

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

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Reviewed By	GT
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Version	4.2



Introduction

The policy is applicable to all pupils, staff and parents of Wychwood School, Oxford.

This School policy will be made available to parents on the Wychwood School, Oxford website and hard copies will be available from the school office on request.

The School fully accepts its obligations to teach effective relationships and sex education as required by the Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 last updated 13th September 2021, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, The School's RSE policy will be reviewed annually.

Principles and Overview

- That young people are entitled to responsible and relevant relationships and sex education as a key element of personal, health and social education.
- That successful adulthood includes understanding and constructive use of relationships and sexuality.

Aims

- The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships.
- Help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing.
- To promote understanding of sexual attitudes and behaviour.
- To assist the development of informed, reasoned and responsible decisions.
- To help develop self-esteem and self-confidence in young people as the foundation for responsible and caring relationships.
- To ensure knowledge of the relevant law.
- To help young people be positive and confident about the physical, emotional and moral aspects of sexual maturity.

Objectives

Wychwood pupils should have:

- Accurate knowledge and understanding about male and female puberty, menstruation, the physiology of sex, contraception, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), screening and legal aspects surrounding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

- Understanding of a variety of personal relationships from friendship to intimacy.
- Opportunities to explore moral values, family values, religious values, gender roles and stereotyping.
- Opportunities for pupils to examine their own and others' attitudes to sexual activity and related issues.
- Awareness of the pressure on young people to behave in certain ways and to help improve assertiveness and the confidence to cope with such pressure.
- Encouragement and direction in further developing personal skills and qualities, i.e. listening, questioning, communicating, standpoint taking, valuing the opinions of others, empathy, etc.

Practice¹

- In curriculum areas and PHSE, content and methods are designed to be appropriate to the age and general development of pupils in the group and to be sensitive to religious belief and cultural practices.
- Outside agencies, e.g. theatre groups, educational groups, medical representatives and the police may be engaged when the quality of learning outcome and resources allow.
- Personal, confidential advice is available for boarders from medical practitioners.
- Parents will be informed of the programme of sex and relationships education being followed by the School and invited to view all resources.

1. Context

All Schools must have an up-to-date RSE policy which is made available for inspection and to parents. The policy must:

- Define Relationship and Sex Education
- Describe how Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is provided and who is responsible for providing it
- Include information about parents' right to withdrawal; and
- Be reviewed regularly.

1.1 Definition

RSE is: 'Lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage, or other committed relationships, for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health'. (Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfE 0116/2000).

1.2 Legal Obligations

All Schools in England and Wales have a legal responsibility to provide a relationships and sex education' curriculum. They also have a responsibility to keep an up-to-date written statement of the policy they choose to adopt and this must be available to parents. Section 405 of the Education

¹ ISSRs Part 1, 2.2 d

Act 1996 enables parents to withdraw their children from sex education other than the sex and health education that is in the National Curriculum (such as the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction that are essential elements of National Curriculum Science). A child cannot be withdrawn from sex education as delivered through the Science National Curriculum. There is also no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. PSHE is compulsory in independent schools, as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

1.3 Parental Concerns and Withdrawal of Pupils

Parents have legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated sex education lessons taught within the PSHE curriculum. They do not have a right to withdraw their children from those aspects of RSE that are taught in National Curriculum Science or where RSE issues arise incidentally in other subject areas. A child cannot be withdrawn from relationships or health education. If a parent/guardian has concerns about the RSE provision, we will address their concerns; if any parents/guardians decide to withdraw their child, we shall work with them and their child to explore possible alternative provision.

Any parent wishing to withdraw their child is encouraged to make an appointment with the Head of PSHE to discuss the matter, any complaints about the content or delivery of RSE should also be addressed to the Head.

If a pupil of sufficient maturity in attendance at a school to which section 403 applies requests to be wholly or partly excused from receiving sex education at the school, the pupil shall be so excused accordingly until the request is withdrawn.

2. The Core Elements of RSE

Knowledge and Understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- Understanding human sexuality, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- Learning about contraception and a range of local and national health advice, contraception and support services
- Learning the key elements of respectful relationships and recognition of abuse
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy
- The rights and responsibilities of citizens in line with the Equality Act 2010

Attitudes and Values

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations
- Learning the value of family life, marriage, the nature of civil partnership and the importance of strong and stable relationships. and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children
- Learning the value of respect, love and care
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas

- Developing critical thinking as part of decision making

Personal and Social Skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships online and in person confidently and sensitively
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- Managing conflict
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse

3. Aims of RSE Curriculum

The overall aims of the School's RSE curriculum are:

- To provide accurate information about, and understanding of, RSE issues
- To create an atmosphere where questions and discussion on RSE matters take place without embarrassment
- To develop respect for each other as individuals, and to encourage all genders to understand one another
- To enable pupils to develop the confidence to communicate and reflect on their feelings about RSE
- To enable pupils to understand the importance of respect, trust, love and intimacy in relationships
- To enable pupils to understand the importance of safe internet use and managing relationships online
- To enable pupils to appreciate the value of family life, marriage, civil partnerships and the implications of parenthood
- To enable pupils to understand about different types of families
- To enable pupils to develop positive attitudes, and to value integrity, self-respect and self esteem
- To enable pupils to explore other people's attitudes and values
- To enable pupils to challenge and reduce discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender
- To enable pupils to address sexist, sexual, homophobic and transphobic bullying
- To enable pupils to gain knowledge and understanding about puberty and the sexual changes that will take place
- To enable pupils to gain knowledge and understanding about reproduction and sexuality
- To counteract myths and correct misunderstanding pupils may have gained from the media and peers
- To promote awareness of the law on sexual behaviour, consent and abuse including FGM
- To enable pupils to seek information and advice when they need help

4. Morals and Values Framework²

The RSE curriculum is delivered through PHSE lessons. In addition certain biological aspects are delivered through science lessons and other aspects of RSE arise in Philosophy and Ethics and/or Religious Studies (RS) lessons. Pupils are taught about the physical, emotional and social changes at puberty, which includes personal hygiene. In RS, they continue to develop an understanding of relationships within a family and society. They will develop skills needed to form relationships and to respect other people's points of view. The School believes Relationships and Sex Education should focus on the development of skills and attitudes not just the acquisition of knowledge.

By the end of Shell (Year 11), pupils will have had opportunities to gain knowledge and skills necessary to build and maintain healthy relationships including sexual relationships. They will also have considered their own and others' attitudes towards relationships and sex which will guide them in making emotionally healthy choices in their future relationships.

Our approach to RSE will be conducted within a clear morals and values framework based on the following principles:

- The value of stable, communicative and loving relationships
- Respect, understanding and empathy towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, sexuality, feelings and views
- The development of relationships, including sexual relationships, based on mutual consent and respect
- The right not to be abused by other people or be taken advantage of online and in person
- The right of people to follow their own sexuality and identity
- Age and circumstance appropriate RSE
- Access to help from trusted adults and medical/counselling services

4.1 Pupil Relationships

It is not the school's intention to put emphasis on the disciplinary aspect of this part of school life. It is our intention to encourage pupils to form positive friendships which are relaxed, natural and mutually respectful. However, it is important that pupils understand that the school has a responsibility to parents and to safeguard the pupils themselves.

If a pupil has a romantic relationship with someone who is a member of the school community, they should be aware that:

1. Displays of intimacy in public are unacceptable, as these are unhelpful to the working atmosphere and community life of the school.
2. A relationship between two pupils at who are more than one school year apart may put the younger pupil under pressure and may therefore not be considered appropriate.
3. Sexual intimacy and activity must be regarded by the school as a serious breach of discipline, and could in certain cases, lead to expulsion.

² ISSRs Part 1 2.2d

The above also applies if a pupil has a relationship with someone who is not a member of the school community. The guidance above applies to Wychwood School, Oxford pupils who have a romantic relationship. A sexual relationship between a teacher and any pupil at the school is a breach of that trust. Such behaviour constitutes serious misconduct on the part of the teacher and will invariably result in disciplinary action, often dismissal. It may also lead to a teacher being barred from further employment in the education service by the Secretary of State. Such relationships will be reported to the DBS where appropriate.

The school wishes to be supportive in guiding pupils in this matter. Pupils who seek advice may contact the DSL, house staff or indeed any member of the teaching staff³.

5. Provision

Sexuality: Some of our pupils will define themselves as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual (GLB), or on any part of the LGBTQ+ spectrum. Some pupils may consider themselves transgender. Pupils may also have GLB or transgender parents/guardians, brothers or sisters, other family members and/or friends. Our approach to RSE will include sensitive honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. Our pastoral, medical and counselling support will take account of the needs of GLB pupils. We shall also actively tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. The school will interpret 'boys' and 'girls' to include children who identify as boys or girls.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)⁴: We shall take account of the fact that some pupils may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities that result in particular RSE needs. Teaching and resources will be differentiated as appropriate to address the needs of these pupils in order for them to have full access and inclusivity in the content of sex and relationship education.

Contraceptive advice to Lower School pupils: Pupils will be taught, in the context of sexual intimacy and safer sex, that intercourse should always involve using a condom. Questions about forms of contraception will be answered accurately and honestly. If pupils need further personal advice about contraceptive use, counselling and medical support will be sought from appropriate agencies and personnel.

External speakers may be involved in inputting to RSE lessons. The school will invite only agencies and speakers who are appropriate to pupils' needs.

6. RSE Curriculum Content

The RSE curriculum is delivered in a developmental manner so that issues are explored in greater depth as pupils mature.

³ NMS 16.1 Equality Act 2010

⁴ ISSRs Part 1 2(b) (i)

7. Methodology and Resources

A wide range of teaching methods are utilised that enable pupils to participate actively in their own learning and personal development. This includes use of academic research, quizzes, case studies, role-play, film and documentaries, small group discussion and use of appropriate guest speakers. Teaching is conducted in a safe designated PHSE learning environment through the use of respectful ground rules and dialogue so that pupils are not expected to discuss their own personal issues in class. Teaching resources are selected on the basis of their appropriateness to pupils.

7.1 Responding to Pupil Questions

The school believes that pupils should have opportunities to have their genuine questions and curiosity answered in an approachable and matter-of-fact manner. However, occasionally a pupil may ask a particularly explicit or embarrassing question in class. If a question is too explicit or inappropriate to answer in class at that moment, it will be acknowledged and responded to later with the pupil who asked it. The Head of PHSE will use their skill and discretion to decide about whether to answer questions in class and, if so, how. They will establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in class by discussing ground rules with pupils and by taking an approach that ensures pupils are mature and sensible.

8. Medical Provision⁵

Under 16s entitlement to confidential health advice and treatment. Boarders are encouraged to seek medical advice through the boarding house staff.

Medical practitioners follow guidelines which allow them to give advice and treatment to young people under 16 years old without the knowledge or consent of the parents/guardians if that is in the young person's best interests. They will, however, encourage the young person to talk to their parents/guardians. Only in cases where there is a safeguarding risk in the boarding environment or suspected abuse and serious risk of harm, would the health professional follow the school's and Oxfordshire's safeguarding and child protection procedures and breach the young person's confidentiality. The young person would be kept fully informed at all stages of the procedure. RSE lessons will inform pupils of their entitlement to seek confidential help, including contraceptive and sexual health advice and treatment, and they will be taught about how they can access local services for this both inside and outside school.

9. Safeguarding

If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of abuse they must follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures. Pupils are made aware of the disciplinary consequences of engaging in sexual activity whilst at school.

However, there may be occasion when a teacher learns that a pupil under 16 is having or contemplating having sexual intercourse whilst not at school. In this case the teacher should:

⁵ ISSRs Part 3

- Make sure the pupil is aware of the need to seek contraceptive and sexual health advice and knows how to get this
- Encourage the pupil to talk to a parent/guardian
- Decide whether there are child protection issues: underage sex or a suspected pregnancy are not, in themselves, child protection issues unless the pupil is under thirteen years of age, and there is suspected coercion or abuse.

A teacher who is concerned that there may be coercion or abuse should discuss the case with the DSL. The pupil will be kept fully informed at all stages. Teachers should be especially alert to pupil relationships involving a child with Special Educational needs/Disability (SEND). A child with SEND may be at greater risk from sexual exploitation, grooming and manipulation.