



A Place To Call Our Own: Relationship and Sex Education Statement

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 are 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) are 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 A Place To Call Our Own we believe that RSE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people.
- Encourage every student to contribute to our community and aims to support each individual as they grow and learn.
- Be set within the wider school 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 staff 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 present topics neutrally and without judgment.
- Generate 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 the content of programmes and sharing resources wherever possible.
- 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 discuss and be aware of genders and gender identification.

Aims of RSE at APTCOO

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 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. Our RSE programme aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- Develop awareness of emotions and how they relate to behaviour of self and others.
- Develop 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.
- Develop awareness of the differing nature and levels of relationships and the codes of conduct relating to them.

- Develop 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.
- Develop awareness of the physical self, how it functions and how changes occur over time.
- Develop practical strategies for self-management of body actions such as menstruation, puberty and related physical changes.
- Develop understanding of how physical changes can affect emotional responses (female & male hormonal changes) and to help pupils to self-manage these.
- Develop 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.
- Understand the physical aspects of reproduction, contraception and sexual health as appropriate to age and cognitive ability of the individual pupil.
- Communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.
- Develop awareness of themselves including their core beliefs and values, sexuality and opinions.
- Be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary.
- Know how the law applies to a range of topic including alcohol, drugs, sex and consent.
- To develop an understanding of how social networks/media portray body image and sexuality.
- To develop knowledge of responses to peer pressure.

Consultation and Engagement in RSE at APTCOO

APTCOO recognises that the development of an appropriate curriculum requires consultation and engagement from all involved. 'To maximise generalisation of knowledge, it is also useful for the curriculum to include strategies that foster collaboration between educators and caregivers (Blanchett, 2002: p16). We have therefore provided recent opportunities for our young people, parents and carers and the staff body to put forwards their suggestions about what the RSE curriculum should include.

Parents and carers were recently given the opportunity to attend a face to face and a virtual RSE meetings. During our communications it was emphasised that we aim to work collaboratively with parents and carers to ensure a consistent approach. We strive to achieve this with regular and open communication and by sharing our practice and resources. The

findings of the above presented the concerns that caregivers have about the vulnerability of our children and young people and that explicit teaching in this area is paramount.

Staff RSE training sessions feature throughout the school year to ensure that staff feel confident in the planning and delivery of a range of RSE topics.

A Personalised Approach

As a result of consultation, a specialised programme of RSE has been developed within APTCOO. All staff have access to the PSHE Association Framework for SEND and access to recommended resources for teaching. The programmes of study are adapted and personalised appropriately to meet the needs of each student.

Due to the considerable diversity that exists between pupils at APTCOO, we believe the most relevant aspects of the curriculum are covered based on the needs of the child or young person. For some pupils it will be appropriate to teach only the functional aspects of the curriculum that have relevance to the individuals concerned. For a minority of pupils, it is more appropriate to address specific areas of need as and when they occur and to continue to work on early development objectives at other times.

RSE personalised sessions on a 1:1 basis are available for any pupil that may require further support to understand and question a particular area of need.

Curriculum Intent, Implementation & Strategies

APTCOO personalises provision for pupils in different curriculum pathways for their individual needs. Whilst some knowledge is taught in RSE lessons at least once a week, many skills are taught day in day out, and across the curriculum. This gives pupils the opportunity to embed new skills and apply their understanding to a range of contexts, including the local community, making learning more functional for their futures.

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.
- Use medically/scientifically correct language to accurately describe human anatomy and the processes of the body.
- 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 have the resilience to manage them, will ensure that relationships can develop, and our young people can flourish. This is an aspect that the staff body model in our daily practice.

We provide an interactive learning environment which is motivating, allowing pupils to practise skills and to embed new information and knowledge. Pupils are provided with exciting and engaging opportunities to apply skills and knowledge to ensure learning is functional, purposeful and reflective. We have a range of RSE resources accessible to all pupils to further their understanding, engagement and independence in a range of areas.

The topics covered in RSE are carefully planned and taught at the appropriate time for them in their journey to adulthood. Deeper Knowledge outcomes are taught when pupils have gained some independence within the subject.

Monitoring and Evaluation of RSE

RSE evidence is captured and assessed in the same way as other curriculum areas.

The Governors and staff are responsible for overseeing, reviewing and organising the revision of the Relationship and Sex Education Policy. Ofsted is required to evaluate and report on the Quality of Education that pupils receive, as well as Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development. This includes evaluating and commenting on the school's RSE policy, and on support and staff development, training and delivery.

Right to Withdraw

As Stated by the Department for Education in statutory guidance published June 2019, parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from some, or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Please note, the right to withdraw is for sex education only and does not include content delivered as part of relationships and health education. If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their child from any part of sex education, they need to contact school to have a discussion with the Head Teacher, so that he/she can be made aware of the reasons and provide alternative arrangements. The request to withdraw a child from sex education can be made up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should include the young person in sex education provision.

Confidentiality, Safeguarding and Child Protection

All staff members and external visitors, and health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the school's policy.

The Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead will have a discussion with any professional or other adult before they start to work with our children. This is to ensure they are familiar with our policy and procedures regarding correct practice and how to respond to issues, including those that may relate to safeguarding matters.

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, staff will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first. Pupils will be encouraged to allow staff to liaise with parents with regard to issues that would benefit from being shared. Pupils 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 are given guidance as to the establishment procedures for dealing with disclosure. When working with more-able pupils, staff are made aware of the fact that disclosures may occasionally be made relating to sexual matters, self-harming /depression, acts of aggression or drugs misuse. Staff are instructed to liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead through recording concerns on CPOMs and will be advised on the appropriate course of action.

Where appropriate, pupils will be given support to access counselling and therapeutic services that are skilled in dealing with individuals with ASD, or other specific learning difficulties.

[PSHE Association Framework for SEND](#)