

# HOWITT PRIMARY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

*Embark Multi Academy Trust*



**Relationships and Health Education Policy**  
**May 2025**

# Relationships and Health Education (RHE) Policy

## Why Do We Teach Relationships and Health Education?

Our Howitt Primary Community School RHE policy is in line with current regulations from the Department of Education (DfE) on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019). Relationships Education and Health Education are taught in this school as statutory subjects. Elements of sex education, though non-statutory, are also part of an integrated PSHE programme of work. For the purposes of this policy we will refer to Relationships Education and Sex Education as combined subjects, as any learning about the physical and sexual aspects of growing up is taught in the context of positive healthy relationships.

Relationships and Health Education make a significant contribution to our school's legal duties to

- prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life
- promote the spiritual, moral, social cultural mental and physical development of pupils

*It is taught in the context of the four core beliefs of the Embark Academy Trust: Family, Integrity, Teamwork and Success.*

Relationships and Health Education is defined by the PSHE Association as learning about the emotional, social, cultural and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, human sexuality and sexual health', diversity and personal identity. **This content is delivered in an age appropriate way in our school with regard to the age and stage of pupils. RHE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. RHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.**

The aim of Relationships and Health Education in our school is to equip children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing. We recognise the central importance of relationships in supporting children's and young people's mental health and wellbeing, academic achievement and future success. We aim to put in the key building blocks of healthy respectful relationships, focussing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online. Our programme also aims to support pupils in their personal development with regard to attributes such as kindness, integrity, generosity and honesty. These approaches support the wider work of building resilience in our pupils.

At Howitt Primary Community School we deliver age-appropriate relationship education as an integrated part of our PSHE programme. We recognise the prevalence of information and attitudes about relationships and health that children and young people are exposed to and aim to provide an environment where they can receive reliable information about their bodies, and feel comfortable to ask questions, rather than turn to inappropriate sources. We take a person's rights- based approach to relationships and health education.

We focus on attitudes, values and skills as well as knowledge and understanding. This will include developing self-esteem, the skills to manage relationships and most importantly keeping themselves safe in all of their relationships.

At Howitt Primary Community School we recognise the impact of social media, the media and the digital world on our children and young people. We aim to deliver an RHE programme that recognises and addresses this to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves and their personal information safe.

## **What does our RHE Curriculum Include?**

The DfE recognises 5 elements to Relationships Education. These are:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

In key stage 1 (age 5-7) pupils will learn about recognising, naming and managing their emotions; what makes them special; what makes a good friend; how to be kind to others; what's special about them and their families; how families are different; life cycles; changes and how they have changed since babyhood; how boys and girls bodies are different; the correct names for sexual body parts; that some parts of their body are private and how to ask for help if they are worried or concerned.

In Lower Key Stage 2 (age 7-9) pupils will learn about changes in friendships, relationships and families; how to be a good friend online and offline; managing conflict in friendships; how and why their bodies are changing; staying safe online; about gender stereotypes and their impact; about feelings and how to cope with them; that a male and a female are needed to make a baby; what a baby needs, about privacy, boundaries and secrets and who to talk to if they feel anxious or unhappy.

In Upper Key Stage 2 ( age 9-11) pupils will learn about the important relationships in their life; about how to show love to others; the different kinds of families and partnerships; about marriage and stable loving relationships and their importance for having babies and bringing up children; how to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships; the different types of bullying, why they are unacceptable and how to respond; the physical and emotional changes in puberty, including menstruation, and how to cope with them; how babies are conceived, how they develop and are born and the impact of social media on self-esteem, body image, health and safety and ways to manage this.

Some elements of sex education are statutory. Learning about 'the changing adolescent body' is part of statutory Health Education. Pupils will learn key facts about puberty including physical and emotional changes, about menstruation and the key facts about the life cycle.

National Curriculum science is also statutory. This includes:

### **Key Stage 1**

- Identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense.
- That animals, including humans, have offspring that grow into adults.

### **Key Stage 2**

- Describe the differences in the life cycle of a mammal, an amphibian, an insect and a bird.
- Describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals.
- Describe the changes as humans develop to old age.
- Recognise the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle on the way their bodies function.

## **Equality**

Howitt Primary Community School delivers RHE with regards to the Equality Act 2010 and observance of the protected characteristics of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership and sexual orientation. We recognise that children have varying needs regarding RHE depending on their circumstances and background. The school believes that all people should have access to RHE that is relevant to their particular needs. To achieve this, the school's approach to RHE recognises that:

- Girls tend to have a greater access to RHE than boys through the media and at home. We will consider the particular needs of boys, as well as girls, and use approaches that will actively engage them. We shall also be proactive in combating sexism, misogyny, sexualised behaviour and sexist bullying. We will foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls.
- Some pupils may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) that result in particular RHE needs at times which we will support. It may also mean that they have difficulty accessing the RHE curriculum. We will ensure that RHE is accessible to all pupils through high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised. We will also be mindful of preparing for adulthood outcomes as set out in the SEND code of practice when teaching these subjects to those with SEND and we will consult parents accordingly.
- Different ethnic cultural and religious groups may have different attitudes and beliefs with regard to RHE. The school will consult pupils and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for and understanding of the views of different ethnic, cultural and religious groups in line with safeguarding and school's statutory duty to keep pupils safe and deliver certain elements of the statutory RHE curriculum.

- These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life. We recognise that our pupils may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. We will take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of pupils based on their home circumstances and deliver the curriculum sensitively and inclusively.
- Our approach to RHE will reflect this and teaching will be sensitive and age appropriate both in content and approach. This content will be integrated into the programme rather than as a stand-alone lesson or unit. We will actively tackle homophobic bullying and attitudes.

## **How is RHE Provided?**

1. This school has a caring ethos that models and supports positive relationships between all members of the school community.
2. Within the taught, age-appropriate, spiral RHE programme within Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE).
3. Within Science as stipulated by the national curriculum.
4. Through other curriculum areas for example English, drama, computing etc.
5. Through assemblies.
6. Through pastoral support, our family liaison officer and nurture provision.
7. By the provision of appropriate leaflets and other information sources.
8. Via targeted intervention, where appropriate, with vulnerable individuals.
9. Delivery in response to incidents.
10. Pupils may also receive stand-alone health education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

## **Teaching Methods, Resources, Training and Monitoring**

All the following elements of teaching methods, resources, training and monitoring are essential elements in providing quality RHE.

### **A Safe Learning Environment**

In order for PSHE or RHE to be conducted safely the following will be in place:

- Group agreements or ground rules are negotiated, explained and referred to wherever appropriate.
- No one in the classroom will be expected to answer a personal question.
- Distancing techniques such as the use of scenarios, will be used to help to keep pupils safe. There will be no need for anyone to discuss their own personal issues.
- Confidentiality will be clearly explained. Pupils will understand how disclosures will be handled.
- Pupils will be expected to engage and listen during lessons, however it is accepted that sometimes it is inappropriate for them to be expected to take part in the discussion.
- In most cases, the correct names for body parts will be used.
- The meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.
- Care will be taken not to use materials or approaches that may trigger trauma or distress. Pupils at risk will be identified and arrangements made for them to access the learning in a comfortable way.
- Signposting to sources of support when dealing with sensitive issues

## **Teaching and Learning Methods**

Teaching and learning best practice will be applied. Active learning methods that support participation and encourage reflection will be used including group work, talking, negotiation and using thinking skills

## **Asking and Answering Questions**

Teachers will attempt to answer pupils' questions and concerns in a sensitive, age and development appropriate manner. Individual teachers will use their skill and discretion in these situations, and if necessary, refer to the Headteacher and PSHE coordinator for advice and support.

Teachers will apply the following principles:

1. Clear guidance will be established about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting-group agreement/ground rules will help to achieve this.
2. If a pupil's question is inappropriate to address the whole class, the teacher will acknowledge the question and attend to it later on an individual basis.
3. Personal questions should be referred to the ground rules/group agreement.
4. Teachers will set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that pupils discuss issues in a way which encourages thoughtful participation.
5. If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk in any way, including sexual abuse or exploitation, the usual safeguarding procedures will be followed.

## **Groupings**

RHE takes place within mixed gender classes or single gender groups as deemed appropriate and relevant with the pupils' usual teacher. There may be times when choosing particular mixes of genders may be useful. Although separated genders may have different activities on occasions, the messages and information they receive will be consistent. It is important that genders learn about each other's changes etc. It is also important to note that at times, friendship groupings may be the safest way for pupils to discuss an issue. It will be left to the teacher's discretion to make these decisions.

## **Visitors**

A visitor can enrich, but not replace, the RHE curriculum. Care is taken to ensure that the visitor's contribution fits with our planned programme of work and policy, and that the content is age appropriate and accessible for the pupils. It is particularly useful when visitors have expertise and/or provide a service to pupils. Please see the External Contributors Policy for the best practice in this context.

## **Resources**

Teaching resources will be selected on the basis of their appropriateness to pupils and their impact. Care will be taken not to use materials or have discussions that could be 'instructional' e.g. regarding self-harm.

## **Continuity, Progression and Assessment**

Howitt Primary Community School has the same high standards of the quality of pupils' learning in RHE as in other curriculum areas. RHE will be delivered through a sequenced planned programme of work. Continuity and progression is generated through the adoption of a whole school approach to the planning and delivery of outcomes covering knowledge, skills and understanding. This is developed in response to the need's assessment of pupils' existing knowledge, experience and understanding.

Pupils' existing knowledge needs to be the starting point for all RHE work. Assessments will be built into some lesson planning as each group may have different knowledge, experience and understanding and lesson planning will reflect this. Baseline and formative assessments will contribute to the effective delivery of RHE

The elements of RHE that form part of the science curriculum are assessed in accordance with the requirements of the national curriculum. Learning from other elements of RHE is assessed as part of the PSHE provision and builds on existing school systems.

## **Parental engagement in RHE**

We recognise the prime role of parents/carers in the development of their child's understanding about relationships and sex. We work in active partnership with parents/carers in the development and review of RHE. The school will ensure that parents/carers are: made aware of the school's approach and rationale for RHE through the policy; involved in the review of the RHE policy; made aware of the school's PSHE curriculum; and encourage to support their child's learning at home through shared learning activities, if appropriate. Resources are available for parents/carers to borrow, to reinforce learning at home and to support them in managing conversations with their children on these issues.

Parents/carers have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated sex education lessons delivered outside the science curriculum. They do not have a right to withdraw their children from those aspects of RHE that are taught in national curriculum science, Relationships Education or Health Education.

If a parent/carer has any concerns about the RHE provision, we will take time to address their concerns and allay any fears they may have. If parents/carers decide to withdraw their child, we will work with them and their child to explore possible alternative provision. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

## **Personnel and Training**

Our PSHE coordinators (Mrs Rhodes and Mrs Payler) are regularly trained and updated in this fast-moving subject area. They are responsible for overseeing RHE provision.

RHE is delivered by class teachers. To ensure quality delivery of RHE, staff have appropriate and regular training to keep them updated. The school is committed to ensuring that everyone involved with teaching, or supporting the teaching of RHE receives appropriate and ongoing professional development in order to maintain a whole school consistency and high standards for the pupils in our care.

All staff will be made aware of any new changes to the RHE policy.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The programme is regularly evaluated by the PSHE coordinator. This takes place through a variety of methods, including learning walks, observation, monitoring of books and pupil feedback. The views of the pupils and teachers who deliver the programme, will be used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis. Assessment is built into the lessons and will also inform any changes to the curriculum.

## **Consultation, Policy Development and Review**

In order for everyone to be consulted effectively, it may be necessary to ensure that governors and parents receive awareness training and/or information about RHE on occasions.

This policy document was produced in consultation with the entire school community, including pupils, parents, school staff and governors. This policy has been approved by governors. This document is freely available to the entire school community. It has also been made available on the website and is signposted by the school newsletter. It will be reviewed on a two year basis.

### **Policy Links**

PSHE

Drugs Education

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Confidentiality

Science

External Contributors

Anti-Bullying

Emotional Health and Well-Being

Online Safety

# Howitt Primary Community School

## Appendix 1: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RHE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent/carer		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent/carer signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parent/carer	