RSE Statement of Intent

Rationale

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

'To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.'

(Department for Education, 2019: p8)

Young people with learning difficulties have increased vulnerability to exploitation. It is therefore vital that we teach our children and young people how to recognise and deal with problems they may face both now and in their futures.

What is Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)?

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of healthy relationships, in their various guises, sexuality and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity.

RSE equips young people with essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline. It involves acquiring information, knowing the law, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

The term relationships and sex education (RSE) is used in this policy to stress that our approach goes beyond provision of biological information to also focus on clarifying

attitudes and values, and developing self-esteem and the skills to manage and maintain relationships.

Principles and Values

At Next Steps Education Ltd we believe that RSE should:

• Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life.

• Encourage every student to contribute to our community and aims to support each individual as they grow and learn.

• Be set within the wider organisation context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.

• Encourage students and tutors to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure.

• The important values are love, respect and care for each other.

• Aim to reflect topics neutrally and without judgment.

• Uphold an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.

• Recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents and students, consulting them about conversations that have come up in sessions. Additional information for parents is included towards the end of this policy.

• Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

• We support students to be aware of genders and gender identification.

Aims of RSE at Next Steps Education Ltd

We aim to enable our children and young people to build safe, healthy and meaningful relationships that are well managed and maintained. We hope to do so by (when appropriate) providing balanced, factual and non-biased information about relationships, reproduction and wider contexts including emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions for a range of topics.

• Encourage awareness of emotions and how they relate to behaviour of self and others.

• Encourage positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.

• Encourage awareness of the differing nature and levels of relationships and the codes of conduct relating to them.

• Encourage an awareness of different 'life choices' with regard to transitions from school and home in relation to the development of relationships as part of a wider context.

• Encourage awareness of the physical self, how it functions and how changes occur over time.

• Encourage practical strategies for self-management of body actions such as menstruation, puberty and related physical changes.

• Encourage understanding of how physical changes can affect emotional responses (female & male hormonal changes) and to help pupils to self-manage these.

• Encourage developing awareness of codes of conduct governing sexual expression & sexuality, particularly in relation to understanding the concepts and implications of 'public' & 'private' behaviours.

• Help pupils to develop strategies for 'keeping safe' and for protecting themselves against exploitation or abuse.

• Encourage having an understanding of the physical aspects of reproduction, contraception and sexual health as appropriate to age and cognitive ability of the individual pupil.

• Support them in communicating effectively by using appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.

• Encourage awareness of themselves including their core beliefs and values, sexuality and opinions.

• Signpost towards sources of help where they can acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary

• Encourage knowledge of how the law applies to a range of topic including alcohol, drugs, sex and consent.

• Encourage an understanding of how social networks/media portray body image and sexuality.

• Encourage a knowledge of responses to peer pressure.

Consultation and Engagement in RSE at Next Steps Education Ltd

Next Steps Education recognises that consultation is difficult given the ever changing student and parent / carer body.

A Personalised Approach

Next Steps Education recognises that we do not teach RSE as a discrete subject but take a personalised approach to individual students. We encourage an open dialogue between student and mentor / tutor and mentor / tutor and directors in order to provide accurate information and signposting.

Intent, Implementation and Strategies

Next Steps Education personalises provision for pupils for their individual needs. The language we use is vitally important in conveying messages to our young people. It is also crucial for safeguarding. We commit to the following:

• The use of inclusive language. Convey to pupils with SEND the message that their needs are important and they deserve to learn this material.

• Provide pupils with resources that are representative of a variety of SEND (and feature different ethnicities, sexes, and sexualities).

• Use medically/scientifically correct language to accurately describe human anatomy and the processes of the body.

• Provide a glossary that explains the terms used (including pictures) and lists alternative language such as slang.

• Use straightforward, explicit explanations and language. Avoid euphemisms – some pupils with SEND may not understand them.

• Reinforce explanations visually wherever possible.

The relationships we have and how they are managed are the foundation of our interactions with one another. Being able to recognise our emotions and having the resilience to manage them, will ensure that relationships can develop and our young people can flourish. This is an aspect that Next Steps Education model in our daily practice.

Confidentiality and Child Protection

All staff members and external visitors, who work with our pupils, will be given a copy of this policy and our School's Child Protection Policy. We make clear to pupils what our procedures are with regard to confidentiality. Similarly, if questions are asked in lessons, adults will follow agreed practice based on DfE Guidance 2000.

Tutors / mentors cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Tutors / mentors need to pass on any relevant information to the DSL / DDSL.

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the tutors / mentors will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first. Students will be encouraged to allow tutors / mentors / DSL / DDSL to liaise

with parents with regard to issues that would benefit from being shared. Students will be informed in the eventuality that a confidence must be breached due to the seriousness of the disclosure.

Subjects of an intimate nature may prompt disclosures. Staff / tutors / mentors. Staff / tutors / mentors are made aware of the fact that disclosures may be made relating to sexual matters, self-harming /depression, acts of aggression or drugs misuse. Staff / tutors / mentors are instructed to liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead through recording concerns on safeguarding forms, and will be advised on the appropriate course of action.

Last reviewed: 15/01/26 by Sarah Marvin

Next review: January 2027