



# Heartwood CE VC Primary and Nursery School

## Life Skills (RSHE) Policy

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "A. Brown", is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Date: July 2025

Review Date: July 2026

Chair

## The Heartwood Vision

Through our Christian values we grow hearts that *Make a Difference*.  
*Courageous* hearts that take *responsibility* and take social action for change,  
Open hearts that *respect* everyone and build *friendships*,  
*Responsible* hearts that protect and admire God's creatures and nature,  
Thoughtful hearts that *serve* the community,  
Strong hearts that can manage conflict,  
Interconnected hearts that create global citizens,  
Warm hearts that are *compassionate* and caring.

Through our curriculum, we grow holistic minds.  
Curious minds with a thirst for knowledge,  
*Resilient* minds that never give up,  
Inquisitive minds that question, challenge and *respect* other points of view,  
Skilful minds that are prepared for the next stage in life,  
Readers who read to fill their minds with a deep understanding of the world around them,  
Artistic minds that can express through creativity,  
Safe minds that have the knowledge and skills to protect themselves,  
*Responsible* minds that always want to Make a Difference locally and globally

At Heartwood, we grow hearts and minds to enable every child to flourish, enjoying a life filled with meaning and purpose, underpinned by the Christian values, a love of learning and an eagerness to make the world a better place.

**'Live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)**

RSHE is underpinned by a clear set of embedded values and principles that complement the school ethos and permeate through the teaching practice, resources and classroom management of RSHE lessons. Our school values are:

- Friendship
- Compassion
- Service
- Courage
- Responsibility
- Respect

## **Introduction**

The school's commitment to promoting the personal and social development, health and mental wellbeing of our pupils is reflected in our statement of aims and values. This underpins the Christian ethos of Heartwood CE VC Primary and Nursery School and is reflected in our policies and in the breadth of the curriculum – including the teaching of Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). RSE is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sexuality and sexual health, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. It supports the wider work of the school in helping to foster pupils' wellbeing and develop their resilience and character.

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. Children 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. PSHE & RSE support the wider work of the school in helping children to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support. High quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Whilst we use sex education to inform children about sexual issues, we do this with regard to matters of morality and individual responsibility, and in a way that allows children to ask and explore moral questions. It is taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of our pupils and parents. Relationship & Sex Education upholds Christian values regarding marriage and relationships, while being mindful of the circumstances of our pupils and the variety of expressions of family life in our culture. Pupils are given the opportunity to explore their own attitudes, values and beliefs and to develop an individual moral code that will guide their actions, within the understanding of the right of others to frame and hold their own views with an expectation of respect.

The new Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools; sex education is not compulsory. The DfE recommends that primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of its pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and - drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the National Curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born, puberty and main external body parts. At Heartwood CE VC Primary and Nursery School, Governors see sex education as an important aspect of the school curriculum for our pupils and ensure that it has due regard to moral considerations and the importance of family life.

Set within the school's Christian ethos, RSE has always been part of our curriculum provision for Personal, Social & Emotional Education (PSHE). The focus of RSE at Heartwood Primary is 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. We want children to form a strong early understanding of the features of relationships that are likely to lead to happiness and security; and to recognise any less-positive relationships when they encounter them. This starts with pupils being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. From the beginning of primary school, building on early education, pupils are taught how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy. Establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact - these are the forerunners of teaching about consent, which takes place at secondary school.

As a school we believe the role of parents/carers in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents/carers are the first teachers of their children and have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships. We believe that RSE should be complementary and supportive to the role of parents/carers and therefore, that the School's Policy for Relationship and Sex Education should reflect consultation with parents and governors.

### **Equality**

As a school we take our responsibilities under The Equality Act 2010 seriously. Prior to the teaching of sex education, we consider the makeup of our pupil body, including the gender and age of children and whether it is appropriate or necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with particular protected characteristics (which mean that they are potentially at greater risk). We consider what we can do to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls, and provide an environment, which challenges perceived limits on pupils, based on their gender or any other characteristic. We are mindful to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Staff understand that they have an important role to play in modelling positive behaviours. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be made to alleviate disadvantage children and teachers will be aware of the SEND code of practice when planning for RSE to ensure teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND.

### **Policy Development**

This Policy has been developed and reviewed following the publication of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance for governing bodies, headteachers and teachers (DfE, 2019) and informed by consultation with parents.

It is the aim of governors and senior leaders that this Policy meets the needs of pupils and parents and reflects Heartwood CE VC Primary and Nursery School community.

### **Policy availability**

Stakeholders can be informed about the policy through RSHE consultation events and accessing a copy from the school website. Should a hard-copy of the document be required,

the school will be happy to provide this upon request and will also work with any stakeholders that require the policy in an alternative format to meet their individual needs, ensuring equitable accessibility for all. The policy can be obtained in an alternative format by contacting [office@heartwood.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:office@heartwood.norfolk.sch.uk)

### **Principals of Effective RSHE**

RSHE provision at Heartwood CE VC Primary and Nursery School:

- Is an identifiable part of our school curriculum, which has planned lessons across all the Key Stages
- Where possible the RSHE curriculum content is planned in the context of the wider curriculum.
- There are daily opportunities planned into the school timetable for staff and children to respond to events and situations in a real-life context to promote contextual understanding.
- Is taught by staff regularly trained in RSHE (with vetted expert visitors invited in to enhance and supplement the programme, where appropriate).
- Works in partnership with parents and carers, informing them about what their children will be learning and how they can contribute at home.
- Delivers lessons where pupils feel safe and encourages participation by using a variety of teaching approaches with opportunities to develop critical thinking and relationship skills.
- Is based on reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights, and distinguishes between fact and opinion.
- Promotes safe, equal, caring and enjoyable relationships and discusses real-life issues appropriate to the age and stage of pupils, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and safe relationships online.
- Gives a positive view of human sexuality with honest and medically accurate information so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health in ways that are appropriate to their age and maturity.
- Gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their values and influences (such as from peers, media, faith and culture) that may shape their attitudes to relationships and sex and nurture respect for different views.
- Includes learning about how to get help and treatment from sources such as the School Health Service and other health and advice services including reliable information online.
- Fosters gender equality and LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans) equality and challenges all forms of discrimination in RSHE lessons and in everyday school life.
- Meets the needs of all pupils with their diverse experiences including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Seeks pupils' views about RSHE so that teaching can be made relevant to their real lives and assessed and adapted as their needs change.

## **Teaching and Learning**

The RSHE programme is led by a qualified teacher, and is taught by all teachers and supported by externally validated visitors and outside agencies. Pupils receive clear and consistent approaches to RSHE throughout their time at Heartwood CE VC Primary and Nursery School. Whole staff and individual training needs will be identified through the school's self-evaluation process and staff appraisal.

On occasion external visitors, experts and agencies may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSHE to enhance delivery of these subjects, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with children and young people. When this happens, our school will:

- Check the visitor or visiting organisation's credentials.
- Ensure the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with our planned programme and our published policy.
- Discuss the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils.
- Ask to see in advance the materials visitors will use as well as a lesson plan so that collectively we can ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs (e.g. special educational needs).
- Agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with our school's policy.
- Arrange for the visitor to be supervised/supported by a member of school staff at all times.
- Monitor and evaluate the visitor input to inform future planning.
- RSHE will be taught through a range of teaching methodologies, including story-telling, drama, discussions, individual private reflection, quizzes and fact finding, value spectrums, debating, independent research and artistic presentations etc. This wide range of teaching strategies promotes engagement by all pupils, irrespective of preferred learning styles.
- Inform the parents/carers

## **Curriculum**

The majority of elements of the RSHE curriculum are a statutory requirement to teach to meet the latest government guidance and The Equalities Act, 2010.

RSHE will be taught through a 'spiral curriculum'. This approach means that pupils will gain knowledge, develop values and acquire skills gradually by re-visiting core themes to build on prior learning. RSHE will support the school's commitment to safeguard pupils through an age-appropriate curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world.

Our intended RSHE curriculum is detailed below but may vary in response to emerging issues and to reflect the rapidly changing world in which our pupils are living and learning. If this is the case, parent/carers will be provided with appropriate notice before the amended

programme is delivered. Where possible the curriculum will be complemented by themed assemblies, topic days and cross curricular links.

We follow the PSHE association planning cycles and materials, there are 3 main threads that run through:

- Relationships
- Health and well-being
- Living the wider world

We also use the Online Safety Association documents to plan in at least half termly online safety sessions and we use the Anti-Racism education documents to plan in at least half termly an anti-racism lesson. These are taught at the beginning of every half term and materials are used to support issues that arise.

At least every half term and in response to need, pupils will watch the NSPCC PANTS video and have planned sessions around this and the Childline video. There are also posters displayed around school and in the children's toilets to remind them of the key information and messages.

### **Assessment**

Pupils' learning will be assessed throughout and at the end of every topic to ensure that pupils are making sufficient progress to build on prior teaching and learning and that teaching strategies and resources remain relevant and effective. Assessment activities will be implicit, forming part of a normal teaching activity to ensure that pupils do not feel under pressure and will include self-assessment tasks that will confirm pupils understanding of the topics and knowledge retention and application. The evaluation of teaching and learning assessments will be shared with pupils and parents as appropriate.

Teachers will use and adapt the PSHE assessment materials to inform their assessment and planning.

The quality of RSHE teaching and learning will be monitored through RSHE learning walks, team teaching, and informal drop-ins conducted by subject leads and/or members of the senior leadership team. The observations and findings of which will be used to identify and inform future staff training needs.

### **Responding to pupil's questions**

There will always be sensitive and controversial issues within the subjects of RSHE. These may be a matter of age and stage appropriateness or contrasting personal beliefs including those originating from faith perspectives and culture. We believe that children are best educated and protected from harm when they are provided with a safe and supportive space to discuss issues openly within the framework of a class working agreement. At the end of every lesson, pupils will be provided with an opportunity to ask questions in an open

setting and will also be provided with an opportunity to raise anonymous questions through the use of an anonymous 'ask-it-basket'.

Teachers will answer questions as fully as they feel age and stage appropriate based on the level of knowledge demonstrated by pupils during the lesson. Teachers may delay answering a pupil's question if they need time to consult with a colleague or the school leadership team to construct an appropriate answer. Parents/ carers will be made aware of this so that they can support their child at home.

Teachers can refuse to answer a question that they feel is inappropriate and will never answer personal questions about their own body, personal circumstances or lifestyle choices. If a teacher does not answer a question, the pupil will have the reasons clearly explained and the teacher will work with the pupil to identify suitable sources of information where they can obtain an answer to their question. This may include encouraging the pupil to ask a parent/carer or trusted adult at home.

### **Confidentiality, signposting and managing disclosures**

The school's responsibility to safeguard pupils through a curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world will remain central to our curriculum content, teaching methodologies and supporting resources.

At the beginning of RSHE teaching the class will discuss and create a 'working agreement'. Confidentiality will be included within this agreement so pupils are clear of the limits of confidentiality that can be guaranteed by a teacher.

Distancing techniques such as the use of characters within RSHE avoids pupils feeling under pressure to participate or disclose information beyond that which is appropriate or feels comfortable. This strategy makes RSHE more accessible to all pupils including those who may have experienced unhealthy relationships and/or abuse.

Teachers will signpost pupils to information relevant to the topic being taught to ensure safe sources of information, advice and guidance are provided. Teachers will also work closely with the school's pastoral system to advise on topic coverage so that the school can be responsive to pupil's pastoral needs and safeguarding arrangements can be actioned efficiently if required.

Teachers will conduct RSHE lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved) in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the reference seriously, and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. They will immediately inform the named person for child protection issues about their concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will then deal with the matter in line with our school's safeguarding policy.

### **Involving parents and carers**

We believe that parents/carers are the primary educators of their children in RSHE and that RSHE is most effective when it is collaboration between school and home. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with parents and carers of children and young people at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation.

The school will provide support to parents and carers through an annual workshop which provides a valuable opportunity to develop awareness of emerging RSHE topics, meet RSHE teachers and review the resources being used as well as consider ways to build on the learning at home, fostering strong channels of communication between parents/carers and their children. The school also operates an open-door policy enabling parents to discuss RSHE at relevant times throughout the school year.

Parents/carers will receive a half termly letter which outlines the content of the upcoming Life Skills lesson, including the vocabulary that will be used. Parents/carers can request to see the resources that will be used during the sessions. If there are changes to the planned lessons, parents will be informed by email.

### **Sex Education**

Sex Education will be taught in the summer 2 term of Year 6. Prior to teaching, a meeting will be held for parents and carers to see the content and resources that will be used in the sex education sessions.

The vast majority of RSHE is compulsory. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents and carers are only able to request that their child is excused from Sex Education, taught outside of the national curriculum for science. If a parent wishes their child to be excused from some or all of the non-statutory Sex Education, they should discuss this with the headteacher, making clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The head teacher will outline to parents/carers the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents/carers propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead). Once a decision has been made, parents/carers must inform the school in writing stating their reasons as to why they would like their child withdrawn.

Once these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, our school will respect a parent/carers' request to have their child excused from non-statutory sex education 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 make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. The school

will document this process. This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.