



Benthal Primary School

Relationships, Sex & Health Education Policy

Agreed by	Chair of Governors:
Approval Date	March 2025
Review Date	March 2028

1. Aims

Through our PSHE programme, we aim to provide children with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active and responsible citizens. In providing children with an understanding of healthy and respectful relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider effective RSHE to be a fundamental part of our approach to supporting pupils to grow into confident, caring, responsible and respectful young citizens.

At Benthall, RSHE is taught within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. In addition, some aspects of the RSHE programme will be covered through:

- Science curriculum
- Computing
- Circle times
- Assemblies
- Stories
- PE in the context of health and hygiene

RSHE is lifelong learning about personal, physical, moral and emotional development. It should teach children and young people to develop and form positive values, attitudes, personal and social skills, and increase their knowledge and understanding of how to make informed decisions and life choices.

The aims of Relationships, Sex and Health education (RSHE) at our school are to:

- Provide a consistent standard of relations, sex and health education across the school
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Promote responsible behaviour
- Create a positive culture of communication around issues of relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- 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
- Give pupils an understanding of reproduction and sexual development
- Ensure that all pupils, by the time they reach secondary school age, are well equipped and on an equal footing, to deal with the secondary RSHE curriculum.
- To provide all pupils with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to make positive and healthy choices concerning relationships as they grow up and deal with risk.
- Combat exploitation.

These aims complement those of the Science curriculum in KS1 and KS2.

2. Statutory requirements

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.

This policy has been written in accordance with the statutory guidance document “Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education” (Department of Education, 2019).

Department for Education guidance states that by the summer term 2021, all primary schools must teach Relationships and Health Education. The teaching of Sex Education in primary schools remains non-statutory, with the exception of the elements of sex education contained in the science national curriculum: including knowledge of the main external body parts; the changes as humans develop to old age and reproduction in some plants and animals. Other related topics that fall within the statutory requirements for Health Education, such as puberty and menstrual wellbeing, will be included within RSHE education lessons.

Within the statutory guidance document for RSHE and Health Education, the DfE also encourages schools to deliver age appropriate sex education if they feel their pupils need this information:

“It will be for primary schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. Many primary schools already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so, although it is not a requirement...”

“It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils’ ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department continues to recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the 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.”

Should you like to see the guidance from the government please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

3. Definition

Within this policy, as in the DfE guidance, **Relationships Education** is defined as teaching about the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to respectful friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults, including online.

For the purpose of this policy, **Health Education** is defined as teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing, focusing on recognising the link between the two and being able to make healthy lifestyle choices

Sex Education is defined as teaching children how human reproduction occurs, including how a baby is conceived. This draws on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science. For the purposes of this policy, we specifically identify any non-statutory Sex Education that falls outside of Science and those related elements (the physical changes associated with puberty) within statutory Health Education.

RSHE is **not** about the promotion of sexual orientation or activity.

4. Curriculum

4.1 Statutory RSHE Curriculum Content

Our RSHE curriculum is embedded within our PSHE curriculum. For more information about our curriculum, see our curriculum map in Appendix 1.

We have developed the curriculum 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 age appropriate manner so they are fully informed and do not seek answers online.

Key objectives of the statutory Relationships & Health Education curriculum are outlined below:

Families and people who care for me

Children should know:

- that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability.
- the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
- that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.
- that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up.
- that civil partnerships and marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong
- that two people who love and care for one another can be in a committed relationship and not be married or in a civil partnership
- how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.

Caring friendships

Children should know:

- how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
- the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.
- that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.
- that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to physically or verbally aggressive behaviour is never right.
- how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.

Respectful relationships

Children should know:

- the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.

- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- the conventions of courtesy and manners.
- the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority.
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help.
- what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive.
- the importance of permission-seeking and granting in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

Online relationships

Children should know:

- that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not.
- that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous.
- the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them.
- how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met.
- how information and data is shared and used online.

Being safe

Children should know:

- what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context).
- about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
- that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.
- Begin to understand the fundamental concept of consent and non-consent and how to seek help if peers or adults are pressurising them to consent to inappropriate or unsafe practices
- how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know.
- how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult and others.
- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.
- how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

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, LGBTQ+ 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).

4.2 Assemblies & Additional Interventions

As part of our Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Values statutory duty we have, in addition, very specific assemblies that focus on particular areas to complement the PSHE and RSHE curriculum across the year for example:

- Healthy Eating, Fit for Life and Keeping Fit
- Fire Safety, Water Safety, Road Safety, E-Safety and Online Bullying, Anti-Bullying, Stranger Danger, Staying safe in the sun
- People who help us, Respect, Peer Pressure

We also teach the NSPCCs 'PANTS' – the underwear rule, program across Early Years and KS1.

{PANTS- Privates are private; Always remember your body belongs to you; No means no; Talk about secrets that upset you; Speak up, someone can help}

This is a code of conduct that has received a quality mark from the PSHE Association. It helps to teach pupils how to protect themselves from sexual abuse. It is covered during circle time and re-visited regularly. (This and other topics such as gender diversity are covered within the PHSE curriculum and will be stated in the PHSE policy).

4.3 Statutory Science Curriculum Content

Early Years Foundation Stage children learn:

- About life cycles as well as watching animal hatch for example chicks, caterpillars/butterflies
- Through ongoing personal, social and emotional development, they develop the skills to form relationships and think about relationships with others

In Key Stage 1 (years 1 – 2) children learn:

- To identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body (not sex parts) and say which part of the body is to do with each sense
- To notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults
- To find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)
- To describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food, and hygiene

In Key Stage 2 (years 3 & 4) children learn:

- To identify that animals, including humans, need the right types and amount of nutrition, and that they cannot make their own food; they get nutrition from what they eat
- To identify that humans and some other animals have skeletons and muscles for support, protection and movement
- To describe the simple functions of the basic parts of the digestive system in humans
- To identify the different types of teeth in humans and their simple functions

In Key Stage 2 (year 5 & 6) children learn:

- To describe different life cycles in some animals and the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals
- To describe the changes, as humans develop to old age

In Key Stage 2 (year 6) children learn:

- To identify and name the main parts of the human circulatory system, and describe the functions of the heart, blood vessels and blood
- To recognise the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle on the way their bodies function
- To describe the way nutrients and water are transported within animals, including humans

- To recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents

4.4 Statutory Health Education

As part of RSHE the Health Education element **is** statutory.

EYFS	
Year 1	
Year 2	Including, Naming main body parts including external genitalia (penis, testicles & vulva, vagina) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bodily similarities and differences between boys and girls
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to take care of your body • Understand that they have a right to protect their own body from inappropriate and unwanted contact
Year 4	Recap from Year 3
Year 5	Naming main body parts Including, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External genitalia (penis & vulva) • Internal reproductive organs in males and females relating to puberty • Physical and emotional changes in boys and girls relating to puberty • Keeping hygiene routines and personal hygiene especially during the time of puberty • Understand that they have a right to protect their own body from inappropriate and unwanted contact and that some actions for example FGM constitute abuse and is a crime
Year 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming main body parts including, external genitalia (penis & vulva) • Internal reproductive organs in males and females relating to puberty • Physical and emotional changes in boys and girls relating to puberty

Children are taught in an age appropriate way about puberty and the associated physical and emotional changes from Year 5 onwards.

Alongside this, children in Year 5 are taught to recognise the signs and changes that may occur during the onset of puberty, in preparation for further lessons on this subject which also focus on emotional changes and menstruation. These lessons form part of the **statutory** requirements for Health Education.

4.5 Non- Statutory Sex Education

The DfE guidance 2019 recommends that all primary schools have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of pupils, and this should include how a baby is conceived. Although **sex education is not compulsory in primary schools**, we believe children should understand the facts about human reproduction before they leave primary school.

We therefore provide some non-statutory sex education **for Year 6 only**:

How human reproduction and conception occurs

Including,

- that for a baby to begin to grow, part comes from a mother and part comes from a father; that in most animals including humans the baby grows inside the mother
- that when a sperm and egg meet, this is called conception; that conception usually occurs as a result of sexual intercourse, and what sexual intercourse means

We believe that teaching this additional content to pupils will ensure that they are better prepared for transition to secondary school and also support their personal and social development as they grow into young adults. As is legally prescribed, parents have a right to withdraw their children from these additional non-statutory sex education lessons – please see the relevant section within this policy in regard to this process.

The resources we use when teaching the non-statutory sex education units are available for parents/carers to view at a dedicated meeting for parents/carers only to attend, led by the Head Teacher.

We strongly encourage parents/ carers to support our teaching of the RSHE curriculum to help our children grow into body and sex positive and confident young adults who can say 'No' when they mean 'No', when to get help and also how to accept a 'No' from someone else.

5 Delivery of RSHE

Our Relationships and Sex Education programme will be delivered in an age appropriate and sensitive manner by class teachers and/or Senior Leaders. Teaching is normally taught in mixed gender groups, though some content is covered in single sex groups e.g. menstrual hygiene, single sex question sessions, etc.

We aim to provide a learning atmosphere where children feel safe and relaxed, and where they feel confident to engage in discussions around potentially sensitive subjects and themes.

Ground rules in class and across the school are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter and teaching RSHE. Clear ground rules are established in partnership with the class, then reinforced at the start of each relevant lesson. As a minimum, ground rules are likely to include the following basic guidelines:

- Listen politely to each other
- Everyone gets a turn to speak, if they want to
- Everyone has a right not to speak
- Everyone's contribution is respected
- Personal information about family members will not be discussed
- We use anatomically correct language when we have learnt it
- The lesson should not be discussed with other children in the school

The children are always encouraged to tell their parents/carers about the lesson and to ask questions to trusted adults at home.

Delivery methods will be adjusted should the need for remote learning continue or extend.

Teaching Strategies

Teachers delivering RSHE will be encouraged to use:

- Distancing techniques such as drama, invented characters, visiting theatre groups and the Living & Growing Programme video clips
- Encourage reflection and opportunities for children to ask questions anonymously to be discussed at a follow up lessons

Dealing with sensitive issues and difficult questions

Pupil's questions will be dealt with honestly and sensitively and in an age appropriate way.

A questions box will be available for pupils to ask anonymous questions.

If staff are faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, techniques such as distancing, the use of a question box, or creating a time to talk to a child individually will be used. Children may also be signposted back to parents/carers and the teacher will contact the parents/carers to give a context to the conversations that have been held in class.

If any questions raise safeguarding concerns, teachers will refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Since RSHE incorporates the development of self-esteem and relationships, pupils' learning does not just take place through the taught curriculum but through all aspects of school life including the playground. It is important then that all staff understand they have a responsibility to implement this policy and promote the aims of the school at any time they are dealing with children.

Resources Used

All resources and materials (Twinkl and Channel 4 Learning) used reflect the consultation with parents/carers and the school health adviser. Age and cultural backgrounds of the pupils were regarded in relation to images used. The range of material used is available to parents/carers and informative books are available to children in the library.

Alongside the Twinkl resources Year 5 and 6 follow the programme Living & Growing produced by Channel 4 Learning. The video clips and paper based resources are used within the lessons.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The Governing Board

The governing board has delegated the approval of this policy to the Curriculum and Standards Committee.

6.2 The Head teacher

The Head teacher is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSHE.

The Head teacher also:

- Ensures that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity
- Monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors on the effectiveness of the policy

6.3 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSHE
- Monitoring progress

Class teachers are responsible for teaching RSHE at Benthall.

Teachers will reply to, and answer, children's questions sensitively and openly. They will ensure that balanced information is provided which will take into account the different faiths' views and avoid any negative impressions. Teachers will need to answer questions that may arise through the direct teaching of sex education, as well as those that may be asked at other times. All questions will be handled sensitively and set within a general context.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSHE are encouraged to discuss this with the Head teacher. Questions which teachers feel uncertain about answering should be discussed with a senior member of staff and answered at a later date. Consideration should be given to religious or cultural factors, and to parents' wishes before questions are answered.

6.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSHE and, when discussing issues related to RSHE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

6.5 Parents & Carers

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's RSHE lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we:

- Will carry out our statutory duty to consult with parents and governors on the contents of this policy
- Inform parents about the school's RSHE policy and practice; this includes informing parents by class curriculum letter or email before beginning to teach a unit of RSHE
- A copy of this policy will be uploaded onto the school website and will be available in paper form on request
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RSHE of their child; this includes providing opportunities for parents to view the resources that are used in lessons
- Provide a Frequently Asked Question document for parents and carers (Appendix 2)
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSHE in the school
- Acknowledge parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSHE. However, this rarely happens as, by working in partnership with parents, they recognise the importance of this aspect of their child's education
- Keep a register of any pupils who are removed from lessons and distributed to all teachers involved.
- Parents/carers will not be informed by the school on which day/s the RSHE lessons will be taught. If a parent/carer has withdrawn their child/ren from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSHE, it will be the responsibility of the class teacher to give said child work to be completed in a different classroom

7. Parents' right to withdraw

As previously stated the RSHE curriculum consists of both statutory and non-statutory elements:

- Parents do have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSHE.
- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from statutory relationships education, health education or the science curriculum.

Parents wanting to withdraw their children are invited to speak to the class teacher. The class teacher will explore the concern of the parents and the possibility of adjusting the programme or approach and will discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. He/she will talk with the parents about the possible negative experiences or feelings that may result from withdrawal of the child and the ways in which these may be minimised.

We would also like to politely request that parents/carers view the resources to be used in the Year 6 lessons before making a final decision. If the parent still wishes to withdraw the child, requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Head teacher. Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in sex education until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education and that child will go to another class for the duration of the lesson.

8. Confidentiality & Safeguarding

Teachers conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse or exploitation. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw these to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for child protection or the Head teacher as a matter of urgency. Disclosure of female genital mutilation must be reported to the police (either by the teacher to whom it is disclosed or by the DSL).

Legally, the school cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. We aim to ensure that pupils' best interests are maintained and try to encourage pupils to talk to their parents or carers to provide support. If confidentiality has to be broken, pupils are informed first and then supported by the Designated Safeguarding Lead throughout the whole process.

9. Special Educational Needs

Pupils with special educational needs will be given the opportunity to fully participate in RSHE lessons, and a differentiated program will be provided where necessary, to ensure that all pupils gain a full understanding, including access to the resources used.

10. Equalities and Diversity

Schools, like all public institutions, have specific responsibilities in relation to equality and protected characteristics. Planning and resources are reviewed to ensure they comply with equalities legislation and the school's equal opportunities policy. All RSHE is taught without bias and in line with legal responsibilities such as those contained within the Equality Act (2010). Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect others that may have different opinions.

The personal beliefs and attitudes of staff delivering RSHE will not influence the teaching of the subject in school. In our school we seek to recognise and embrace the diverse nature of our community. We aim to value and celebrate religious, ethnic and cultural diversity as part of modern Britain. We will explore different cultural beliefs and values and encourage activities that challenge stereotypes and discrimination and present children with accurate information based on the law. We will use a range of teaching materials and resources that reflect the diversity of our community and encourage a sense of inclusiveness. We do **not** use RSHE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation or activity.

11. Complaints Procedure

Any complaints or concerns about the Relationships and Sex Education programme should be made to the class teacher in the first instance. Parents can choose to follow the Benthal complaints procedure if they feel things are not resolved.

12. Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by Middle and Senior Leadership Team members through, for example, planning scrutinies, learning walks and lesson observations.

Pupils' development in RSHE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

13. The School Environment

The school will ensure that the whole school environment reflects the values of respect for themselves and others. It will:

- Ensure that posters and displays use positive images and celebrate difference and diversity.
- Use anonymous question boxes or similar items enabling children to have questions and concerns answered privately where needed.
- Ensure that communication between staff and pupils is welcomed and encouraged, and children know how to access members of staff.
- Provide provisions for pubertal girls, including sanitary ware and free sanitary towels.
- Ensure that discriminatory behaviour is always challenged in any context.

14. Equal Opportunities

Benthal Primary School is committed to equality of opportunity in all aspects of school life. In RSHE this will include:

- Examining and challenging gender stereotyping,
- Celebrating difference and diversity
- Ensuring a programme of Relationships Education that is relevant to all pupils

15. Further policies

In conjunction with this policy, please also see:

- PSHE Policy
- Mental Health and Well-Being policy (formally known as the Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Child Protection & Safeguarding policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Policy 2024 (updated annually by the Government)
- Anti-bullying policy and procedures
- E-Safety policy
- Equalities Policy
- SEND Policy

Please see below a useful document produced by the government, which provides answers to frequently asked questions:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs>

Appendix 1



Please find attached Curriculum Map for PSHE & RSHE

Appendix 2



Frequently Asked Questions about Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE)

The Department for Education has announced changes to Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE). These changes will come into effect from September 2020 and all schools will be required to comply with the updated requirements, making **Relationships Education compulsory** for all pupils receiving primary education. It has been 20 years since the last review of these curriculum areas, and in that time the world has changed significantly. Children now face new challenges: they have to process lots of information from different sources such as TV, the internet, social media, understand how society is changing, understand risks they may face, all putting pressure on their physical and mental health.

We believe relationships, sex and health education is important for our pupils and our school because:

- It is giving children the knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships
- It is about giving children the opportunity to put knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts.
- It is the recognition that everyone faces difficult situations in their lives and how relationship and sex education can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support

We view the partnership of home and school as vital in providing the context to both complement and reinforce what pupils learn at home about healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online, as well as how to be healthy.

Below, we have explained some of the common questions around these subjects.

So, why now?

The Equality Act came into force in 2010. The Equality Act 2010 states that it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation

The public sector Equality Duty came into force on 5th April 2011 and requires that public bodies (including schools):

- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. (Government Equalities Office 2013, p1) This makes it clear that promoting some of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act while ignoring others is against UK law.

What is teaching about equality?

It is teaching about:

- Difference
- Acceptance
- Tolerance
- Diversity
- How to challenge discrimination

Teaching about equality helps our children to prepare for the next stages in their lives.

Is school the best place for discussions about Sex and Relationships?

We know from surveys of children, that if they do not get the correct and accurate information about sex and relationships from a reliable source, they will find the information from other sources (friends, older siblings, website, television) which may not be true or age

appropriate. The information gathered during the Government consultation found that most children wanted this information and discussion to be provided in school with their teachers so that they could ask their questions in a safe space, and have them answered in an age-appropriate way.

Does the new Relationships Education and RSHE curriculum take account of my faith?

The RSHE curriculum is designed to help children from all backgrounds and religious beliefs build positive and safe relationships, and to thrive in modern Britain.

Do I have a right to withdraw my child from Relationships and Sex Education?

In a Primary School, you have the right to withdraw from any sex education lessons that go beyond that of the science national curriculum. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships or Health Education at Primary or Secondary school as the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety), puberty – are important for all children to be taught.

Has the government listened to the views of my community in introducing these subjects?

The Government undertook a wide public consultation which involved discussions with over 90 organisations, as well as the public consultation on the draft regulations and guidance. This has informed the key decisions on these subjects.

Will these subjects promote LGBTQ+ relationships?

No, these subjects don't 'promote' anything, they educate. We are teaching about equality. Our school ethos says that we are respectful of everyone. We value ourselves and all others: this means that all ethnicities are welcome in our school; all people with or without mental or physical disabilities are welcome in our school; all people regardless of their sexual orientation are welcome in our school. Pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. These subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships. RSHE should meet the needs of all pupils, whatever their developing sexuality or identity – this should include age-appropriate teaching about different types of relationships in the context of the law. In our school the teaching of LGBTQ+ will be delivered through teaching about different types of family, including those with same sex parents. All our planned learning will be taught in an age-appropriate way.

Are primary children too young to be taught about gay or lesbian people?

Some children grow up in families with gay or lesbian people. We can't say to a child who has two dads, 'You can't talk about your family'. We want all of our children to know that their family is normal and accepted in school. Our children will interact with people from different backgrounds and we want them to treat all members of the community with the same respect. Just like racism, school has a duty of care to challenge any language that may cause offence to others, whether used intentionally or not. Phrases such as "that's so gay" or "that's a girls/boys toy" when used in a negative manner may unintentionally cause offence to a child or adult. School will challenge this language if it is used by children, parents or visitors as we want everyone to feel welcome.

There are no children who are gay or transgender here, so why does it need to be mentioned?

We want our children to grow up respectful and tolerant members of our community. As they grow up, make more friends, watch television, go to different places they will meet people who are gay or transgender. We want them to understand that this is okay that some children when they grow up may be gay. We don't want children growing up thinking something is wrong with them or with people they recognise who are gay or transgender.

My religion says that gay is wrong, so why are you teaching about different sexuality choices?

We are teaching about equality. We understand and respect all faiths. We recognise the tension that it can present. We are teaching children not to be afraid of difference but to celebrate difference. Any discussion or resources used will be to help your child be respectful and tolerant towards others. We are preparing the children for life in Britain. Britain is diverse and they are going to meet people who are different to them as they grow up.

You are confusing my child because at home they are learning that being gay is wrong but at school you are telling them that being gay is OK.

As a parent it is your right to talk to your child about religious beliefs. In school we build our curriculum around UK law. We are teaching children that all people and relationships are equal. We are teaching children that all families are different and your child as they grow up are going to meet people who live in different families. It is important that children learn about people who are different. They need to learn to be tolerant and respectful of people with different views. When they grow up they can make up their own minds about what they perceive is right and wrong.

Who will be teaching RSHE?

Class teachers deliver RSHE teaching with support from Support Staff and the PSHE Lead and the Head Teacher where appropriate.

What training will staff be given?

The PSHE Lead attends external training facilitated by the Local Authority, the PSHE Association and other agencies to ensure best practice and so that they can support colleagues as necessary. All class teachers are then trained by the PSHE Lead and SLT to deliver RSHE.

What are the topics covered in RSHE?

The teaching of RSHE at Benthall is informed by the law, national RSHE guidance and the national curriculum set out by the Department of Education, as well as the school ethos and policies already developed. The teaching of RSHE at Benthall is delivered within and influenced by all relating school policies:

- Mental Health and Well-Being Policy (formally known as the Behaviour & Anti-Bullying policy)
- Equality Policy & statement
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policies
- Computing policy

In school, RSHE topics will be taught within our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education curriculum.

How will we ensure lessons are taught sensitively?

Puberty and menstruation and human reproduction are seen as sensitive topics to teach in RSHE and therefore we will put in special measures to make sure that Year 5 & 6 pupils feel at ease when talking about these topics.

How will we know what is being taught so I can talk to my child about it at home?

The units of work taught as part of the RSHE strand of PSHE are available on our school website. If you need to discuss this further, teachers will be happy to discuss this with you or signpost other resources that can be used at home to support discussions. Parents/carers of Year 6 children will be invited in to view the resources used for the human reproduction lessons. Parents/carers will not be told in advance, the days in which these lessons will be taught.

Will this work prompt my children to ask challenging questions?

Possibly, your child or children trust you and will be likely to ask you questions to test your beliefs and opinions. Please don't avoid them, talk openly about diversity and equality. The children are encouraged to tell you as their parent or carer about the puberty and human reproduction lessons.

How do I explain what 'gay' means to my child?

'Gay' is when a man loves a man. 'Lesbian' is when two women love each other. 'Bisexual' is when a person can love both men and women. 'Transgender' is when a person feels different about the body they were born into; we are all assigned a gender at birth and sometimes when we get older we may feel differently about this. Some people say there are 'boy' things or 'girl things' but we say this is not the case and boys and girls can do the same sort of things if they want.

But brothers love brothers and sisters love sisters and fathers love sons. Does that make them gay?

No, when two brothers or sisters love each other, it doesn't mean they are gay. This is a different kind of love. We may love our mum but we don't want to marry or enter into a civil partnership with them. Some people grow up and fall in love with a person of the same gender.

What do I say when my child comes home and asks, 'How can two men love each other?'

People are different. Some men do love other men. In the UK two men or women can get married or enter into a civil partnership in the same way that a man can with a woman.

What do I say if my child comes home and asks, 'how can two men/women have a baby?'

Lots of people have children in different ways, like fostering, adoption or step families. These are all families. They look after one another and love one another so they are the same in many ways. Some families have a mum and dad. Some families have a mum and a mum. Some families have two dads. Some families have one mum or dad or one grandparent. All families are different and that is okay.