



MERE SCHOOL

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Written By	Mr David Rich (Spring Term 2024)
Reviewed By	Mrs Julia Cole (Spring Term 2024), Mr David Rich (Summer Term 2025)
Current Approval / Last Reviewed	Summer 2025 (JC)
Next Planned Review Date	Autumn 2027
Statutory Status	Statutory – Compliant with KCSIE, DfE, and Ofsted requirements

1. Document Purpose and Definition of RSE

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is lifelong and involves the physical, moral, and emotional development of the child. It is about understanding the importance of stable and loving relationships and their positive impact on family life. We believe it is crucial that children are taught that relationships are founded on respect, love, and care, and that they should experience this as well as show this to others.

RSE is also about the age-appropriate teaching of sexual reproduction, sexual orientation, and sexual health, with an aim to help identify and combat discrimination. Effective RSE is a positive part of an inclusive and holistic Personal, Social, Health, and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum, which enables young people to mature, to build confidence and self-esteem, and to understand changes to their bodies and to their relationships (and the relationships between others) as they grow.

1.1 Why RSE Matters in Primary School

Relationships form an integral part of life, and understanding how to communicate effectively within a relationship is a vital life skill. We teach children about how relationships and friendships work on a daily basis and from an early age. It is also important that, from an early age, children understand that family life is important and that, despite the fact that in the modern world families are diverse, at the core of family life there should be stability, respect, love, and care.

RSE is vital because children can often learn about sex and puberty from a young age, even if they do not discuss it at school. Some of the information they acquire from peers, media, or online spaces can be incorrect, confusing, and frightening. Providing structured, factual, and supportive lessons ensures that children have a safe environment to acquire accurate information and resolve doubts.

1.2 Core Legal Definitions (DfE & Ofsted Compliance)

To ensure complete regulatory clarity, Mere School distinguishes clearly between the following three components of our curriculum:

- **Relationships Education (Statutory):** Compulsory for all primary pupils. It focuses on the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, including friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and adults, both online and offline. This is statutory and cannot be subject to parental withdrawal.
- **Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing / Health Education (Statutory):** Compulsory for all primary pupils. It teaches children about physical health and mental wellbeing, helping them make good decisions about their health, understand emotional wellbeing, and recognise the physical changes that occur during puberty (including menstruation). This is statutory and cannot be subject to parental withdrawal.
- **Sex Education (Non-Statutory for Primary):** In primary schools, this goes beyond statutory Relationships and Science national curriculum requirements, focusing specifically

on human reproduction and how babies are made. At Mere School, this is explicitly isolated to a single Year 6 lesson titled "Making babies". Parents hold a statutory right to request withdrawal from this specific non-statutory lesson.

2. Statutory Framework and National Compliance

This policy is written and maintained in strict accordance with the following UK statutory requirements and national guidelines:

- **The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019**, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**, which governs safeguarding duties and mandates that RSE must align with safeguarding policies to protect pupils from exploitation, abuse, and peer-on-peer harms.
- **The National Science Curriculum**, which covers biological aspects of life cycles, growth, and reproduction in plants and animals.
- **The Equality Act 2010**, which establishes legal protection against discrimination across protected characteristics.
- **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF)**, which evaluates how the school supports personal development, inclusivity, and spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development.

2.1 Integration with the Equality Act 2010

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Mere School ensures that pupils of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, and that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of boys or girls.

Furthermore, Mere School ensures that all gender-variant pupils, or the children of transgender parents, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils. There are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of such pupils. For example, it is unlawful discrimination for a teacher to single out a pupil undergoing gender reassignment or identify them for different treatment, or to cause them embarrassment in front of the class because of this characteristic.

Mere School has a fundamental responsibility for the welfare of the children in its care and adheres to curriculum guidance. School teachers are in a very influential position, and their actions and responsibilities are bound by much wider duties than this legislation. A teacher's ability to express views on a subject in question should not extend to allowing them to discriminate against others in the school environment.

2.2 Inclusion of Faith Backgrounds and Religious Beliefs

A deep understanding of pupils' faith backgrounds and positive relationships between the school and local faith communities help to create a constructive and respectful context for the teaching of RSE. At Mere School, the religious background of all pupils is systematically taken into account when planning teaching, ensuring that the topics included in the core content are appropriately, sensitively, and respectfully handled.

3. Safeguarding, Online Safety, and Handling Disclosures

Mere School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of its pupils, and Relationships and Sex Education is a vital element of this commitment. RSE equips pupils with the terminology and self-awareness required to identify inappropriate behaviour, understand boundaries, and seek help if they are in distress or experiencing harm.

3.1 Handling Disclosures and Safe Classroom Environments

Because RSE deals with sensitive personal topics (such as family, friendships, body changes, and boundaries), it can occasionally trigger disclosures from pupils regarding abuse, neglect, exploitation, or online harms. To ensure safety, all staff must adhere to the following protocols:

- **Establish Clear Ground Rules:** At the beginning of every RSE lesson, teachers must establish clear, non-judgmental classroom ground rules (e.g., using 'distancing' techniques where pupils talk about hypothetical situations rather than personal experiences, respecting others' privacy, and using anatomically correct terminology).
- **Do Not Promise Confidentiality:** Teachers must never promise complete confidentiality to a child. If a child makes a disclosure that suggests they may be at risk of harm, the teacher must explain calmly that they have a duty to pass this information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- **Immediate Safeguarding Referral:** If any disclosure or concern arises during an RSE lesson, staff must immediately document the interaction and refer the concern directly to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

3.2 Online Safety and Digital Boundaries

Through our PSHE and RSE curriculum, integrated with our Internet Safety framework, children are taught vital strategies to keep themselves safe online and in the real world. We teach pupils about the risks of peer pressure online, online exploitation, cyberbullying, and how media manipulation can distort perceptions of healthy relationships. Children are taught how to recognise online risks, protect their privacy, and identify trusted adults to contact if they encounter harmful content or behaviour.

4. Mere School RSE Curriculum Framework

RSE at Mere School is taught through the delivery of the **SCARF (Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience, Friendship)** resources from Coram Education. Respect for ourselves and for others, which is the basis for any positive relationship, is a core value at our school and is modelled by staff on a daily basis. Through our curriculum, children build up the skills needed to resist peer pressure, identify and avoid risky behaviour, and actively combat discrimination.

The development of curriculum topics across year groups is structured as follows:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS / Year R):** Children learn about animal babies, where they come from, human life stages, and caring for physical bodies.
- **Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2):** Children learn the correct names for body parts and their basic functions, and understand the concept of personal privacy ("Keeping privates private") and physical boundaries.
- **Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4):** Children learn about body spaces, personal privacy, secrets versus surprises, and prepare for the physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty.
- **Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 & 6):** Children explore changing bodies, emotional feelings, and manage peer/online pressures. In Year 6, children cover "Making babies", which is our dedicated, non-statutory Sex Education lesson focusing on human reproduction.

4.1 Year-by-Year SCARF Curriculum Content Map

The table below details the specific units taught across each year group under our SCARF program. All puberty and body change lessons in Years 4 and 5 are compulsory under the statutory Health Education framework, while the Year 6 "Making babies" unit is classified as non-statutory Sex Education:

Year Group	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
Year R	Seasons	Life stages - plants, animals, humans	Life Stages: Human life stage - who will I be?	Where do babies come from?	Getting bigger	Me and my body - girls and boys
Year 1	Healthy me	Then and now	Taking care of a baby	Who can help? (2)	Surprises and secrets	Keeping privates private
Year 2	A helping hand	Sam moves away	Haven't you grown!	My body, your body	Respecting privacy	Some secrets should never be kept

Year Group	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
Year 3	Relationship tree	Body space	None of your business!	Secret or surprise?	My changing body	Basic first aid
Year 4	Moving house	My feelings are all over the place!	All change! Preparing for changes at puberty	Secret or surprise?	Together	[N/A - Unit Complete]
Year 5	How are they feeling?	Taking notice of our feelings	Dear Ash	Growing up and changing bodies	Changing bodies and feelings	Help! I'm a teenager - get me out of here!
Year 6	I look great!	Media manipulation	Pressure online	Helpful or unhelpful? Managing change	Is this normal?	Making babies (Non-Statutory)

4.2 Links with the Science Curriculum

Through our Science curriculum, children learn about reproduction as a natural part of a life cycle, focusing on the reproduction of plants and animals. The biological facts of human growth and development, including puberty and basic anatomy, are aligned between our PSHE/SCARF and Science curriculums to ensure consistency and age-appropriate progress. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from National Science Curriculum requirements.

5. Inclusion, Accessibility, and Special Educational Needs (SEND)

In line with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, Mere School is committed to ensuring that the RSE curriculum is accessible and highly effective for all pupils, including those with SEND. We recognise that pupils with SEND can be more vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and peer pressure, making high-quality, structured, and accessible Relationships Education particularly vital.

To ensure RSE lessons are inclusive and tailored, Mere School rejects ad-hoc teacher discretion in favour of systematic, structured planning and differentiation. Staff will implement the following evidence-based support mechanisms:

- **Collaboration with the SENDCo:** Teachers will consult the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo) to review pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans to tailor delivery to specific cognitive, communication, or emotional needs.

- **Visual and Multi-Sensory Resources:** Use of simplified language, visual prompts, social stories, and concrete examples to explain abstract social and physical concepts, such as personal boundaries and body changes.
- **Pre-Teaching of Key Terminology:** Providing key vocabulary (such as anatomical terms) to SEND pupils before the whole-class lesson to build confidence and ensure familiarity.
- **Adaptive and Scaffolded Instruction:** Scaffolding learning tasks and allowing flexible methods for pupils to demonstrate understanding, ensuring that physical or communication barriers do not restrict learning.

6. Parental Consultation and the Right of Withdrawal

Mere School deeply values the partnership between home and school. The governing body makes a written statement of RSE available to parents, which is drawn up in consultation with school staff and the headteacher. The headteacher ensures that RSE is delivered in a way that teaches pupils about the nature of marriage and its importance to family life and for bringing up children, while remaining highly sensitive, respectful, and inclusive of diverse and different family situations.

Parents have been consulted about our RSE policy and are kept informed about the specific curriculum content taught in each year group. To ensure compliance with DfE regulations, the school maintains the following legal guidelines regarding the right to withdraw:

- **Relationships Education (Statutory):** *Parents do not* have the right to withdraw their children from Relationships Education. These lessons (covering friendships, families, online safety, and physical boundaries) are compulsory under UK law.
- **Physical Health and Wellbeing / Puberty (Statutory):** *Parents do not* have the right to withdraw their children from lessons on physical health, mental wellbeing, or the physical and emotional changes of puberty (including menstruation) taught under statutory Health Education.
- **National Science Curriculum (Statutory):** *Parents do not* have the right to withdraw their children from biological science lessons covering life cycles, plant/animal reproduction, and human growth.
- **Sex Education (Non-Statutory):** *Parents do have the right* to request that their child be withdrawn from the single non-statutory Sex Education lesson at Mere School, which is the Year 6 "Making babies" unit.

6.1 Procedure for Requesting Withdrawal from Sex Education

If a parent wishes to request that their child be withdrawn from the Year 6 "Making babies" lesson, they must follow this formal process:

- **Step 1: Written Submission:** The parent must submit a written request addressed to the Headteacher, clearly stating their desire to withdraw their child from the non-statutory Sex Education lesson.

- **Step 2: Meeting with the Headteacher:** The Headteacher will invite the parents to a meeting to discuss their request. The purpose of this meeting is to explore the parent's concerns, explain the educational and protective benefits of the curriculum, detail the specific lesson content, and outline how the child will be safely and respectfully supervised in another classroom during the lesson.
- **Step 3: Determination and Supervision:** Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher will respect the parental request. The school will ensure that the withdrawn child receives appropriate, purposeful, and supervised learning in another class for the duration of that specific lesson.

7. Roles, Responsibilities, and Monitoring

Clear accountability and regular monitoring are essential to maintain high-quality delivery and ensure full compliance with Ofsted and DfE standards. The distribution of responsibility is as follows:

- **The Governing Body:** Responsible for holding the school leadership to account, ensuring this policy is reviewed regularly, and ensuring that RSE is delivered in accordance with statutory guidelines and the school's wider legal duties.
- **The Headteacher:** Responsible for the overall implementation of this policy, managing parental withdrawal requests, ensuring staff have access to high-quality training, and ensuring that the curriculum is balanced, inclusive, and safe.
- **The PSHE Subject Leader:** Responsible for the operational monitoring and evaluation of RSE at Mere School. This includes leading the curriculum design, supporting teaching staff, and monitoring quality. Monitoring is done through talking to children, reviewing teaching plans, and looking at work produced by children during RSE/PSHE lessons. Feedback is used to continuously refine delivery and report back to the leadership team.
- **Teaching Staff:** Responsible for establishing safe, respectful, and inclusive classroom environments; delivering the SCARF curriculum in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner; adapting materials for SEND pupils; and immediately referring safeguarding concerns or disclosures to the DSL.