



HEDGEWOOD SCHOOL

# Relationships Policy

2021 - 2022

September 2023



## RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

This policy sets out our commitment to deliver Relationships (REd) to all our pupils. It has been developed in consultation with our parents, our staff and governors and is written with reference to government guidance, including 'Relationships policy (REd) : draft statutory guidance (DfE, February 2019). and 'Keeping children safe in education '(DfE, September 2020). Relationships and Health Education forms part of our overall commitment to safeguarding, and as such, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy as well as the other related policies and procedures listed at the end of this document.

As a Primary Special School we will provide relationships education and health education. **We will not be providing Sex Education.** (Any individual need for pupil understanding and development will be addressed through a request from parents).

### Introduction

As a school we are committed to ensuring every pupil experiences learning from a platform of security, safety and enjoyment where relationships with staff are trusting and well established to ensure readiness for learning. Hedgewood School uses the National Autistic Society's SPELL framework and makes a commitment to every autistic learner's journey to ensure wellbeing, develop independence and achieve positive outcomes.

We are committed to the development of skills and learning which empower our young people to understand and develop knowledge of the world around them to keep themselves happy, healthy and safe.

This policy document sets out the school's aims, principles and strategies for the Relationship Education (REd) for pupils at Hedgewood School.

### Rationale

Effective REd makes a significant contribution to the development of the pupils' personal skills, helping them to establish and maintain healthy relationships. REd also enables young people to make responsible and informed choices about their own health and well-being. Hedgewood School's REd programme is delivered as a strand of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) & well-being curriculum. It is embedded in each of our three curriculum pathways.

## **Key Principles of Relationship Education:**

- Develop a positive and healthy attitude towards relationships.
- Help pupils to develop social understanding, social context, and self-esteem and make informed decisions by considering the importance of managing feelings, self-worth, respect for themselves and others, acceptance of responsibility and sensitivity towards the needs and views of others.
- Acknowledge the role of the family and the value of family life.
- To appropriately clarify myths, misconceptions and address stereotyping.
- Present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner.
- Encourage pupils to recognise the physical, emotional and other implications and risks of certain types of behaviour.
- Value the role of marriage/ partnership and the responsibilities of parenthood.

## **Delivery of Relationships Education (REd)**

REd is incorporated into all our curriculum pathways (Essentials for Living, Foundations for Life and Core Curriculum). When planning and delivering appropriate REd, each pupil's autism and associated learning difficulties, communication needs, social interaction, independence and emotional well-being are considered.

The REd programme is delivered as part of the Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE) & Wellbeing curriculum including E-safety and is embedded in all three of our curriculum pathways.

## **RED learning is broken down into six focus areas:**

1. Families and people who care for me
2. Caring friendships
3. Respectful relationships
4. Online relationships
5. Being safe
6. Physical health and mental well-being

For our pupils with more complex needs, our **Essentials for Living** (EfL) pathway focuses on developing a method of communication to enable requesting and making choices, as well as developing independence and the understanding of communications from others. The focus is on keeping pupils safe and promoting their future well-being.

For some of our pupils, incidents of challenging behaviour function as communication. We aim to reduce the number of such incidents by giving pupils effective ways for communicating their needs and responses.

## **The EfL approach to REd:**

**Families and people who care for me:** through the precise teaching of Essential 8 skills e.g. 'making requests'. These skills are generalised to more than one setting, developing and improving pupils' interactions at home. Specific EfL guidance, alongside individual support to the families, enhance pupils' communication and relationships.

**Caring friendships:** making and maintaining relationships by developing communication and such key skills such as waiting and turn taking, improve pupils' interactions with adults and peers.

**Respectful relationships:** developing pupils' own body awareness and confidence through the building of self-care skills, independence skills and listener responses. A stage appropriate understanding for all pupils of healthy relationships (including LGBT), acceptable behaviour and the right of everyone to equal treatment will help ensure that pupils treat each other well and go on to be respectful and kind adults.

**Being safe:** access to broader experience of life in their community by developing: listening and response to instructions related to health and safety; transitioning to and from different environments; and teaching skills to enable pupils to access the wider community. Also for some pupils who are ready, learning how to respond to other people's unwanted or unsafe behaviour e.g. stepping back or away from an individual.

**Physical health and mental well-being:** building self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviours by developing tolerating skills. Addressing 'eggshell' or problem behaviours that may restrict their quality of life.

**Online relationships:** Accessing online materials safely, what to click and what not to click, to teach the recognition of safe/not safe sites, to accept mediation of online access from responsible other.

**The Foundations for Life (F4L)** learning pathway has functional communication as the prime aim, alongside the development of: independent living skills; functional early Maths and English as well as social interaction skills and emotional regulation. Many pupils in F4L are not yet ready for subject specific study and require a holistic approach to developing successful engagement and independence skills for life.

#### **The F4L approach to REd:**

**Families and people who care for me:** developing relationships with family and carers, developing independence in separating from main carer, generalising effective engagement skills (including communication) at both school and within the wider family. We build awareness of different family make ups, building awareness that families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children. (Families can include for example, single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures.) we sensitively discuss that some children may have a different structure of support around them; e.g. looked after children or young carers.

**Caring friendships:** responds to peers positively, show concern for others, engage in paired and group tasks, develop some empathy with others, can offer simple help to others, can identify their friends, say what makes them happy/sad. Engage pupils in activities that encourage interaction and response such as Attention Autism, Intensive interaction approach, sensory exploration, supported exploration activities. We develop pupil understanding that friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and they do not make others feel lonely or excluded through regular positive play interactions. Through emotional development in F4L pupils are encouraged to empathy towards others in some situations.

**Respectful relationships:** follow others lead in games/activities, develop understanding of others views, respect others possessions, engage collaboratively with others with increasing independence, understand if others are treating them unfairly. A stage appropriate understanding for all pupils of healthy relationships (including LGBT),

acceptable behaviour and the right of everyone to equal treatment will help ensure that pupils treat each other well and go on to be respectful and kind adults.

**Online relationships:** Accessing online materials safely, what to click and what not to click, to have basic understanding of safe/not safe sites, to accept mediation of online access from responsible other.

**Being safe:** understand safe practice in engagement with others (sharing space/resources safely) learn to say no to unwanted attention, learn to greet familiar people and strangers differently.

**Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing:** develop maximum independence in self care skills and keeping healthy (appropriate clothing for weather), develop emotional regulation and tolerating skills, can make choices and express likes and dislikes.

The **Core curriculum (CC)** learning pathway builds pupil's independence and life skills alongside academic knowledge and skills, following the structure of the national curriculum. Pupils on this pathway access RED through lessons in PSHE, science, computing and E-safety, as well as through discreet spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) lessons which include British Values. This underpins the core curriculum.

**The CC approach to REd:**

**Families and people who care for me:** Understanding the characteristics of healthy family life, (love, security and stability,). Recognising the family relationships that make them happy and relationships that make them feel unsafe or unhappy.

**Caring friendships:** Developing skills through joint play and turn-taking activities in a variety of contexts. Support pupils' interests over time, reminding them of approaches and encouraging them to make connections between their experiences. Pupils are encouraged to reflect and label how friendships make us feel e.g. happy and secure and understand from a pupil's point of view what they view friendships to be. Pupils develop their understanding that friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and they do not make others feel lonely or excluded

**Respectful relationships:** Developing purposeful social experiences such as through joint projects and play, e.g. Lego group, art group, gardening, etc. Pupils are supported on how to use language for negotiation e.g. 'may I, would it be alright, I think that, and will you" in their interactions with peers. Pupils will develop flexibility by reducing dependence on rigid routines and build their awareness and coping across a range of situations. problem solving understanding of how to respect others, even when they are very different from themselves (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or belief.

**Online relationships:** To develop the online skills to know with whom they are communicating and sharing information, to be able to identify strangers and how information can be manipulated. To recognise how information can be shared or presented on different sites and understand when to say no online, in person and in different situations.

**Being safe:** By encouraging pupils to develop safety awareness when accessing experiences in different settings. Helping individual to understand their right to be kept safe by others. Encourage discussion about ways to avoid harming or hurting others.

**Physical health and mental well-being:** by maintaining a healthy body through self-care skills, exercise relating to physical development, managing feelings and behaviours and by developing toleration skills as well as addressing ‘eggshell’ or problem behaviours that may restrict their quality of life.

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

Hedgewood will ensure that all staff understand and support the purpose and aims of the REd policy and that they are aware of their professional roles and responsibilities as determined by current legislation. Any resources, materials or external agencies used to deliver aspects of the REd programme will operate within the context of the school’s guidelines.

Bespoke staff training will reflect the specific needs of individual pupils in a class or curriculum pathway. Hedgewood operates a range of staff training and development opportunities. Regular safeguarding and wellbeing updates are delivered at staff training, along with a range of ASC -specialist training modules such as TEACCH all help to ensure that staff understand how to best support Relationships Education and wellbeing,

Monitoring and evaluation of the training will help ensure best practice and positive outcomes for all pupils.

#### **The Senior Leadership Team will:**

- Promote a culture of mutual respect, trust between pupils and staff and the fostering of a positive learning environment;
- Ensure that staff are able to access relevant training and that it is regularly updated as appropriate e.g. PSHE & wellbeing, Play, Communication, Positive Responses to Behaviour
- Ensure that staff supporting pupils through challenging situations are themselves well supported via appropriate channels e.g. immediate and follow-up debriefs, access to Hedgewood Occupational Health support and the Employee Assistance Programme etc. – please refer to the Hedgewood Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for further details.

#### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will:**

- Ensure that Relationships and Health Education considerations are embedded within safeguarding and child protection practice, including environmental and social factors that form part of the provision’s contextual safeguarding approach;
- Ensure that all staff understand their safeguarding duties in relation to Relationships and Health Education.
- Provide relevant advice and support to pupils and staff as required, including signposting to appropriate sources of further support e.g. GP, CAMHS or other healthcare professional.

#### **All staff will:**

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect;
- Understand their safeguarding duties in relation to pupils’ mental and physical health and wellbeing, and raise any concerns promptly with the DSL or other members of the safeguarding team;
- Adhere to this policy and any related policies and procedures.

**All pupils will:**

- Be encouraged to treat themselves and others with dignity and respect;
- Engage in Relationships and Health Education curriculum-related topics and activities;
- taught about the qualities of a positive relationships and how they can keep themselves safe.
- They will also be informed of who to talk to if they have concerns (See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for more details).
- Be encouraged to raise any concerns with staff;

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies including: Teaching for Learning Policy, Communication Policy, PSHE & Wellbeing Policy, Behaviour and Safety Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, E-Safety Policy, Assessment and Recording Policy, Whole School Curriculum Policy, SEN Policy and Plan, Food and Nutrition and Health and Safety Policy.

**POLICY REVIEW DETAILS**

Document Reviewed by SLT/GB every two years or in response to changed government advice.

Readers are: staff, parents, governors, others

Adopted by GB in Spring Term 2021  
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