

Vines Academy RSE Policy

Vines Vision

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

As members of the Vines Academy Trust, our values and principles stem from a connection to the Word of God and the example of Jesus. Our connection to the Vine influences and guides our decisions and expectations. Serving our communities, we will treat families, pupils and our workforce with compassion and fairness, but with uncompromising high expectations of behaviour from adults and children alike, and the goal for every child and staff member to achieve their full potential academically, socially and spiritually. We seek to deliver a curriculum and opportunities for our pupils and families which supports them in their own unique contexts, builds social capital and allows spiritual growth and fruitfulness.

This policy applies to all schools in the Vines Multi-Academy Trust so that every child has equal access to high quality RSE education. A common policy also ensures that there is a shared understanding of high quality RSE work across the Trust, in order that staff will achieve this and parents will understand and support it.

Definition of RSE

RSE stands for Relationship and Sex Educations and represents a new curriculum to be used in Primary Schools. It is divided into two parts. Relationships Education, which must be taught to all pupils and Sex Education which Primary Schools can choose whether to teach.

In Relationships Education pupils must learn:

- The nature of marriage and civil partnership and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children;
- Safety in forming and maintaining relationships; families and people who care for me;
- Caring Friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online Relationships
- Being Safe
- The characteristics of healthy relationships

- How relationships may affect physical and mental health and well-being.

If a Primary School chooses to deliver Sex Education, it must also encourage pupils to have *“due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life,”* including learning *“the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children.”* Sex Education includes puberty, how a baby is conceived and born, body ownership and safeguarding. Some aspects are taught in science, and others are taught as part of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).

Purpose of RSE

The purpose of RSE in primary schools *“should be on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults,”* (DFE 2019). RSE is also designed *“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.”* (DFE 2019).

In the Vines Academy Trust our delivery of RSE will equip our children who are growing up in an increasingly complex and sexualised world, that is lived both on and offline. Whilst this world presents many positive and exciting opportunities, there are also many challenges and risks. Within this context, children need to know how to safely navigate through it and how to manage their personal and social lives in a positive way.

The RSE programme within the Vines Academy Trust aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and become informed and active citizens. It provides an understanding that positive, caring environments are essential for the development of a good self-image and that each individual is responsible for their own body. All of this is filtered through the lens of our Christian vision as articulated above, namely a love of Jesus Christ and a love for our neighbour.

RSE and being Church of England Schools

The Vines Academy Trust comprises of four Church of England primary schools, and as such has a unique and life giving message which can shape RSE across the Trust.

A core truth within the Christian faith is that all humanity has been made in the image of God.

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27

There are several important points that flow from this which shape our RSE policy:

1. Being made in God’s image means that in some sense humans are like God. We have been given the task of being his representatives on earth. We share God’s concern for justice, love, mercy and compassion.
2. Being made in God’s image means that relationships among people are crucial and part of being human. God himself exists in a relationship: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. God has created humanity different (male and female), but completely equal in value and significance.

However, we know that we live in a broken world where relationships have been damaged. We don’t always share or live out God’s concerns. Yet Jesus, God in the flesh, lived on earth among us to show us what being truly human is like. He taught that first and foremost our relationship with God is one that will help our lives flourish. Jesus says *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* and you shall *love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”* (Matthew 22:37). Jesus also taught that we should *“love your neighbour as yourself.”* (Matthew 22:39). These teachings of Jesus underpin the Christian vision of the Vines Academy Trust. As such they impact our RSE in the following practical ways:

1. Whilst a gift from God, we are not chiefly defined by our sexuality or relationships with others. Rather we are defined by our relationship to God. We can live a wonderful and fulfilling life without marriage and sex.
2. We should love others as we would like to be loved. This means whilst we might not agree with someone’s view or beliefs we treat each other with respect and love. It also means that whilst the Church of England upholds the biblical view of marriage, as a lifelong covenant relationship between a man and woman it recognises that couples, whether of the same or opposite sex can and do have happy, fulfilling and loving relationships.
3. As creatures of God we are all of extreme worth and precious in God’s sight.
4. As creatures of God we are all different and unique.
5. Relationships, romantic or not, are a gift from a loving God that require nurturing and investment
6. Healthy relationships are underpinned by faithfulness, love and forgiveness.

Equal opportunities and accessibility

The Vines Academy Trust is committed to the provision of a comprehensive, well-planned programme of Relationships and Sex Education for all children. Our programme aims to respond to the diversity of children’s cultures, faiths and family

backgrounds. The RSE teaching programme is inclusive, appropriate and relevant to all pupils, including those with SEN and disabilities. Teachers ensure that the content, approach and use of inclusive language reflect the diversity of the school community and helps pupils feel valued and included, regardless of their gender, ability, disability, experiences and family background. Tasks and outcomes are altered in line with pupils needs to ensure that all pupils gain a full understanding. Equal time and provision will be allocated for all groups but there may be occasions where children with Special Educational Needs are given extra support. This is in line with the Equalities Act 2010.

Confidentiality and Child protection issues

Our RSE programme is one of the most important ways we act on our responsibility to safeguard and protect our children, as set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Under the 2020 'Keeping Children Safe In Education' statutory guidance for schools staff have a responsibility to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed. Therefore, staff will use their discretion to inform the named Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if they believe a child is at risk or in danger. The DSL then takes action as laid down in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. All staff are familiar with the policy and know the identity of the members of staff with responsibility for Child Protection issues.

Relationships and Sex Education

The objectives within the RSE curriculum can be divided into four categories:

- Relationships Education (compulsory)
- Science (compulsory)
- Health Education (compulsory)
- Sex Education (non-compulsory)

Relationships

Relationships Education is compulsory for all pupils and focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships and relationships with other children and with adults.

By the end of primary school, children will have studied: -

Families and People who care for me

- Caring Friendships

- Respectful relationships
- Online Relationships
- Being Safe

Science

It is compulsory for Vines Academy schools to teach the parts of sex education that fall under the National Curriculum for science. This encompasses learning about sexual reproduction in 'some plants and animals.' It does not state that schools should cover human reproduction specifically; however, understanding sexual reproduction in humans enables children to understand the processes of puberty. After consultation with parents, the Trust has decided to teach sexual reproduction, which will include the following topics:

- Parts of the body
- Puberty
- Gestation period
- The process of reproduction in some plants and animals- sperm and egg to make a baby
- How the body develops and changes over time.
- Conception (of a human baby)

Health Education

Health Education within primary schools is compulsory for all pupils. It aims to develop children's understanding of good physical health and mental wellbeing.

By the end of primary school, pupils will have studied:

- Mental wellbeing
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Physical and emotional aspects of the changing adolescent body

Sex Education

Following guidance from the DfE, we define Sex Education as learning about 'how a (human) baby is conceived and born'. This teaching is not compulsory, however, the Vines Academy Trust is of the view that it should be taught in an age appropriate way.

The content of Sex Education will include:

- Reproduction requires physical and emotional maturity* (health education)
- Human babies grow inside their mothers
- Sperm and egg are needed to make a baby* (Science Curriculum)
- Conception* (Science Curriculum)

- Sexual intercourse
- Birth

*denotes those parts taught in other compulsory subjects whilst the others remain non-compulsory.

Sex Education will be delivered by a teacher, who knows the needs and natures of the children. We understand that at times children will benefit from varying methods of delivering the RSE curriculum. For example, we may use single-sex groups or small group teaching where this will help us to meet the needs of particular children more effectively, we will use team teaching where this enables us to best use teacher expertise. We will ensure there are positive educational reasons for each method of delivery. We understand that our teaching in sex education must be tailored to the needs and physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.

Each school in the Vines Academy Trust will have access to a host of resources to teach Sex Education. Please consult the individual school websites for information on what curriculum resources are being used.

Withdrawal and Parental Rights

From September 2020, parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationship or health content. We acknowledge that parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education taught in the school, except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum: all children are expected to learn the content of the national science curriculum (see Appendix 1). Parents are encouraged to establish exactly what is covered in the lessons relevant to their child's year group and discuss any concerns about lesson content with staff at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be excused from some or all of Sex Education delivered as part of statutory Relationships Education. Before granting any such request, the Head Teacher/PSHCE Leader will discuss the request with parents/carers (and, if appropriate, with the child) to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The educational, social and emotional benefits for the child of being part of the lessons will also be discussed. We will record the discussion and the outcomes.

If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from any part of our sex education lessons, they should discuss this first with the Head Teacher, make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in and confirm their request in writing. If a parent/carer requests that their child be removed from sex education, we will ensure that they understand that it is their duty to provide their child with the missed information.

We will consider compromise arrangements which will enable the child to receive Sex Education at school (e.g. same sex teacher, same sex teaching group). We will offer support to parents/carers who wish to deliver Sex Education at home, which becomes their responsibility if they withdraw their child from Sex Education at school. If a pupil is excused from Sex Education, we will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. The parents/carers will be asked to reconfirm their decision to withdraw their children from Sex Education each time a Sex Education element is planned for their child.

Consultation

The school acknowledges that the primary role in children's RSE lies with parents and carers. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. Parents will be informed about the policy through consultation, information meetings and through written correspondence. The policy will be available to parents through the school websites. We are committed to working with parents and carers by holding information sessions and through signposting via targeted support in school or through the school websites, to other sources of support. As part of our whole school approach to RSE, annual Parent Information Sessions and opportunities for parents to view the materials and resources used will be held.

We will notify parents when Relationships and Sex education will be taught, by written communication and through the sharing of our curriculum coverage plans.

Parents, carers and other adults in the community are entitled to:

- Accessible, accurate, up-to-date, information delivered in a way which meets their needs
- A safe and supportive environment for their children
- Information on how and when RSE is taught
- Understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to RSE policy and curriculum
- Be informed about issues of confidentiality and how it affects them and their children
- Have their views and ideas received in a respectful, non-judgemental manner.

Difficult questions

During the teaching of RSE, staff will establish with pupils a set of ground rules which set out the parameters for discussion, in addition to those already used in the classroom. They will cover the following areas:

- Appropriate use of language
- The asking and answering of personal questions
- Strategies for checking or accessing information.

Staff are aware that views around RSE related issues are varied. While personal views are respected, all RSE issues are taught without bias which is in line with the school's belief that all children are created equally in the image of God. Pupils are exposed to a variety of views and beliefs so that they are able to form their own, informed opinions, but also respect others that may have a different opinion.

In order to protect children's privacy, we will employ teaching and learning strategies known as distancing techniques which will enable them to discuss issues without disclosing personal experience. For example, we will use fiction, puppets, case studies, role-play and videos to enable children to share ideas and opinions and to practise their decision-making skills in a safe learning environment. A question box will be available should children feel uncomfortable about asking the questions directly. We acknowledge that sensitive and potentially difficult issues will arise in RSE as children will naturally share information and ask questions. When spontaneous discussion arises, it will be guided in a way which reflects the stated school aims and curriculum content for RSE. As a first principle we will answer questions relating to the taught planned curriculum for that age group to the whole class. We will answer questions relating to areas beyond the taught planned curriculum for that age group in a sensitive and age appropriate way only to the child or children who have asked the question, where appropriate, in consultation with a child's parent. Year group teachers will use their skill and discretion in this area and if they are uncertain when discussing particular questions, they will discuss these with a senior member of staff and answer at a later date. Staff will refer to the DSL if they have any concerns.

The Vines Academy Trust believes that RSE should meet the needs of all pupils regardless of their developing sexuality and be able to deal appropriately and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if legislation changes.