2015), and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023.
- Schools must consult parents on the Relationships Education policy and provide the right to withdraw from sex education (not Relationships Education).
- Relationships Education must be inclusive, age-appropriate, and sensitive to pupils' backgrounds and needs.
- Policies and curriculum must be regularly reviewed and updated in line with statutory guidance.

4. Curriculum Coverage

Relationships Education at Birchwood covers the following broad areas:

- Understanding different types of families and the importance of stable, caring relationships.
- Building and maintaining caring friendships, including communication and conflict resolution.
- Developing respectful relationships, embracing diversity, and challenging stereotypes.
- Recognising and managing emotions, fostering emotional literacy and resilience.
- Understanding online relationships, digital safety, and responsible use of technology.
- Learning about consent, privacy, personal boundaries, and recognising unsafe situations.
- Knowing how to seek help, report concerns, and access support.
- Promoting equality, inclusion, and respect for all, regardless of background or belief.

Relationships Education will be delivered in Birchwood as part of our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all key

stages, using a spiral curriculum approach, and is supported through 'Circle Time' activity and discussion. It will be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way, using the correct medical terms where appropriate (for example, when teaching about the external body parts). It is also taught as part of our wider curriculum, whereby children will learn through the modelling of respectful relationships between adults and adults/adults and children and other, unplanned opportunities for discussion.

EYFS and Key Stage One

Throughout their first few years at Birchwood, children will be taught the importance of creating relationships by learning to play cooperatively and take turns with others. They will be taught to take account of one another's ideas and to show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; this will form the basis of nurturing positive relationships with adults and other children.

Children will go on to learn about different types of relationships and the importance of these on our lives; this will include how to identify and maintain positive relationships. Children will also learn about how to recognise and manage hurtful behavior and bullying, including an introduction to cyberbullying. Through the teaching of Protective Behaviours, children will recognise the difference between safe and unsafe feelings and how to respond to these feelings. They will also learn about the private parts of the body and how to respond when something/someone makes them feel uncomfortable.

Key Stage Two

Throughout Key Stage Two, this knowledge will be reinforced and applied to many different situations. The children will learn about more complex and mature issues as they move through the school.

Children will begin to learn about the importance of different types of relationships and to respect the similarities and differences between different people's relationships (including different types of families). They will delve deeper into the different types of bullying, including peer pressure and other hurtful behaviours such as stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. They will look more deeply into recognising and responding to unsafe relationships, both online and offline, and begin understanding the basic principles of boundaries and consent in an age-appropriate way. Teaching of Protective Behaviours will be continued throughout the school to ensure that children are aware of their rights and responsibilities and are able to recognise safe and unsafe behaviours.

Sex Education

Many aspects of sex education are complimented by our science curriculum where children learn about the main external body parts and changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty).

In the statutory Health Education curriculum, children learn about puberty and menstruation. We deliver content on menstruation from Year 5 so that girls can learn about menstruation in advance of them starting their first period.

In Year 6, our sex education programme builds upon the content already delivered through the Science and Health Education curriculum and is the foundation for helping children to stay safe. We recognise that some parents may be uncomfortable with their children receiving sex education in primary school; however, in our experience, children will naturally ask questions about sex and their bodies, and be curious about where they come from. We believe that it is safer and better for children to receive age appropriate and medically accurate information from trained teachers and from external visitors rather than learn inaccurate information through peers/online. We believe that sex education should allow children a safe space to ask the questions that they may have without shame or judgement.

Relationships Education is taught in line with government guidelines; therefore, parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from these lessons as all areas taught are relevant to the children and the changes that are happening to them as they grow up (taught in line with the science curriculum). We will take care to highlight lessons that we define as sex education so that we can respect the wishes of parents who have withdrawn their children from this content. Simultaneously, we will seek to nurture children's curiosity about the world around them, supporting their development and their respect for themselves and each other.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of RSE, it is our aim to encourage parents to see the value of sex education and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing. Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the headteacher to discuss their concerns. The headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum. If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this. We will automatically grant a parental request to withdraw their child from any sex education, other than as part of the Science or Health Education curriculum.

We will remind parents annually that the request to withdraw is still in place and invite them to confirm whether they want to continue this arrangement.

5. Curriculum Implementation

- Relationships Education at Birchwood covers the following broad areas:
- Understanding different types of families and the importance of stable, caring relationships.
- Building and maintaining caring friendships, including communication and conflict resolution.
- Developing respectful relationships, embracing diversity, and challenging stereotypes.
- Recognising and managing emotions, fostering emotional literacy and resilience.
- Understanding online relationships, digital safety, and responsible use of technology.
- Learning about consent, privacy, personal boundaries, and recognising unsafe situations.
- Knowing how to seek help, report concerns, and access support.
- Promoting equality, inclusion, and respect for all, regardless of background or belief.

Relationships Education is delivered at Birchwood through formal and discrete methods of teaching. Children will make links to Relationships Education through their themes and key driving texts. This will be planned for but will also be made up of regular, unplanned discussions to embed learning. Our Relationships Education programme will be rooted in our school's ethos and will therefore also be delivered and assessed through assemblies, student voice (such as the school council) and the school environment. There will also be dedicated curriculum time to ensure a planned, balanced and progressive delivery of Relationships Education is taught. Relationships Education will be delivered by a class teacher or teaching assistant.

Pupils will be given opportunities to ask questions during each Relationships Education lesson. We view questions as a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to explore natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships. All teaching at Birchwood takes place in a safe learning environment and is underpinned by our one school rule, 'Consideration and Respect'. All of the themes that are covered in Relationships Education are age-appropriate and are delivered by teaching staff in a child-friendly way. As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group. There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class. If questions arise that teachers are unsure will be covered within the statutory guidelines, then they should seek support from SLT or the PSHE coordinator. We believe that an open approach to

answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers. We believe exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in our Relationships Education curriculum. Importantly, we believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they are able to discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

From time-to-time, we may invite external experts and visitors to deliver some Relationships Education lessons. External visitors will be selected in order to enrich and supplement our Relationships Education by bringing particular skills, methods and expertise to the classroom and the whole school. External visitors may include school nurses, Loudmouth and the NSPCC. A teacher will always be present throughout these lessons so as to build on the pupil's learning after the session(s) as well as answer any questions the pupils may subsequently have. Any external visitors will be expected to comply with this policy and other related policies, including the school's confidentiality and child protection policy. We will also ensure that:

- There is appropriate planning, preparatory and follow up work for the session
- The visitor understands the cohort of children involved

6. Assessment

- Ongoing formative assessment is used, including observation, discussion, pupil self-assessment, and reflection.
- Evidence of progression is gathered through recorded work, pupil voice, and teacher assessment.
- Summative assessment is based on pupils' knowledge, understanding, and ability to apply skills in real-life contexts.
- Progress in Relationships Education is reported to parents and carers as part of regular school reporting.
- Assessment systems are inclusive and adapted for pupils with SEND.

Children will demonstrate their knowledge and ability in Relationships Education throughout verbal discussions, written work and their levels of questioning. Therefore, teachers will use a variety of assessment, including informal observational assessment alongside assessing written work in PSHE books. Teaching staff actively assess work and discussions and use this information to plan for future learning.

Teachers should use baseline assessments to ensure they understand the children's starting point and to use this to monitor progress throughout lessons and circle times. This could be done through a variety of techniques, such as pupil self-assessment at the beginning and end of a module of learning, a quiz or a mind map of what the children know. This is key in Relationships Education to ensure that lessons are pitched in an age-appropriate way.

Written and/or verbal feedback is given to the child to help guide his or her progress. At the end of each year, teachers assess pupil's progress in PSHE, which will include Relationships Education, and this is reported to parents through the end of year report.

The PSHE subject leader will also conduct monitoring and evaluation through 'Subject in Focus' – Observing lessons and circle times, pupil interviews and book looks to ensure that the PSHE curriculum that is being taught is meeting the needs of all pupils (including SEND and pupil premium children).

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Headteacher	- Overall responsibility for policy implementation, statutory compliance, and safeguarding.
PSHE/Relationships Lead	- Curriculum planning, staff training, monitoring and evaluation, resource selection.
Inclusion Lead	- Ensure accessibility and differentiation for SEND pupils, advise on inclusive practice.
Teachers	- Deliver Relationships Education, adapt teaching for pupil needs, assess progress, report concerns.
Support staff	- Assist in delivery, support individual pupils, contribute to safe classroom climate.
Parents	- Engage in consultation, support learning at home, communicate with school regarding concerns.
Pupils	- Participate actively, respect others, reflect on learning, raise concerns as needed.

8. Inclusion

- Relationships Education is accessible to all pupils, regardless of ability, background, or belief.
- Lessons are differentiated to support pupils with SEND, EAL, and other needs, in line with the SEND Code of Practice.
- Resources and teaching approaches reflect diversity and promote equality, challenging stereotypes and discrimination.
- The curriculum is sensitive to cultural, religious, and family backgrounds, ensuring respectful and age-appropriate delivery.
- Pupil voice is actively sought to ensure content is relevant and inclusive.
- Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure full participation and engagement.

9. Professional Development

- Training covers statutory requirements, safeguarding, inclusion, and effective pedagogical approaches.
- Staff are supported to develop confidence in handling sensitive topics and responding to pupil questions.
- Opportunities for sharing best practice and accessing external expertise are provided.
- Induction for new staff includes Relationships Education policy and curriculum.

Teachers should make use of the Protective Behaviours resources to support their teaching of the Relationships Education curriculum. There are also several resources and websites which will supplement teaching, such as the NSPCC, SEAL and PSHE Association resources, which staff will be regularly updated on. These will be clearly identified on the PSHE curriculum overview.

10. Inspectorate Expectations

- Relationships Education contributes to pupils' personal development, positive attitudes, and respect for others.
- Robust safeguarding systems are in place, with clear links between Relationships Education and safeguarding practice.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems demonstrate curriculum impact, progression, and pupil voice.
- Staff training and support are prioritised, ensuring effective delivery.

- Parental engagement and transparent communication are embedded within policy and practice.

11. Monitoring and Review

- The Relationships Education policy and curriculum are monitored and reviewed annually by the PSHE/Relationships Lead and senior leadership.
- Monitoring includes lesson observations, scrutiny of planning and resources, assessment data, and pupil/parent feedback.
- Areas for improvement are identified and addressed through action planning and staff development.
- Policy updates reflect changes in statutory guidance, best practice, and school context.
- Governors oversee policy implementation and review.

12. Links to Other Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- SEND Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Review Sheet

Please note any comments or suggested amendments on this sheet. You may also choose to complete your comments in confidence on a separate piece of paper. Please add your initial to any comments.
