

# RSE Curriculum: Framework of Objectives

## Relationships Education (Primary)

- ▶ The focus in primary school should be on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, relationships with other children and with adults.
- ▶ This starts with pupils being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. From the beginning of primary school, building on early education, pupils should be taught how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving and the concept of personal privacy. Establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact are the forerunners of teaching about consent, which takes place at secondary.
- ▶ Respect for others should be taught in an age-appropriate way, in terms of understanding one's own and others' boundaries in play, in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources and so on.
- ▶ From the beginning, teachers should talk explicitly about the features of healthy friendships, family relationships and other relationships, which young children are likely to encounter. Drawing attention to these in a range of contexts should enable pupils to form a strong early understanding of the features of relationships that are likely to lead to happiness and security. This will also help them to recognise any less positive relationships when they encounter them.
- ▶ The principles of positive relationships also apply online, especially as, by the end of primary school, many children will already be using the Internet. When teaching relationships content, teachers should address online safety and appropriate behaviour in a way that is relevant to pupils' lives. Teachers should include content on how information and data is shared and used in all contexts, including online; for example, sharing pictures, understanding that many websites are businesses and how sites may use information provided by users in ways they might not expect.
- ▶ Teaching about families requires sensitive and well-judged teaching based on knowledge of pupils and their circumstances. Families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children. (Families can include, for example, single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers, among other structures.) Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances and needs, to reflect sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them, e.g. looked after children or young carers.
- ▶ A growing ability to form strong and positive relationships with others depends on the deliberate cultivation of character traits and positive personal attributes (sometimes referred to as 'virtues') in the individual. In a school-wide context, which encourages the development and practice of resilience and other attributes, this includes character traits, such as helping pupils to believe they can achieve, persevere with tasks, work towards long-term rewards and continue despite setbacks. Alongside understanding the importance of self-respect and self-worth, pupils should develop personal attributes including honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice. This can be achieved in a variety of ways including by providing planned opportunities for young people to undertake social action, active citizenship and voluntary service to others locally or more widely.
- ▶ Relationships Education also creates an opportunity to enable pupils to be taught about positive emotional and mental wellbeing, including how friendships can support mental wellbeing.
- ▶ Through Relationships Education (and RSE), schools should teach pupils the knowledge they need to recognise and to report abuse, including emotional, physical and sexual abuse. In primary schools, this can be delivered by focusing on boundaries and privacy, ensuring young people understand that they have rights over their own bodies. This should also include understanding boundaries in friendships with peers and also in families and with others, in all contexts, including online. Pupils should know how to report concerns and seek advice when they suspect or know that something is wrong. At all stages, it will be important to balance teaching children about making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online) whilst being clear it is never the fault of a child who is abused and why victim blaming is always wrong. These subjects complement Health Education and, as part of a comprehensive programme and whole-school approach, this knowledge can support safeguarding of children.

## By the end of primary school:

### Families and people who care for me

#### Pupils should know:

- 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.

### Caring friendships

#### Pupils should know:

- how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure and how people choose and make friends;
- the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties;
- that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others and do not make others feel lonely or excluded;
- that most friendships have ups and downs and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened and that resorting to violence is never right;
- how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.

### Respectful relationships

#### Pupils should know:

- the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs;
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships;
- the conventions of courtesy and manners;
- the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness;
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority;
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help;
- what a stereotype is and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive;
- the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

## Online relationships

### Pupils should know:

- that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not;
- that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous;
- the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact and how to report them;
- how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met;
- how information and data is shared and used online.

## Being safe

### Pupils should know:

- what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context);
- about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults, including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe;
- that each person's body belongs to them; the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe, physical, and other, contact;
- how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know;
- how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult;
- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others and to keep trying until they are heard;
- how to report concerns or abuse and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so;
- where to get advice, e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

## Sex Education (Primary)

- ▶ The Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools. Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools and the content set out in this guidance therefore focuses on Relationships Education.
- ▶ Many primary schools already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so, although it is not a requirement.
- ▶ Where a maintained primary school chooses to teach aspects of sex education (which go beyond the national curriculum for science), the school must set this out in their policy and all schools should consult with parents on what is to be covered. Primary schools that choose to teach sex education must allow parents a right to withdraw their children. Unlike sex education in RSE at secondary, in primary schools, headteachers must comply with a parent's wish to withdraw their child from sex education beyond the national curriculum for science.

## Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing: Primary

- ▶ The focus in primary school should be on teaching the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. Teachers should be clear that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.
- ▶ This starts with pupils being taught about the benefits and importance of daily exercise, good nutrition and sufficient sleep, giving pupils the language and knowledge to understand the normal range of emotions that everyone experiences. This should enable pupils to articulate how they are feeling, develop the language to talk about their bodies, health and emotions and judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate for the situations that they experience.
- ▶ Teachers should go on to talk about the steps pupils can take to protect and support their own and others' health and wellbeing, including simple self-care techniques, personal hygiene, prevention of health and wellbeing problems and basic first aid.
- ▶ Emphasis should be given to the positive two-way relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing and the benefits to mental wellbeing of physical exercise and time spent outdoors.
- ▶ Pupils should also be taught the benefits of hobbies, interests and participation in their own communities. This teaching should make clear that people are social beings and that spending time with others, taking opportunities to consider the needs of others and practising service to others, including in organised and structured activities and groups (for example, the scouts or girl guide movements), are beneficial for health and wellbeing.
- ▶ Pupils should be taught about the benefits of rationing time spent online and the risks of excessive use of electronic devices. In later primary school, pupils should be taught why social media, computer games and online gaming have age restrictions and should be equipped to manage common difficulties encountered online.
- ▶ A firm foundation in the benefits and characteristics of good health and wellbeing will enable teachers to talk about isolation, loneliness, unhappiness, bullying and the negative impact of poor health and wellbeing.

## By the end of primary school:

## Mental wellbeing

## Pupils should know:

- that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health;
- that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations;
- how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings;
- how to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate;
- the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, voluntary and service-based activity on mental wellbeing and happiness;
- simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests;
- isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for children to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support;
- that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing;
- where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online);
- it is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough.

## Internet safety and harms

## Pupils should know:

- 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.

<p><b>Physical health and fitness</b></p>	<p><b>Pupils should know:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• the risks associated with an inactive lifestyle (including obesity);</li> <li>• how and when to seek support, including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Healthy eating</b></p>	<p><b>Pupils should know:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content);</li> <li>• the principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals;</li> <li>• 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).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Drugs, alcohol and tobacco</b></p>	<p><b>Pupils should know:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use and drug-taking.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health and prevention</b></p>	<p><b>Pupils should know:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss, or unexplained changes to the body;</li> <li>• about safe and unsafe exposure to the sun and how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer;</li> <li>• the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and that a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn;</li> <li>• about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including regular check-ups at the dentist;</li> <li>• about personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and treated and the importance of handwashing;</li> <li>• the facts and science relating to allergies, immunisation and vaccination.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Basic first aid</b></p>	<p><b>Pupils should know:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary;</li> <li>• concepts of basic first-aid, for example, dealing with common injuries, including head injuries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Changing adolescent body</b></p>	<p><b>Pupils should know:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes;</li> <li>• about menstrual wellbeing, including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.</li> </ul>