



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

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This policy is underpinned by the Department for Education's document *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education*, which contains statutory guidance for schools relation to the teaching of these areas from September 2020 onwards.

The THRIVE curriculum helps pupils to think about the different social contexts, influences and beliefs that affect personal behaviour. It also develops a positive vocabulary and the strategies and skills children and young people need to stay healthy and safe. The PSHEE programme in both the Junior and Senior schools is designed to meet the needs of the pupils and to equip pupils with a sound understanding of risk and with the knowledge and skills necessary to make safe and informed decisions. We recognise that pupils need high-quality Relationship Education (Junior School) and Relationship and Sex Education (Senior School) and well as Health Education so they can make wise and informed choices.

Therefore, in addition to the National Science Curriculum topics (which teaches the biological facts relating to human growth, puberty and reproduction), Relationship and Sex education (RSE) is part of the PSHEE programme offered throughout pupils' time at the School. Relationship and Sex education is set within a broader base of self-esteem and responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. It includes discussion about feelings, relationships and values as well as helping young people to respect themselves and others, and understand difference. Relationship and Sex Education is learning in an age-appropriate way about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health.

A comprehensive programme of RSE provides medically and factually accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex, and sexual health, including how to access services. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline. It is therefore an essential part of the school's duty to safeguard the pupils' welfare and promote their emotional well-being. The RSE programme links to the ICT Curriculum in teaching that the internet and social media are important resources for learning and information but that there are risks which must be negotiated in order that young people are able to stay safe online.

Relationship and Sex Education encompasses an understanding of the ways in which humans love each other and stresses the importance of respecting individual autonomy. Whilst RSE at Bolton School Girls' Division involves teaching children about reproduction, sexuality and sexual health, it does not promote early sexual activity or any particular sexual orientation.

Age-Appropriate Topics

It is a requirement that children in primary schools should have a Relationship Education programme tailored to their age and their physical and emotional maturity. All children, including those who develop earlier than average, need to know about puberty before they experience it and should learn 'how a baby is conceived and born' before leaving primary school. Under the Science Curriculum, primary age pupils should know about puberty and how a baby is born. In the early primary school years, education about relationships within PSHEE focuses on friendship,

bullying and the building of self-esteem. In addition, they learn that their body belongs to them and that they can say who has access to it.

Schools have a clear duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). Young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that Sex and Relationship education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. It is important that teachers deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Teachers must be particularly sensitive to the issue of homophobic bullying, in line with the School's Anti-bullying policies. Teaching should be based on facts and should enable pupils to develop an understanding of how the law applies to different relationships.

As part of the Senior School THRIVE programme, Medical room staff or other appropriate adults give young people full information about different types of contraception, including emergency contraception and their effectiveness. When abortion is covered within the programme, pupils have the opportunity to explore the dilemmas, so that they know and understand about abortion, and develop the communication skills to discuss it with parents and health professionals. Lectures given by outside speakers to different year groups give the pupils a better understanding of the way in which internet pornography can distort young people's attitudes towards sex and sexuality. They also help the pupils appreciate the dangers of sexting, grooming, domestic violence and sex trafficking.

Pupils are taught about all aspects of the law and sexual consent - notably that, in the law on sexual offences, the onus is on getting rather than giving consent. Teaching promotes equality in relationships and emphasises the importance of seeking and gaining mutual consent through positive and active communication. Pupils are taught how to identify behaviour in a relationship which is positive and supportive and that which is exploitative and controlling.

Conduct of Lessons

In preparing to discuss sex education with their class, form teachers are guided about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting and how to deal with individual questions. For example, whilst children may learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society, teaching in this area needs to be sensitive so as not to stigmatise children on the basis of their home circumstances.

Learning how to show respect through listening and sharing is a significant part of Sex and Relationship education. Pupils can learn how to challenge one another's ideas and behaviour in non-confrontational ways, recognising the difference between aggressive and assertive responses.

The classroom is never a confidential place to talk, and that remains true in Sex and Relationship education. Pupils are reminded that lessons are not a place to discuss their personal experiences and issues – or to ask others to do so – through the establishment of ground rules or a working

agreement. Any visitor to the classroom is bound by the school's policy on confidentiality, as set out in the Behaviour Management Policy for Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and Other Adults, regardless of whether they have – or their organisation has – a different policy. If a teacher or other adult believes there is a safeguarding or child protection issue, the Senior Designated Lead must be informed, in line with the Foundation Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Parents and RSE

Up to and until three terms before the child turns 16, parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE, and may do so by giving formal notice in writing to the Headmistress that they do not wish their daughter to take part in this aspect of the curriculum. The Headmistress will then explore their concerns and discuss the impact that such an action might have on the pupil.

Once a pupil reaches this age, it is she who makes this decision. Please note that parents are not legally allowed to request that their daughter opts out of those aspects of Sex Education which fall under the National Curriculum.

NB A parent's choice to withdraw a child from RSE does not affect the child's right to use confidential health services provided by the School or elsewhere.

Parents are informed of the right to withdraw their child from all or part of sex education.