Relationships, Health & Sex Education policy

Name of Headteacher:	**Thomas Johnston**
Date Policy approved and adopted:	**September 2026**
Date due for review:	**September 2028**

Equality at Merdon Junior School

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school. (See Initial Equality Impact Assessment)

Aims

The aims of relationships, health and sex education (RHSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Relate RHSE to our school values and ethos (ACT)

How this Policy was developed

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

- Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
- Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
- Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to view the draft RHSE policy and provide feedback which was addressed by the working group
- Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RHSE
- Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

Requirements on schools in law

Since September 2020 it has been statutory for schools to deliver Relationships Education in primary schools, and they are encouraged by the Department of Education to deliver Sex Education that ensures that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes adolescence brings. Although not compulsory, we do teach elements of sex education beyond what is contained in the science curriculum. Health Education is also statutory and covers the key facts about puberty, menstrual wellbeing and, from September 2026, the correct names of body parts.

At Merdon Junior School we teach RHSE as set out in this policy, taking into consideration:

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 which places schools under a duty to promote the well-being of their pupils.
- The Education Act 1996, as amended by the Learning and Skills Act 2000, which requires head teachers and governing bodies to have regard to the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, and make a statement of policy on their provision and set out the circumstances in which a pupil is to be excused.
- As a maintained primary school we must provide relationships education to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.
- In teaching RHSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

What is Relationships, Health and Sex Education?

RHSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, Science, Computing, Religious and Physical Education. It is also taught through whole school assemblies and events.

Relationships Education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe
- Puberty, menstruation and sexual reproduction

Primary Sex Education is predominantly taught in Year 5 and 6 and focuses on:

- Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings
- How a baby is conceived and born

Parents are given the opportunity to view and discuss the resources used to teach sex education prior to the lessons.

Delivery of the RHSE Curriculum

Our curriculum, based on the Coram SCARF PSHE scheme, is set out as per Appendix 1 and 2 but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary, depending on the needs of different cohorts of children. We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, pupils and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online. The appropriate manners may include consulting with the parent(s) or following the safeguarding policy.

Our lesson plans will focus on friendship, bullying, building self-esteem, health and mental wellbeing using the SCARF (Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience and Friendship) Coram Life Education resources. By delivering a spiral curriculum, the same themes will taught each year. This enables the children to apply their learning to age-related scenarios, helping them to make healthy decisions and keep themselves and others safe. Using the same themes across the year groups will ensure progression in knowledge, attitudes, values and skills thus developing the children's social and emotional learning skills which are known to improve outcomes for children

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RSE will be delivered and enriched in a variety of ways including:

- Linking RSE to other curriculum areas or incorporating it within a project
- Discrete lessons or blocked units of work
- Ongoing personal and social activities
- Spontaneous sessions in response to a particular need or situation
- Assemblies
- Inviting visitors to school to address the children

All teachers will plan their own RSE using the 'SCARF Scheme of Work' as set out in the whole school RSE Curriculum Map. Teachers will develop their knowledge and understanding of the RSE elements at an appropriate age and cognitive level for the pupils they teach.

Lessons will be taught whole class to facilitate discussion and questions. This also allows children to work in pairs or small teams to learn from each other. For some elements of the Sex Education Curriculum, single-sex groups will be considered if appropriate.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

Statutory guidance states that primary pupils should be taught protective and preventative content in an age-appropriate, non-alarming way that avoids normalising risky behaviours. Topics like pressure to share explicit images or exposure to online sexual content may be addressed if relevant. Teaching must be respectful of all pupils, including those unfamiliar with such issues. Any deviations from the school's RSE policy should be shared with parents in advance, along with relevant materials upon request. If pupils ask questions beyond the taught Sex Education or about content which they've been withdrawn from, school may refer them to parents, trusted adults, or support services, while recognising the risks of unanswered questions.

For more information about our curriculum, see our curriculum map in Appendix 1 and 2.

How Relationships and Sex Education is monitored and evaluated

Our RHSE curriculum builds knowledge and skills sequentially, with regular feedback provided on pupil progress. Lessons ensure that all pupils are challenged, and assessments identify where pupils need extra support or intervention. Pupils have the opportunity to self-assess their understanding as well, and opportunities to give feedback via questions and discussions.

How the delivery of the content will be made accessible to all pupils

Through use of the Coram SCARF PSHE curriculum content and resources, we make sure RHSE inclusive and relevant to all our pupils and consistent with our equalities duties. This includes:

The needs of boys as well as girls

Teachers are responsible for adapting the SCARF unit planning so that they meet the needs of each specific cohort and class. Although the overall content encourages pupils to consider how some online content may be harmful to both men and women, in some cases gender stereotypes may need more carful addressing if this is an identified need in the cohort.

Ethnic, religious and cultural diversity

SCARF's planning acknowledges different ethnic, religious and cultural attitudes to puberty, relationships and sex and thoughtful discussion and questioning is also encouraged throughout the school and curriculum as part of our school ACT values. There may be times when the school needs to consult pupils and parents / carers about their needs in order to take into account of their individual views and culture.

Varying home backgrounds

At Merdon, we recognise that pupils may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. SCARF resources do not promote one specific family situation and, in fact, encourage children to consider different family situations and what the core values of a family are, such as love, unity and respect.

Sexual Orientation

We know that a number of our pupils will go on to define themselves as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual (GLB) and pupils may also have GLB parents / carers, brothers or sisters, other family members and / or friends. Our RHSE programme of study acknowledges this and includes sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. Through the teaching of puberty in Sex Education, the

development of attraction to others is discussed, including towards those of the opposite sex. This is discussed in an age-appropriate way. If there are any challenges to this from pupils, the school's anti-bullying policy outlines how it manages incidents of homophobic bullying.

Special educational needs

Much of the SCARF RHSE curriculum can be adapted for children with special educational needs in line with the *SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years*. This can be through:

- Alternative ways of recording ideas
- Giving of sentence stems and ideas for structuring ideas verbally
- Use of visuals to support understanding, including books and video clips
- Group work to give peer support

SCARF units are designed to be relevant, age and stage appropriate and accessible to pupils. For some pupils, it may be appropriate to use resources from a younger year group or to have small group or individual sessions to ensure that work is closely matched to their developmental stage.

Parental concerns and withdrawal of pupils

An overview of the content of the RHSE is outlined in the Appendices of this policy. Any further materials can be shared with parents at their request. In Years 5 and 6, where Sex Education will be taught, parents will be informed of the topics covered in these units of RHSE. Parents have the right to contact the school and ask for further information and to ask questions about the content in more detail. Where appropriate, parents will be given support in managing conversations with their child about RHSE topics.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their pupils from Relationships and Health Education, nor can they be withdrawn from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction. Parents do have a right to request that their children are withdrawn from non-statutory Sex Education; this is why we ensure parents are aware of Sex Education content within lessons in advance. Before granting any such request, school will usually request that parents, and if appropriate the child, meet with the Headteacher to discuss the request to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RHSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. The Headteacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RHSE.

Policy Review and Development Plan

The delivery of RHSE is monitored by Tom Johnston (Headteacher) and Claire Sambles (Deputy Headteacher/SENDco) through:

- Monitoring planning
- Learning walks
- Pupil conferencing

Pupils' development in RHSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.
This policy will be reviewed by Tom Johnston (Headteacher) every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body.

Sources of Further Information

This policy has drawn on:

- DfE ‘Sex and Relationship Education Guidance’ (2000)
- DfE ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Guidance’ (July 2025)
- DfE ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (September 2025)
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (November 2025)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy (inc. responding to disclosures)
- Anti-bullying policy
- SEND policy

Evaluation and Review

Date of Ratification	September 2026
Date for Next Review	September 2028
Comments: Rewritten to ensure compliance with guidance.	

Year 3 content

Extending learning in Y2

New content to include:

- Change including bereavement
- Images in the media
- Protecting personal information online
- Different types of relationships
- Healthy and unhealthy relationships (friendships) both online and IRL
- Discrimination and its consequences
- Understanding risk
- Making informed choices
- Resisting pressure
- Menstruation

Sample Learning Outcomes

- Explain some of the feelings someone might have when they lose something important to them
- Recognise and describe appropriate behaviour online as well as offline
- Identify when it is appropriate or inappropriate to allow someone into their body space
- Recognise who they have positive healthy relationships with
- Recognise that repeated name calling is a form of bullying
- Understand that for girls, periods are a normal part of puberty

Year 4 content

Extending learning in Y3

New content to include:

- Body changes in puberty
- Conflicting emotions
- Good and not so good feelings
- Marriage, Civil Partnership and other relationships
- Consequences of our actions
- Recognise and challenge stereotypes
- Pressures to behave in an unacceptable, unhealthy or risky way

Sample Learning Outcomes

- Understand and explain why puberty happens
- Suggest reasons why young people sometimes fall out with their parents
- Discuss the reasons why a person would want to be married, or live together, or have a civil ceremony
- Define what is meant by ‘being responsible’
- Understand and identify stereotypes, including those promoted in the media
- Understand that we can be influenced both positively and negatively

Year 5 content

Extending learning in Y4

New content to include:

- Body changes and feelings during puberty
- Changing feelings and the effect on those we live with
- Unhealthy relationships
- Risky behaviour
- Healthy behaviour online
- Types of bullying including homophobic
- Keeping personal information private online

Sample Learning Outcomes

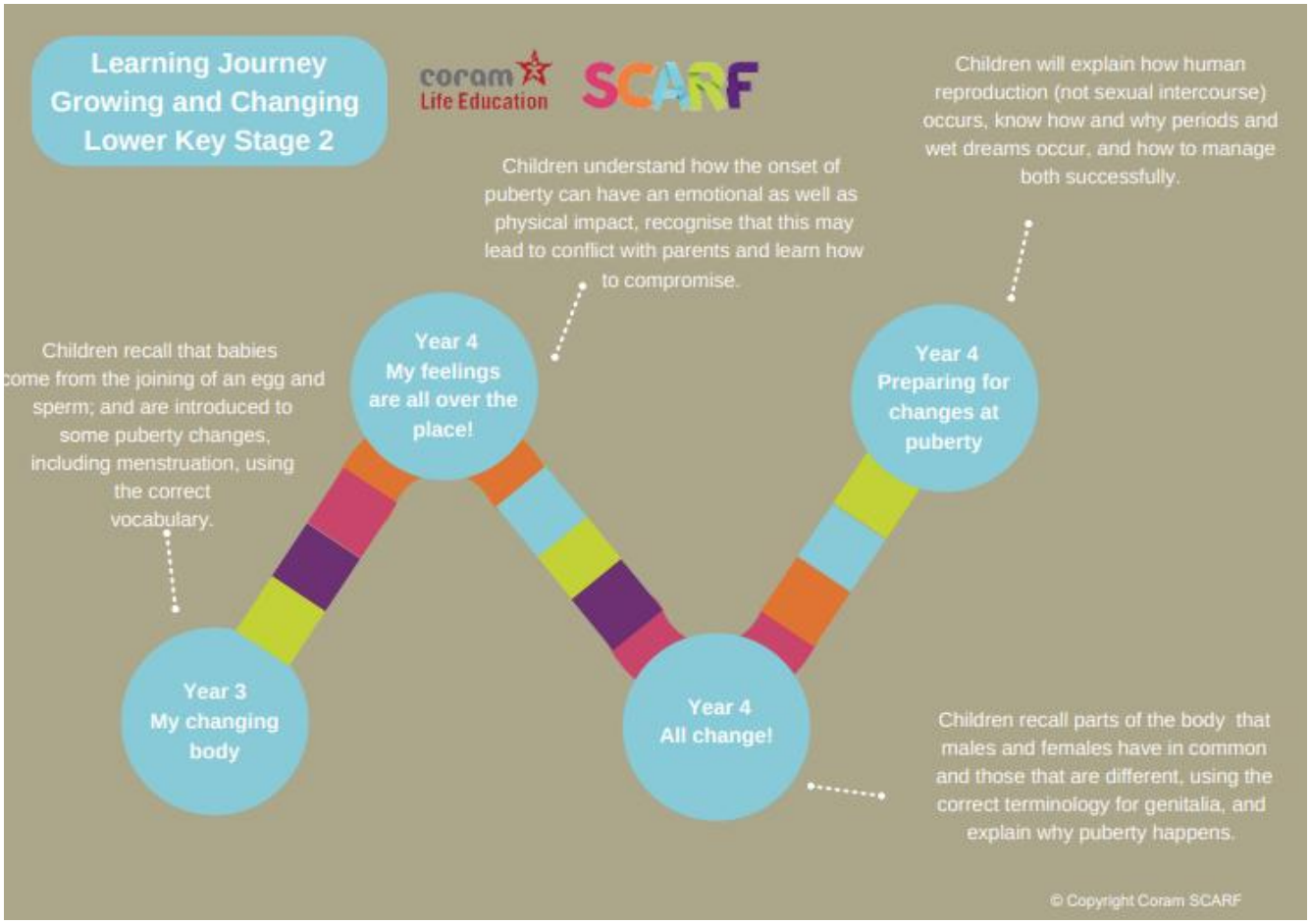
- Identify some products that they may need during puberty and why
- Recognise some of the feelings associated with feeling excluded or 'left out'
- Identify what things make a relationship unhealthy
- Explore and share their views about decision making when faced with a risky situation
- Recognise that people aren't always who they say they are online
- Recognise that some people can get bullied because of the way they express their gender
- Know how to protect personal information online

Year 6 content

Extending learning in Y5 New content to include:

- Body image
- Sharing images online
- Forced marriage
- Conception, reproduction & birth

Sample Learning Outcomes

- Recognise that photos can be changed to match society's view of perfect
- Explore the risks of sharing photos and films of themselves or others online, and without consent
- Take a critical approach to what they see and hear online
- Describe ways in which people show their commitment to each other
- Know a variety of ways in which the sperm can fertilise the egg to create a baby

Appendix 2 - Overview of curriculum content (Growing and Changing PSHE unit including RHSE)