

ST MARGARET'S
SCHOOL

Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Introduction

Health Education is one of the major themes in St Margaret School's (the "**School**") comprehensive Life Skills and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education ("**PSHEE**") Programme. Relationships Education and Sex Education ("**RSE**") is a major component of this programme. The School's RSE programme aims to be a sensitive and responsible one, which is set in a moral and social framework. Within this framework pupils will also be taught about law, consent, safe sex, sexual health and sexuality.

This policy was drawn up in light of Department for Education guidance (Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education – first published on 25 June 2019) and following consultation with parents, teachers, Governors and the School Nurse(s). RSE provides an understanding that positive, caring environments are essential for the development of a good self-image and that individuals are in charge of and responsible for their own bodies.

Aims

Effective RSE is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. RSE has a crucial role to play in preparing children for their lives now and in the future, as adults and parents. In RSE, we teach pupils about sexual and emotional health, about family life and the exercise of personal responsibility towards other individuals and the broader community.

We aim to present relevant facts in an objective and balanced manner. Our comprehensive PSHEE curriculum ensures that every year group will learn RSE set in the context of family, friends and wider societal issues and address responsibilities that arise from within these relationships. RSE at St Margaret's will help young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

Pupils will build their confidence and self-esteem to ensure that they understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity and how to form successful, safe and healthy relationships.

The School will also ensure that awareness of wider issues such as child sexual abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment (including child-on-child abuse), sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, sexting and the growing risks associated with the digital world, form part of RSE in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

Organisation and Delivery

RSE is coordinated by the **Head of PSHEE** with reference to Medical Staff, other Heads of Department and outside agencies, where applicable. The **Head of PSHEE** is responsible for the overall planning, implementation and review of the RSE programme.

Delivery is through planned aspects within PSHEE and Science curricula and addressing moral and ethical issues, which may arise from apparently unrelated topics in all National Curriculum subjects. Within this category, as long as any discussion takes place within the context of the subject, it will not be deemed part of the RSE programme and therefore not subject to the parents being permitted to withdraw their child.

Relationships Education and Sex Education form part of the PSHEE Programme in Years 1 to 13. Pupils are taught in mixed ability and in both mixed and single sex groups for certain components of the course.

A wide variety of approaches are used to give pupils relevant information, to enable moral issues to be explored. Additional information for both pupils and parents is available on the School's website in the Parent Portal.

Ground rules are agreed in advance of RSE lessons – including that:

- no one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions
- any personal matters regarding sex, sexuality and personal relationships should be discussed privately with the teacher or a member of the medical centre, as appropriate. Confidentiality and boundaries for confidentiality relating to teaching staff and Medical Centre Staff/School Doctor will be clearly explained to pupils in advance of RSE lessons.

Please refer to **Appendix 1** for information on RSE in the Senior School and to **Appendix 2** for further information on RSE in the Junior School.

Resources

Teaching resources are available to teachers via the PSHE Association website, Hertfordshire LA Advisor for PSHE and Boost Learning Online Platform.

A summary of the RSE content at the School is in **Appendix 3**.

Staff

Only staff who feel comfortable with the subject matter teach RSE. All staff involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly/honestly

and to be prepared to refer to more expert advice if necessary. Staff will be given opportunities to attend relevant courses to develop their skills.

We believe that most of the RSE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However, we recognise that visitors such as nurses, family planning or sexual health workers, can greatly enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of RSE. Therefore, some content is delivered by external professionals or the School Nurse(s).

Involving Parents and Withdrawal

The School recognises that parents are key figures in helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up and in preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities of adulthood. The teaching offered by the School should be seen as complementary and supportive to the role of parents. Our School website contains links and guidance for parents and where possible we will host events aimed at supporting families to address the issues raised by RSE. This policy will be available for inspection via our website, and we will work closely with parents to ensure they are aware of what is being taught.

Letters are sent to parents every year informing them of the RSE Programme, detailing which aspects of the curriculum parents have the right to refuse for their child. Currently, parents have the right to withdraw their child from 'sex education' that is not part of the Science National Curriculum. Should a parent choose to withdraw their child we will offer support via a meeting and ensure that their child's other learning is not disrupted. The Head will discuss with the parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child, e.g. social and emotional effects of being excluded, the likelihood of hearing their peers' version of what was said etc. Schools should document this process to ensure a record is kept.

Once discussions have taken place, the School will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, 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 will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. If a pupil is excused from sex education, the School will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Additional support materials as links and recommended books such as: [Ask the expert](#), [Starting your periods](#), [Parents and Carers](#) [What's Happening to Me? \(Boy\) | Usborne |](#) are recommended to families and available on request.

Please refer to **Appendix 4** for a template Parent Form for Withdrawal from Sex Education within RSE

Concerns and Complaints

Any concern or complaint about the content or delivery of the RSE programme should be addressed to the Head of PSHEE.

Safeguarding

Pupils will be made clearly aware that some information cannot be kept confidential by school staff and that staff have a responsibility in certain circumstances, to refer the matter on to the appropriate person. Where disclosures indicate that a pupil is at risk, or where there is a suspicion of possible abuse, this must be managed in accordance with the procedures contained in the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Any concerns about the welfare of a pupil for example engaging in underage sexual activity or involvement in a coercive relationship should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Advice is available for all pupils and parents if they request it, regarding information about where and from whom they can receive confidential relationships and sex advice/counselling and treatment.

Prior to any external speakers, care is taken, to ensure the content is appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils and aligns with the School's approach to RSE. Safeguarding protocols are handed to all visitors to the School. Please refer to our School's Visitors' Policy and Procedures for further information on external speakers.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (“SEND”)

St Margaret's prides itself on its inclusive culture and how we make provision for all pupils' needs. The nature of work undertaken in RSE will be appropriate to the age, experience, reading level, maturity and sensitivity of any SEND pupils. As pupils mature and develop at different rates, the RSE programme is therefore a 'spiral system' in as much as key concepts are revisited several times throughout the programme. This allows for reinforcement at the differentiated stages of pupil maturity. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities may require support with their learning and adjustments will be made as appropriate.

Equality

In teaching RSE, the School will comply with relevant requirements under the Equality Act 2010. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, the School must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation. The School will make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage where it is required.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing the RSE Programme

The policy is a living document, which we are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of on a regular basis as well as ensuring it complies with statutory changes.

Of particular importance to the RSE programme are:

- regular pupil feedback, via questionnaires and discussion in PSHEE, in House, in Tutor periods etc
- regular staff review of pupils' progress through, for example, quizzes, written assignments or self-evaluations
- identification of pupils who require extra support or intervention
- staff review and feedback, particularly at House Staff, Tutor, Welfare Committee Meetings
- parental feedback via the Head's Parent Panel and parental questionnaires on school provision
- continuing opportunities for INSET training as deemed necessary
- resource materials which are updated as necessary and made available to staff, pupils and any parents who wish to study them.

The policy is regularly reviewed and will be updated as required. Currently the School's RSE Policy is consistent with:

- DfE RSE Guidance (last updated September 2021)
- National Children's Bureau, Sex Education Forum
- Hertfordshire LA Guidance on Relationships and Sex Education
- PHSE Association Guidance.

This policy will be reviewed and approved annually by the Head of PSHEE.

Other Policies/Guidelines, which have relevance to the RSE Policy, are:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Drugs and Controlled Substances Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Notice
- Equal Opportunities Policy (part of Staff Handbook)
- SEND Policy

Member of Staff responsible: Mrs A Winslett.

APPENDIX 1

SENIOR SCHOOL

Relationships and Sex Education

RSE will be specifically taught in PSHEE and science lessons. PSHEE is taught by teachers who have undertaken training in both PSHEE and RSE. Certain aspects of the programme will be delivered and supported by external professionals. For further details of the RSE programme please refer to the PSHEE Spiral Overview and Schemes of Work.

Safety and Confidentiality

Staff follow the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the statutory guidance entitled *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2021). Training on this issue is an annual requirement. Teachers will make it clear to pupils what our procedures are with regard to confidentiality. Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. Teachers will follow the appropriate protocols for reporting and safeguarding.

Resources

RSE resources are carefully selected to ensure

- Inclusivity
- Positive, healthy and unbiased information can be delivered
- Age and understanding appropriate

Effective and Appropriate Teaching

- Biological terms will be used for all parts of the body
- Clear and unequivocal language will be used
- 'Slang' words will be discussed to avoid misunderstanding and to ensure that offensive language is not used by pupils
- All teaching will be age appropriate
- Respect will be expected and shown at all times
- Creation of class agreements of ground rules will be completed as a class before RSE is taught.

APPENDIX 2

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Relationships and Sex Education

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education are:

- to give pupils the knowledge (that is age appropriate) and understanding they need in order to make informed decisions and behave in a responsible way in matters concerning relationships and sex.
- To ensure pupils have a good knowledge of their own bodies and to prepare them for the changes during puberty.
- To learn about the values of family life, love, respect and care.
- To help pupils develop healthy attitudes towards relationships and sex.

These values are enhanced by our school ethos of kindness and respect, in which everyone is valued, supported, safe and secure. Attitudes, values and skills are as important as knowledge and understanding.

Sex education is taught in the context of a family situation and includes both the physical and emotional aspect of relationships and sex.

Children will learn about relationships and sexual behaviour from many different places but home and school are the most important. Parents and teachers must work together to make sure that pupils develop the confidence to make healthy decisions about a broad range of relationship issues, including decisions about sexual behaviour as they grow older.

Teaching of Sex Education in School

Opportunities will arise during science topics to discuss various issues as and when they arise and these issues will always be dealt with at the time rather than being avoided.

Sex education is officially taught in Year 6.

Parents are notified of this by letter and given an outline of the lesson content with an invitation to discuss any concerns and view the videos used beforehand. Pupils are encouraged to discuss issues raised at home and parents are encouraged to be open and honest with their children.

RSE/PSHEE Related Lessons

Year 5: The Human Body: including puberty and the human lifeline

Reproduction in mammals and plants (asexual and sexual reproduction)

Year 6: Human Reproduction: including puberty and menstruation

Personal Hygiene

Healthy Lifestyle and Exercise

Impacts of Drugs and Alcohol

Questions are encouraged and are always answered honestly but for any pupils who are too shy to speak aloud or who have a personal query, they may write a note on a piece of paper and put it in the 'Ask it Basket'. These questions will be answered with no reference to individual pupils.

APPENDIX 3

OVERVIEW OF TOPICS TAUGHT IN RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

Overview of Relationship and Sex Education 2022-2023

Year 7

Health and Puberty

Healthy routines, influences on health, puberty, unwanted contact, and FGM

- Healthy lifestyle choices including diet, dental health, physical activity and sleep
- How to manage influences relating to caffeine, smoking and alcohol
- How to manage physical and emotional changes during puberty
- Personal hygiene
- Feelings
- FGM and how to access help and support

Building Relationships

Self-worth, romance and friendships (including online) and relationship boundaries

- What are the different types of relationship?
- What is a healthy relationship
- Communication Skills
- Is commitment important in relationships?
- Consent and assertive communication
- What is an unhealthy relationship and how to develop strategies to deal with unhealthy situations

Year 8

Identity and Relationships

Gender identity, sexual orientation, consent, 'sexting', and an introduction to contraception

- Who am I?
- Gender Identity
- Choices around sex and and sexual orientation
- Sexting/Sharing Images/Nudes
- Sex and the Law/Consent

Year 9

Intimate Relationships

Relationships and sex education including consent, contraception, the risks of STI's and attitudes to pornography

- About readiness for sexual activity, the choice to delay sex, or enjoy intimacy without sex
- About myths and misconceptions relating to consent
- About the continuous right to withdraw consent and paucity to consent
- About STIs, effective use of condoms and negotiating safer sex
- About the consequences of unprotected sex, including pregnancy
- How the portrayal of relationships in the media and pornography might affect expectations
- How to assess and manage risks of sending, sharing or passing on sexual images

- How to secure personal information online

Year 10

Healthy Relationships

Relationships and sex expectations, including myths, pleasure and challenges, including the impact of pornography

- Consent
- Sexual Relationships
- Safety in Relationships
- Pornography

Year 11

Communication in Relationships

Personal values, assertive communication (including in relation to contraception and sexual health), relationship challenges and abuse

- About core values and emotions
- About gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation
- How to communicate assertively
- How to communicate wants and needs
- How to handle unwanted attention, including online
- How to challenge harassment and stalking, including online
- About various forms of relationships abuse
- About unhealthy, exploitative and abusive relationships
- How to access support in abusive relationships and how to overcome challenges in seeking support

Families

Different families and parental responsibilities, pregnancy, marriage and forced marriage and changing relationships

- Different types of families and changing family structures
- How to evaluate readiness for parenthood and positive parenting qualities
- About fertility, including how it varies and changes
- About pregnancy, birth and miscarriage
- About unplanned pregnancy options, including abortion
- About adoption and fostering
- How to manage change, loss, grief and bereavement
- About 'honour based' violence and forced marriage and how to safely access support

Year 12

Respectful Relationships

Healthy, happy and safe relationships

- Maintaining healthy, positive relationships
- Consent
- Relationship pressures and expectations
- What is sexuality?
- Contraception and parenthood
- Safe, happy and legal

Year 13

Sexual Health

- Maintaining healthy, positive relationships
- Consent
- Relationship pressures and expectations
- What is sexuality?
- Contraception and parenthood
- Safe, happy and legal

These are the areas that qualify as Sex Education although the government does not provide precise definitions (helpful definitions have been provided by the Sex Education Forum). It is important to realise that many of these topics also cross over into Health Education and Relationship Education. The emphasis is never just on Sex Education.

ST MARGARET'S

SCHOOL

APPENDIX 4

PARENT FORM: WITHDRAWAL FROM SEX EDUCATION WITHIN RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Form	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within Relationships and Sex Education			
Any other information you would like the School to consider			
Parent signature			
Agreed actions from discussion with parents			