



**ST MARGARET'S**  
SCHOOL

Relationship and Sex  
Education Policy

# ST MARGARET'S

SCHOOL

## Relationship and Sex Education Policy Review:

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|------------------|---|
| Review Date      | Autumn 2025   |
| Reviewed By      | Simon Winchester - Deputy Head Academic<br>Alexia Winslett – Head of PSHE |
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## **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 ("PSHE") 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. The school is now preparing to implement changes and additions to the programme in preparation of the new guidance that will become statutory from 1st September 2026.

## **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 PSHE 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.

The School has initiated the use of tried and tested programmes from 'Working with Boys' and Voicebox to increase awareness of unhealthy masculine behaviours in relationships and the school environment. These sessions took place within PSHE lessons and provided opportunities for discussion, reflection and proactive change. A lunchtime club has also been created to highlight the areas of school culture that the students would like to address directly themselves – this is an opportunity for them to decide the changes that need to be made to ensure that all students feel safe and happy in school.

## **Organisation and Delivery**

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

Delivery is through planned aspects within PSHE 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 PSHE 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 Brook Sexual Health.

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

Parents have also been offered an opportunity to come into school on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025 and discuss the RSE lessons, view resources and raise any concerns or queries with the Head of PSHE.

## **Concerns and Complaints**

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

## **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

- booklets have been created to support every topic ensuring that students can review their work and progress regularly

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
- PSHE Association Guidance

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

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

## **Assessment in PSHE**

Assessment in PSHE refers to gauging what has been learned and what still needs to be learned.

Learning in PSHE education should be assessed for several reasons:

### **Reflection**

It is important for students to have opportunities to reflect on their learning, especially when that learning relates directly to the individual's identity – their personal qualities, attitudes, skills, attributes, achievements and influences.

### **Progress**

It is important for teachers to feel confident that learning has taken place, to be able to demonstrate progress, and to identify future learning needs.

### **Motivation**

Assessment increases students' motivation and improves learning, as their increased awareness of their own progress and development illustrates the value of their learning.

### **Impact**

It allows the leadership team, parents, governors and school inspectors to see the impact PSHE education is having for students and for whole-school outcomes, such as inspection judgements on personal development, safeguarding, SMSC development and the promotion of fundamental British values.

The Department for Education (DfE) states in the statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health education that "schools should have the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas"

Assessing learning in PSHE education uses a combination of teacher assessment and pupil self- and peer assessment.

The model of assessment that is most meaningful in PSHE education is ipsative assessment. Ipsative assessment compares where a student is at the end of a lesson or series of lessons against where they were before the lesson(s).

Therefore, the following forms of assessment are used in PSHE lessons:

1. Baseline Assessment
2. Assessment for Learning
3. Assessment of Learning

Baseline Assessment and Assessment for Learning can be achieved through the following activities:

- questioning, discussion and brainstorming
- role-play, hot-seating, freeze frame and other drama techniques
- scenarios, cartoon strips or script-writing
- responding to a scenario, video clip or image
- mind-maps and spider diagrams
- ‘Graffiti Wall’
- quiz, questionnaire or continuum line
- Draw and Write
- Explain to an Alien
- Diamond 9 Activity

Endpoint Learning (Assessment of Learning) might be achieved through the following activities

- presentations
- producing resources and materials to teach younger students
- leading a discussion or other learning activity with younger students
- giving advice to characters in specific situations e.g. Agony Aunt responses, producing a blog or podcast
- keeping a journal or log of times when they have demonstrated a particular skill or attribute during the week



## **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**

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/PSHE Related Lessons**

**Reception to Year 4:** a focus on foundational topics like friendships, family diversity, feelings, respect, personal boundaries, and understanding differences, laying the groundwork for later RSE.

#### **Year 2:**

- Children in Year 2 learn about privacy and the correct vocabulary for body parts
- Parents are informed about this and the slides used are shared with them in advance so they can review them beforehand

#### **Year 5:**

- The Human Body: including puberty, menstruation and the human lifeline
- Personal Hygiene
- Healthy Lifestyle and Exercise
- Impacts of Drugs and Alcohol

#### **Year 6**

- Respectful relationships online
- Puberty (recap) with a focus on change and becoming independent
- Reproduction, pregnancy and birth
- Personal Hygiene
- Healthy Lifestyle and Exercise
- Impacts of Drugs and Alcohol

**Use of Correct Vocabulary:** we teach pupils the proper names for body parts from Year 2 and related vocabulary from an early age to promote confidence, body awareness, and reduce stigma.

**Inclusivity:** we focus on diverse families, and gender identities, to reflect current standards.

**Emotional Wellbeing & Consent:** we include age-appropriate lessons on mental health, consent, boundaries, and healthy relationships.

**Online Safety:** we cover digital relationships and safe internet use.

**Parental Engagement:**

- sharing lesson plans, slides, and resources with parents beforehand
- holding information sessions and offering an open-door policy for parental discussions
- collecting and considering parental feedback regularly

**Adapt Lessons for Pupil Needs:** we tailor content based on pupils' backgrounds, needs, and sensitivities. We support vulnerable pupils and encourage pupil feedback.

**Safe Learning Environment:** we maintain confidentiality, encourage anonymous questions, and foster respectful discussions.

**Legal Compliance:** we adhere to the latest DfE statutory guidance on Relationships Education and RSE, including confidentiality and safeguarding protocols.

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. 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 2025-2026

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>Year 7</b></p> <p><b>Health and Puberty</b></p> <p>Healthy routines, influences on health, puberty, unwanted contact, and FGM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Healthy lifestyle choices including diet, dental health, physical activity and sleep</li><li>● How to manage influences relating to caffeine, smoking and alcohol</li><li>● How to manage physical and emotional changes during puberty</li><li>● Personal hygiene</li><li>● FGM and how to access help and support</li></ul> <p><b>Building Relationships</b></p> <p>Self-worth, romance and friendships (including online) and relationship boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Developing self-worth and self-efficacy</li><li>● Qualities and behaviours relating to different types of positive relationships</li><li>● How to recognise unhealthy relationships</li><li>● How to recognise and challenge media and stereotypes</li><li>● How to evaluate expectations for romantic relationships</li><li>● About consent, and how to seek and assertively communicate consent</li></ul> |
| <p><b>Year 8</b></p> <p><b>Discrimination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Identity and communication</li><li>● Bias and stereotypes</li><li>● Discrimination</li><li>● Protected characteristics from 2010 Equality Act</li></ul> <p><b>Digital Literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sharing images</li></ul>  |
| <p><b>Year 9</b></p> <p><b>Respectful Relationships</b></p> <p>Families and parenting, healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and relationship changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● About different types of families and parenting, including single parents, same sex parents, blended families, adoption and fostering</li><li>● About positive relationships in the home and ways to reduce homelessness amongst young people</li><li>● About conflict and its causes in different contexts, eg. with family and friends</li><li>● Conflict resolution strategies</li><li>● How to manage relationship and family changes, including relationship breakdown, separation and divorce</li><li>● How to access support services</li></ul> <p><b>Intimate Relationships</b></p> <p>Relationships and sex education including consent, contraception, the risks of STI's and attitudes to</p>   |

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

- About relationship values and the role of pleasure in relationships
- About myths, assumptions, misconceptions and social norms about sex, gender and relationships
- About the opportunities and risks of forming and conducting relationships online
- How to manage the impact of the media and pornography on sexual attitudes, expectations and behaviours
- About the ethical and legal implications in relation to consent, including manipulation, coercion, and capacity to consent
- How to recognise and respond to pressure, coercion and exploitation, including and accessing appropriate support
- How to recognise and challenge victim blaming
- About asexuality, abstinence and celibacy

## **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**

### **Building and Maintaining Relationships**

- New friendships
- Personal safety
- Intimacy
- Conflict resolution
- Relationship changes

## **Year 13 - Autumn 1 and 2**

### **Respectful Relationships**

- How to seek and assertively give, not give or withdraw consent, in all contexts
- About the legal and moral responsibilities in relation to seeking consent and how to recognise factors that might affect capacity to consent
- About the emotional, physical, social, and legal consequences of failing to respect others' right not to give or to withdraw consent
- How to identify the signs of abuse, exploitation and assault or rape
- Where and how to access support and report concerns, including online
- To evaluate attitudes towards sexual assault and their impact; how to challenge victim-blaming, including when abuse occurs online
- How to recognise manipulation and coercion and manage negative influence and persuasion
- Exit strategies for unhealthy relationships
- About rights in relation to harassment, including online, stalking and violence, how to respond and where to seek help • about the unacceptability and illegality of forced marriage and 'honour'-based violence and how to safely seek help
- Exit strategies for pressurised or dangerous situations

# 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                                      |      |



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